

Brain Care is Self Care

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Self Care

- Exercise
- Sleep
- Touch
- Nature
- Stress reduction
- Emotional Health
- Healthy relationships
- Meaningful work

Brain Care

- Exercise – grow new brain cells
- Sleep – housekeeping; consolidate learning
- Touch – safety and trust; equilibrium
- Nature – reverie, insights
- Stress reduction – reduce damage to brain
- Emotional Health – antidote negativity bias; connect to resources
- Healthy relationships – develop inner secure base
- Meaningful work – thriving and well-being

Human Brain: Evolutionary Masterpiece

- 100 billion neurons
 - Each neuron contains the entire human genome
 - Neurons “fire” hundreds of times per second
 - Neurons connect to 5,000-7,000 other neurons
- Trillions of synaptic connections
- As many connections in single cubic centimeter of brain tissue as stars in Milky Way galaxy

Brain Care

- Recover from impact of stress and trauma
- Rewire automatic habits
- Resilience and well-being

Conditioning

- Experience causes neurons to fire
- Repeated experiences, repeated neural firings
- Neurons that fire together wire together
- Strengthen synaptic connections
- Connections stabilize into neural pathways

- Conditioning is neutral, wires positive and negative

New Conditioning

- Choose new experiences
 - Gratitude practice, listening skills, focusing attention, self-compassion, self-acceptance
- Create new learning, new memory
- Encode new wiring
- Install new pattern of response

Cues to Practice - ANTS to PATS

- Identify habitual negative pattern of response
- Identify new, positive response to counter/replace
- Identify cue word or phrase to name negative and positive
 - Criticism - Compassion
- Use cue to break automaticity and change the channel
- Repeat the practice as many times as necessary

Re-conditioning

- Memory de-consolidation – re-consolidation
- “Light up” neural networks
- Juxtapose old negative with new positive
- Neurons fall apart, rewire
- New rewires old

Re-conditioning

- Resource with memory of someone's compassion toward you
- Evoke compassion for your self
- Evoke memory of someone being critical of you (or inner critic)
- Hold awareness of criticizing moment and compassionate moment in dual awareness
- Drop the criticizing moment; rest in the compassionate moment

De-Conditioning

- Imagination
- Guided visualizations
- Guided meditations
- Reverie, daydreams
- Brain “plays,” makes own associations and links, connect dots in new ways
- Reflect on new insights

Wiser Self

- Imagine being in your safe place
- Imagine meeting your Wiser Self who embodies all of your best qualities and strengths
- Ask your Wiser Self
 - How did you come to be wise, happy, content?
 - What did you have to overcome?
- Listen to words of advice for your journey
- Receive object to remember Wiser Self by

Intelligences

- Somatic - body-based, rewire trauma
- Emotional - from survival responses to thriving
- Relational - heal heartache, access havens and resources, navigate peopled world
- Reflective – conscious awareness; catch the moment, make a choice

Calm through the Body

- Hand on the Heart
- Body Scan
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Calm – and empowerment – through body

Calm through Movement

- Body inhabits posture of difficult emotion (40 seconds)
- Body moves into opposite posture (40 seconds)
- Body returns to first posture (20 seconds)
- Body returns to second posture (20 seconds)
- Body finds posture in the middle (30 seconds)
- Reflect on experience
- “Power posing” – Amy Cuddy TED talk

Compassion – Self-Compassion

- Compassion: care and concern in the face of other people's pain and suffering
- Self-Compassion: care and concern for one's own pain and suffering
- Mindful Self-Compassion:
 - Awareness of experience of suffering
 - Kindness toward self as experiencer of suffering
 - Felt sense of common humanity; all human beings suffer

One for Me; One for You

- Breathing in, “nourishing, nourishing”
- Breathing out, “soothing, soothing”
- In imagination, “nourishing for me, nourishing for you, soothing for me, soothing for you”
- “One for me, one for you”
- Practice breathing “one for me, one for you” when in conversation with someone

Emotions

- Signals to take action
- Adaptive action tendencies
 - Anger – protest injustice, betrayal
 - Sadness – pull in comfort
 - Fear – move away from danger, toxicity
 - Guilt – healthy remorse, make amends
 - Joy – expand, connect with others

Left shift

- Positive emotions cause more neural firing in left hemisphere of brain
- Left hemisphere more oriented to approach stance toward experience, openness to learning
- Openness to learning, flexibility, options = resilience

Gratitude

- 2-minute free write
- Gratitude journal
- Gratitude buddy
- Carry love and appreciation in your wallet

Take in the Good

- Notice: in the moment or in memory
- Locate felt sense in the body
- Absorb: savor 10-20-30 seconds,

Positivity Portfolio

- Ask 10 friends to send cards or e-mails expressing appreciation of you
- Assemble phrases on piece of paper
- Tape to bathroom mirror or computer monitor, carry in wallet or purse
- Read phrases 3 times a day for 30 days
- Savor and appreciate

Relational Intelligence

- Asking for and receiving help
- Compassionate listening
- Setting limits and boundaries
- Negotiating change
- Resolving conflicts
- Repairing ruptures
- Forgiveness

Wished for Outcome

- Evoke memory of what did happen
- Imagine new behaviors, new players, new resolution
- Hold new outcome in awareness, strengthening and refreshing
- Notice shift in perspective of experience, of self

Mindfulness

- Pause, become present
- Notice and name
- Step back, dis-entangle, reflect
- Catch the moment; make a choice
- Shift perspectives; shift states
- Discern options
- Choose wisely – let go of unwholesome, cultivate wholesome

Mindfulness

Catch the moment; make a choice

- Janet Friedman

Every moment has a choice;

Every choice has an impact.

- Julia Butterfly Hill

Multi-tasking

- Focused attention – brain works well
- Spacious awareness – brain works well
- Multi-tasking
 - Switching attention requires metabolic energy
 - Switching fatigues brain
 - Brain becomes tired, confused, foggy

Movement - Exercise

- Oxygen – brain is 2% of body weight, uses 20% of body's oxygen
- Endorphins – feel good hormones, brighten the mind
- Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF) - grow new brain cells, will migrate to where needed

Touch

- Hand on heart, hand on cheek
- Head rubs, foot rubs
- Massage back of neck
- Hold thumb as “inner child”
- Hugs – 20 second full bodied

Sleep

- Housekeeping
- Reset nervous system
- Consolidate learning

- Take mental breaks

Take Mental Breaks

- Focus on something else (positive is good)
- Talk to someone else (resonant is good)
- Move-walk somewhere else (nature is good)
- Every 90 minutes; avoid adrenal fatigue

Nutrition

- Eat more
 - Protein
 - Vegetables
 - Supplements
- Eat less
 - Caffeine
 - Sugar
 - Allergens

Laughter


- Reduces cortisol; lowers blood pressure
- Increases oxygen and blood flow; reduces risk of heart disease and stroke
- Triggers catecholamines; brightens the mind
- Promotes productivity, creativity, problem-solving
- Reduces mistakes; promotes efficiency

Learn Something New

- Speak a foreign language
- Play a musical instrument
- Juggle
- Play chess
- Crossword puzzles when you don't know the words

Hanging Out with Healthy Brains

- Brain is social organ; matures and learns best in interactions with other brains
- Social engagement regulates nervous system
- Resonant interactions prime the brain's neuroplasticity; promotes learning and growth



There is a natural and inviolable tendency in things to bloom into whatever they truly are in the core of their being.

All we have to do is align ourselves with what wants to happen naturally and put in the effort that is our part in helping it happen.

- Dave Richo

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