

Healthy Mind Platter
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This workshop is based on the work of David Rock and Dan Siegel MD and will explore the seven daily essential activities that maintain strong brain health. Dan Siegel is a neuro psycho biologist and Director of UCLA Mindfulness Research Center and the Mindsight Institute.

A cancer diagnosis and treatment is a huge stressor on our brain's functioning. The stresses on the mind and body from multiple surgeries, the effects of chemotherapy, and changes in life style all effect our relationships with our selves and others. For family and friends there are stressors related to caregiving. While caregiving offers the opportunity to care for another, it often reduces the time we need to care our own health.

This workshop explores ways to engage all of our brain and to improve a sense of well being. In a nutshell when we attend to the main areas of brain functioning, we increase our immune system, increase our resiliency to face challenges, and experience more humor and joy. Under stress we activate fewer regions of our brain and can get stuck in unhealthy mind patterns.

So let's dig in and explore!

The Healthy Mind Platter focuses on seven essential mental activities for optimum mental health. These seven activities, according to Dr Siegel, make up a set of mental nutrients that our brain and relationships need in order to function at it's best. By engaging everyday in these servings we strengthens our brain's ability to connect with world around us.

In this workshop we will explore these nutrients and how we can integrate them into our current situation. We will complete a packet to take home to support applying these activities daily. The workshop is open to all.

FOCUS TIME

When we take on tasks that require a single focus we activate the deep connections in the brain. It is any task that requires close attention. Sometimes we can turn a routine task into a focused task. It is a task without any editorial about good or bad. No shoulda or oughts. Simple noticing the task at hand.

Ideas?

Turn to person next to you and brainstorm, ie no editing good or bad, some ways to help get you both get going to do the activity. (5min) and now what might interfere.(5 min).

Notes:

Focus Time Activities.

Roadblocks.

Solutions

Discussion

PLAY TIME

When we make space to be playful and creative. This creates new healthy connections in our brains.

Ideas?

Again turn to someone near you and discuss some things to do that are meaningful and creative.(5 minutes) Then discuss between you the possible blocks to it. What are the things we say to ourselves that keep us from engaging in a creative and playful activity.

Notes:

Play. Time Activities.

Roadblocks.

Solutions

Discussion of Play Time.

Connecting Time

With the simple activity of connecting with others and taking the time to appreciate our connection to the natural world we activate our brains relational circuitry. We we care about others it releases oxytocin, the feel good experience.

Ideas?

Turn toward someone, if convenient , that you have not yet spoken with. Repeat the process of brainstorming ways of connecting. Best when face to face, but not necessary. Then we will switch in 5minutes to discussing the thoughts and realities that might hamper connection.

Notes:

Connecting Time Activities.	Roadblocks.	Solutions
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Discussion of connecting time.

PHYSICAL TIME

When we move our bodies we strengthen the brain in many ways. Sometimes we need to be pretty creative, given physical limitations, but we can do it.

Ideas?

Now it's time again to look at what activities might be possible to you and the person next to you. What road block may need to gone around.

Notes:

Physical Time. Activities.

Roadblocks.

Solutions

Discussion of Physical Time

TIME IN

This is self reflection time. Not just being aware of what our current experiences are, but also focusing on sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts. This process helps integrate the brain. Mindfulness breathing exercises, prayer, contemplation are some avenues for turning inward.

Ideas:

Turn toward someone and consider different ways to to pause and turn awareness inward.

Notes:

Time in Activities.	Roadblocks.	Solutions
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Discussion of Time In

DOWN TIME

When we are not focused, a space without a specific goal, and we let our minds wander and relax we help the brain recharge and integrate the myriad of experiences that we encounter each day. Each minute really. I call these night gown days. Just no real agenda just flow to what ever catches our fancy. No guilt! It is a super important activity.

Ideas

Discuss with a neighbor experiences that have worked to allow yourself down time and the obstacles to simple enjoyment of the downtime.

Notes:

Down Time Activities.

Roadblocks.

Solutions

Discussion of Down Time

SLEEP TIME

Giving our brains a rest is a good idea. Sleep provides an opportunity for the brain to consolidate learning and recover from the events of the day.

Ideas?

Discuss with a partner what helps transition to sleep and what are the interferences. Share strategies to enhance sleep.

Notes:

Sleep Time Activities.

Roadblocks.

Solutions

Discuss Sleep Time

There is no specific recommendations for the amount of time to devote to each of these to support a healthy mind. It is meant to be a tool to stop and notice if our lives are balanced in a way that supports healthy brain function. It is like a balanced diet. Some days we may not get our full nourishment! If we pause we will notice we feel out of balance. That's the time to consider what we have not enjoyed tasting from our healthy mind plan