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## Your Mental Health By Sherry DeGrazia

Mental Health is more than thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Our bodies will react to the way we think, feel and act. When we are stressed, anxious or upset, our bodies may react in; headaches, backaches, stomachs, poor sleep or high blood pressure. If your emotions are turning into physical symptoms you may not be expressing your thoughts and feelings in an appropriate way. It is ok to let your spouse, partner, parent and Dr. know when something is upsetting you. However, your loved ones may not always be able to help or understand your feelings appropriately. At these times, it is ok to ask for professional help from a therapist or counselor for support and guidance to help navigate your emotional health.

Poor emotional health can weaken our body's immune system. This will make us more susceptible to colds, flu and other infections during emotional times. During times when we feel stressed, upset or anxious we may not eat as well, take prescribed medication as directed or exercise. These are the time you may lean towards alcohol, tobacco or drug abuse. These unhealthy coping skills will increase physical symptoms such as' chest pains, change in sleep/appetite, weight gain/loss, sexual problems and trouble sleeping. These are only a few of the physical symptoms that may result in poor emotional health.

So next time you are tired, have a headache, stomach, backache or eye strain do not reach for an aspirin, energy drink, muscle relaxer or a cigarette, which may only help for the moment. If you want long lasting relief contact a professional therapist or counselor. 45-60min per week is worth years of emotional/physical health.

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