



the MIND reader

Volume 1, Issue 2

MAY 2013

PAGE 1

Mind Meets Matter
Improving Diabetes Self
Management

PAGE 2,3

Whippers, Crimpers and
Calm
stuh-bil-i-tee
What Will Sweat Tell You
Food Journals: Annoying
but Useful

PAGE 4

-S*M*A*R*T*

INTERSECTION OF PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH



Mind MEETS Matter

BY: Sheri Fluellen

So your primary care physician just told you that whatever it was that you just saw him for is “all in your head”. You are so frustrated that he isn’t taking your problems and your symptoms seriously! Or is he?

People often get to us (Mind Spa) as a last resort to their problem when modern medicine is insufficient. I completely understand this perspective. Sometimes it’s easier to believe that a little pill will be the answer to your struggles, and on occasion it can be. Also, it is important to make sure that your symptoms are not caused by or contributing to your struggles, such as having a dysfunctional thyroid causing depression or a brain tumor on your pituitary gland that is leading to some un-

usual, addictive, sexual behavior that is now causing problems in your marriage.

In general, however, most people do not have a solely organic problem. Our mind, our emotions, our beliefs, our social networks all have an impact on symptom development, presentation, and recovery. At the most basic level is the real impact of our environment on our body’s ability to heal. At a more complex and fascinating level, for example, is the documented impact of one’s faith in God on cancer remission.

While the idea that we can “will” our way to health is a simplistic view that may frequently be inaccurate, our “will” and our intangible assets do play significant roles in our health.

IN NEXT ISSUE:

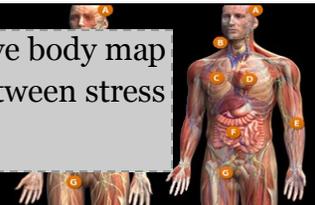


Just kidding. Not really all about Will Smith. But it is all about the male species in honor of Father’s Day

Editor:
Dr. Sheri Fluellen

Contributors:
Doug Blocksma
Mark Russell
Sheri Fluellen

American Psychological Association has a fantastic interactive body map that provides helpful information about the relationship between stress and your body. (1) *** [CLICK HERE](#) ***



Improving Diabetes Self Management

Education, in and of itself, does not necessarily lead to adequate self-management of diabetes. This is not a new concept to us, is it? We know that if we eat too much, we gain weight. We all “know” how to eat less, yet often we choose not to. Interestingly, research has demonstrated a correlation between distress and adherence to lifestyle changes– the more distress, the less adherence. And who doesn’t experience distress over having a life long disease? Encouraging news is that a specific therapy, called Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), has been demonstrated in real life use and in research to hold some valuable keys for diabetes management, and to a long list of other medical conditions, such as chronic pain. ACT teaches individuals to experience their thoughts and feelings rather than attempting to alter



or stop them. Individuals are asked to work toward their own specific goals and values they hold while experiencing their thoughts and feelings. Learning and implementing mindfulness strategies into every day life can have lots of “side effects”, such as improved self esteem, healthier relationships, and ironically, a stronger sense of control. (2)

Research: Dispositional optimism at beginning of ovarian cancer treatment results in lower cancer antigen levels after chemotherapy. (3)

Whippers, Crimpers, and Calm

BY: Doug Blocksma

Research: Physically abused children can have smaller amygdala and hippocampi than children without a history of stress. The amygdala, involved in emotion and decision making, has been implicated as an important region for regulating aggressive behavior. The hippocampus, also involved in emotional processing, is crucial for memory formation. Smaller hippocampi in abused children could present a hurdle for learning and making progress in school for children exposed to stress. (5)



Being active can do wonderful things for your health – mental, physical or otherwise – but there are some activities that are most notable for the things that they *won't* let you do. The practice of mindfulness is a bit like trying to catch a look at your own earlobes: the harder you try, the less you really succeed. The concept of being mindful, calmly striding through our day with peace of mind, a sense of purpose and emotional presence is usually a fairy tale of idealistic proportions. The reality of the day feels more like a whirring set of gears between our ears that will never let us sniff those zen-like goals.

Getting back to the theme at hand of exercise and mental health, a sport often regarded as 'niche' or 'extreme' is for some a direct gateway to the practice of mindfulness. The barrier to entry for the sport can be quite high, with the equipment, knowledge and height-aversion requirements, but the rewards are unlike any other pursuit. There is also some myths to dispel about the sport: possibly the first image in your mind after reading

the phrase "rock climbing" is a bearded man in goggles, clinging to an icy rock face with a rope tied about his waist. This image is fun for movies, but is not in reality very helpful.



