



Treating the Whole Person: HealthPartners

HealthPartners is expanding its mission to include emotional health and life satisfaction.

HEALTHY THINKING

Healthy living goes beyond just the physical. That's why Minnesota-based HealthPartners expanded its mission to include emotional health and life satisfaction. Through unique programs and a focus on healthy thinking, HealthPartners is leading the way on wellbeing.

“Stress happens, and it happens to everyone. If workers do not have emotional resilience skills and habits to help support them when they're stressed, their productivity declines. Their precision and accuracy, speed and quality of work, problem solving and interpersonal communications all suffer.”

-Nico Pronk, PhD, President of HealthPartners Institute and Chief Science Officer for HealthPartners

WARDING OFF STRESS

Nearly half of all Americans have experienced at least one major stressor, according to a poll by NPR, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Harvard School of Public Health. Emotional resilience can help reduce stress by improving the ability to bounce back after a difficult event. But it takes work and requires the same dedication as physical fitness. People can build emotional resilience through a combination

of awareness, skills and practice. To combat stress and help people manage daily challenges, ACHP member HealthPartners offers emotional resilience programs to members, patients and employees.

Instructors use cognitive behavior therapy to help participants identify negative patterns of thinking and behaving and examine how these patterns affect feelings. Exercises geared toward changing thoughts and behaviors bring about more positive emotions and strengthen emotional resilience.

“You can't just work out once; the same is true with your mind,” said Karen Lloyd, PhD, LP, HealthPartners Senior Director of Behavioral Health and Resilience.

Group coaching also plays a role - reinforcing information, creating a sense of support and empowering individuals in the emotional resilience programs. Several programs include group coaching sessions with 25 to 50 people that are led by a licensed therapist.

Group coaching participants reported that their wellbeing was improved for a year or more after completing one of the programs. More than 90 percent of people surveyed said the courses helped them replace negative self-talk with factual thoughts. For example, someone might be anxious about losing his or her job. Instead of thinking “I will be unemployed and lose everything” he or she could focus on facts such as “I can work at a temporary job while I look for another job” or “I have had challenges before and I will get through this too.” The results were part of a 2016 case study in the American College of Sports Medicine's Health & Fitness Journal.

ONLINE ACCESS

HealthPartners was among the first in the U.S. to offer an online program to treat mild and moderate stress, depression and anxiety. Over eight weeks, Beating the Blues helps participants build skills that lead to healthier thinking.

"As many as eight in 10 people with symptoms of clinical depression are not receiving any treatment. Beating the Blues can increase access to treatment that we know works," said Lloyd.

Since it began, more than 5,000 people have participated in the online course. In a survey, 94 percent of people said the course was helpful in their personal life and 91 percent said it was helpful in their work life. Building Emotional Resilience™ is another online tool for members and patients, and it's free! Three self-guided sessions take 15 to 20 minutes each to complete. Healthy Thinking builds skills for reducing stress and boosting mood, Healthy Communication focuses on body language and listening skills and Finding Meaning and Purpose has tips on bringing talent and passion to work. More than 90 percent of participants reported less stress and better listening skills after completing the sessions.

MEASURING WELLBEING

HealthPartners stays up to date on the health of its members and employees, measuring outcomes and tracking progress. The Summary Measures of Health and Wellbeing tool, currently in development, assesses members' health, lifestyle choices and life satisfaction, identifying areas where member wellbeing can be improved and strategies to do so.

In the first year of assessment, HealthPartners learned:

- **Current health:** Bone, joint and muscle problems; anxiety and depression; and headaches are among the leading illnesses among its members.
- **Sustainability of health:** HealthPartners members practice about four or five out of seven

lifestyle components that keep them in the best health (tobacco free, moderate or no alcohol use, eating five fruits and vegetables on most days, enough physical activity and sleep, healthy thinking and preventive care).

– **Life satisfaction:** More than 40 percent of members are very satisfied with their lives, while 13 percent report very little life satisfaction.

Details of the summary measure are published by the National Academy of Medicine and by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the journal Preventing Chronic Disease. 🍊