

Promoting Emotional Wellness

What Affects our Emotions?

- Our emotional wellbeing is generally determined by a combination of genetics, situations, thoughts, and actions.
- Depending on your genetics, your body might not produce enough of the neurotransmitters needed to feel good. If you think that's the case for you, talk to your MD about medications that can help your body create more of those much-needed chemicals.
- Fortunately, research shows genes are less important than other factors when it comes to emotional wellbeing. Your happiness is more closely linked to your efforts to maintain positive thought processes and behavioral patterns.
- Situational factors also affect how we feel. That means it's especially important that you monitor your thoughts and actions when times are tough.

Why Behavior Matters

- Your mind constantly monitors your actions and creates an emotional states to match them. If you observe yourself engaging in depressive behaviors, for example, you'll feel more depressed.
- If you're physically active, socially engaged, and productive at work, it's harder for your subconscious to create feelings of depression.
- Healthy behaviors like planning and assertiveness also help us prevent and resolve problems before they turn into big deals. Fewer problems means less stress, and that means happier emotions.
- If you find yourself in a depressed or anxious state, part of your solution can be to intentionally engage in a brief, enjoyable activity. That brief break could be enough to snap you out of a downward emotional spiral.

Why Thoughts Matter

- Our emotions often arise from the way we interpret our bodily sensations.
- If you feel butterflies in your stomach right before singing karaoke, for example, you could interpret it as excitement or nervousness. How you choose to view your bodily sensations affects your feelings.
- Therefore, it's important to monitor your *self-talk*, which is the running mental dialogue in your head. Your self-statements can be upsetting or soothing.
- By replacing negative self-talk with positive statements, you can improve the way you feel.

Coping During Stressful Times

- Avoid thinking of a problem as your fault, something that affects every part of your life, and something that will never go away. Those ideas are distortions of reality, and they'll make coping more difficult.
- Remember that stressful times are usually the result of circumstances beyond your control, they usually affect only certain aspects of your life, and they're almost always temporary.
- Tackle your troubles proactively, with a pre-planned course of action. Simply reacting in the moment usually leads to less successful outcomes.

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