Climbing is a sport that needs only a few pieces of equipment, and can be done indoors at a gym or outdoors. Special shoes, a harness, rope and helmet (and a partner!) are what are required to make your way up a face. What this ingredient list can create, though, is the kind of laser-focus and intention that suddenly stops those gears running awry in your head. The act of finding correct foot placement, keeping your breathing in check and engaging every muscle in your body suddenly leaves your upper cortex with no horsepower to stay anxious. All of your attempts to be calm and mindful at home pale in comparison to this moment, if only due to the fact that if you *don't* give your full attention to your climb, you'll be sure

to notice a short fall before your partner and harness remind you of *their* attention.

For some, even the description of what it means to be mindful is as foreign as describing colors to someone without the gift of sight. Sure, it sounds really nice, but it's basically impossible. Being placed on a rock with no other goal than 'up!' is almost like a short-cut to fully informed focus and presence. Instead of tricking your brain into calm with meditation, it tricks it with the threat of falling and the goal of upward movement. And once you've experienced that moment of calm and focus it can become addictive, easier and fun. Maybe you can take the muscle memory of finally reaching the top of a hard route with you to home or work, and remember that the lessons of breathing, patience and hard work can be used anywhere.

And in the very least, it'll make for a great set of photos to terrify your parents with. See you at the crag!

FACT:

Physical activity is a protective factor against early mortality. (4)

stuh-bil-i-tee

By Mark Russell



We are creatures of habit. There is a definite spectrum regarding how people value structure and organization, but even the most spontaneous person will have sources of stability in his or her life. Stability is one of those buzz words that gets tossed around, but what purpose does it serve? In the realm of crisis intervention, finding stability is one of the most important aspects of helping a person transition back into every day living. It grounds the mind in behavior that is achievable and consistent which helps to relegate the sense of powerlessness or loss of control that often goes hand in hand with a crisis. The same can be said of the body. Going to the gym once a month or trying a new diet every other week will likely have little impact on physical health. However, consistency in be-

havior can train the body to build muscle, burn fat, and increase metabolism. The individual workouts may need to change from time to time to prevent the body from developing a tolerance to specific exercises, but consistent exercise with a consistent diet is the best way to get your body to respond. Another source of stability that is often overlooked is sleep. Whether you are a night owl or an early bird, being consistent with the time that you sleep allows your body to rest more effectively. Healthy rest impacts the body's ability to recover and heal as well as increasing mental alertness. We live in an ever changing world trying to juggle the many different aspects of our lives. The question then, is where do you find stability in your life?

What will sweat tell you?

By: Sheri Fluellen

FACT: Physically active people have lower rates of anxiety and depression than sedentary people.

Have I ever in my life thought I was a natural runner? Nope. Not a chance. Running to the end of the driveway to get my mail made me winded. So why would I ever think I would want to classify myself as a runner? Because it is something I stumbled on that I find brings peace, healthful behaviors, and spiritual connections.

My first experience with running was about 10 years ago, when I was highly motivated to lose weight. I had two major periods where I focused on running, although not in a formal manner. Fast forward to spring of 2012. My husband and I had our last child, and I was now faced with the reality of being out of shape and unhealthy. I got wild hair (inspired by an acquaintance who recounted her story of her marathon-running career starting in her 30s) and decided to train for and run a marathon. Mind you, I had never run or walked for any sort of organized sport before (not even a 5k). I don't comprehend what prompted my desire, other than I like a challenge and I feel good when I get my body moving. I would also say that there had to have been a divine inspiration tied into this as well. The pe-



riod of training held some epiphanies for me. One of the most important things I have learned about running is that it can be a very peaceful activity (don't give me that look, it really can be). Granted, there are moments that my feet hurt, I am huffing and puffing up a hill, and I notice that something on my body is jiggling a little more than I'd like. But once I get into a steady rhythm, I can think about all the things going on in my life that I need to problem solve, that I need to work out, or that I need to pray about. These moments of just me, my thoughts, and my body are very calming and spiritual. I intentionally try to use my time running to pray to my creator. It is like our special time together when I don't get bothered by kids trying to get my attention, or my phone notifying me of a text. It seems as though the blood rushing to my brain gives me some mental clarity that I don't as easily have otherwise. Sometimes I have

“bright ideas” pop into my head and sometimes someone I know will flash into my mind's eye. Whatever it is, I go with it and trust that the thought is there for a reason. I will freely admit there have also been times when I have been running and crying at the same time. I will tell you, it is hard to be emotional and doing physical exertion at the same time, but I have come to accept that when my body moves, it is harder to “suck it in” (regarding emotions). The most vivid memory of crying was during the 23rd mile of the marathon, when the tears were flowing as I thought about how I want my children to see this accomplishment as a testimony into their own lives about setting out goals and persevering. So what is the real goal of this story? It is not about self promotion or a “look at me” attitude. Overall, I see my life as a tool to help others learn, for better or for worse because Lord knows I am not perfect. I hope that what I have shared can make an impact on somebody in some way.



“What fits your busy schedule better, exercising one hour a day or being dead 24 hours a day?”

FOOD JOURNALS— ANNOYING BUT USEFUL?

By: Sheri Fluellen

In the pursuit of controlled eating for health or weight loss, virtually every research study concludes the same thing: those that use of a food journal consistently lose more than those that don't record their food.

I have used food journals many times in my life while trying to lose weight. The problem is that journals can be time consuming, annoying, and people often give up on them. The key that I have found to using journals for

the long haul is via my smart phone. I have used a food journal app for a few years now and have found multiple aspects that have kept me “plugged in”. First and foremost, the apps have amazing databases of food so your recording becomes as simple as searching for “Haagen-Dazs Dulce de Leche “ and choosing if you ate 2 or 3 cups worth. Then, viola, the calories are calculated for you. Other benefits: you always have your phone with you so you always have

the ability to add to your journal, you can share your account with friends for accountability, keep track of your weight loss, and account for calories lost through exercise in your daily caloric intake. It can be even easier to add food by just scanning the barcodes of a grocery item and the nutrition information is automatically added to your day's food. However, the key to real weight loss is just doing it. (6)



Google play



OUR TEAM

Dr. Sheri Fluellen, PhD
Licensed Psychologist
Sheri@mindspatherapy.com

Ch. Jim Patterson, MA, MDiv
Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist
Jim@mindspatherapy.com

Linda Malm, MS
Licensed Professional Counselor
Linda@mindspatherapy.com

Doug Blocksma, MA
Provisional Professional Counselor
Doug@mindspatherapy.com

516 & 518 E 18th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82001
Phone: 307-509-0772
Fax: 307-426-4133
E-mail: info@mindspatherapy.com

Lindsay Simineo, MA
Provisional Professional Counselor
Lindsay@mindspatherapy.com

Mark Russell, MA
Provisional Professional Counselor
Mark@mindspatherapy.com

Tonia Carter
Billing Manager
Tonia@mindspatherapy.com

Florence Engel
Office Administrator (outgoing)
Flo@mindspatherapy.com

Kristen Pelle
Office Administrator (incoming)
Kristen@mindspatherapy.com

MONTANA

This month, we are excited to expand our services and reach into Helena, Montana. Jim is moving to Helena and taking Mind Spa with him. We are thrilled to see how we are able to serve this new community and provide some much needed mental health services.

References

- (1) <http://www.apa.org/flash/helpcenter/anatomy/index.aspx>
- (2) Gregg, J.A., et al. (2007). Improving Diabetes Self-Management Through Acceptance, Mindfulness, and Values: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 75 (2), 336-343.
- (3) De Moor, et al. (2006). Optimism, Distress, Health-Related Quality of Life, and Change in Cancer Antigen 125 Among Patients With Ovarian Cancer Undergoing Chemotherapy. *Psychosomatic Medicine* 68, 555-562.
- (4) <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1957766>
- (5) Woon & Hedges (2008). Hippocampal and amygdala volumes in children and adults with childhood maltreatment-related posttraumatic stress disorder: a meta-analysis. *Hippocampus* 18(8), 729-736.
- (6) iPhone App: MyFitnessPal

S*M*A*R*T*

By: Sheri Fluellen

When planning on making any sort of changes in your life, here is a great acronym to keep in mind.

S*M*A*R*T*

S: specific. Keep your goals and plans very specific, not general or ambiguous. Who, what, when, where, why. You'll never know if you achieve them if you haven't spelled it out.

M: measureable. Figure out how to measure your goals, how to track your progress. You'll never know if you achieve them if you have no way of measuring progress and

your end point.

A: attainable. Keep your goals within reach. Your motivation for change will surely wane if you set goals that are too lofty. You can always set new goals once your originals ones are met.

R: relevant. Ensure that your plan is really one that is consistent with your values and is going to achieve what you ultimately want.

T: time-bound. Set a time frame on your goals. This will help you stay motivated in your perseverance, and help ward off discouragement.