


ARTHRITIS
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Emotional Impact of Living with Rheumatoid Arthritis

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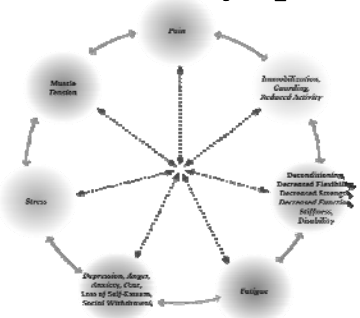
Goals





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- Pain/Pain Cycle and Pain Management
- Grief
- De-Stress: Relax the Body
- De-Stress: Calm the Mind
- Power of Positivity: Research from Positive Psychology
- Committing to change


Chronic Illness Symptom Cycle





	 <h3>Pain Management Strategies</h3>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop pain before it starts • Use pain relief strategies • Manage pain safely with medicine • Work with your doctor • Meditation/Guided Imagery/Prayer • Focus on your wellness- not your pain.

	 <h3>Grieving Process</h3>
	<p>When the diagnosis of RA is given, or as the disease rears its ugly head, we experience loss over and over.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Denial ■ Anger ■ Bargaining ■ Depression ■ Acceptance

	
	<p>It's okay to talk to your physician about your depression.</p> <p>It's okay to admit that you need help</p>

	 <p>Other Emotions associated with RA</p>
	<p>“But you look so good!” Dealing with uneducated/unsympathetic people can be <i>frustrating</i>.</p> <p>Not knowing what the future will bring can cause <i>anxiety and fear</i>.</p>

	 <p>Start where you are</p>
	<p>FIRST STEP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We admit we are powerless over chronic illness-our lives have become more challenging as a result ■ TO SURRENDER DOES NOT MEAN WE QUIT HOWEVER..... <p>In our surrender to powerlessness, we find energy that can lead us to emotional health</p>

	 <p>Emotional Response</p>
	<p>In our confusion, fear and anger, we may react in ways that limit us and leave us living diminished lives, but.....</p> <p>WE CAN CHANGE THIS</p>

Body-Mind-Spirit: Evidence-based Strategies

De-stress the Body:

- Decreased stress and increased level of resilience and health can be achieved by better understanding the effects of stress on your body.
- Using and practicing breathing and relaxation techniques can help you relax your body and reduce your response to stress.

Easy, Effective Techniques

- Deep Breathing
belly breathing, counting breaths
- Relaxation techniques:
progressive relaxation, visualization

Changing Your Mind

“Change your thoughts, and you will change your world.” Norman Vincent Peale

“I find that we often look too far ahead to find our happiness. We try to be wealthy and famous instead of trying to be loving or fascinated.” B. Fredrickson

“You will not be punished for your anger, you will be punished by your anger.” Buddha

Techniques to Change your Mind

- Thought stopping
- Limit time for distress
- Shift to problem solving mode
- Cultivate positive mind states
- Think in percentages
- Switch from “have to’s” to “get to’s”

Techniques to Change Your Mind

- Minimize “shouldy” thinking
- Avoid Catastrophizing
- Step away from “all or none” thinking
- Avoid social comparisons

The Power of Positivity: Evidence-based Effective Techniques

- Positivity: More than just positive or magical thinking
- Represents the pleasant end of feelings
- Goal is not to end negativity but to seed your life with more positivity
- Positive Outcomes: increase happiness and psychological growth, increase resilience, strengthen immune function.

Tools for a Healthy Lifestyle

- Be open
- Create high quality connections
- Cultivate Kindness
- Develop Distractions
- Find nearby Nature
- Dispute negative thinking
- Learn your strengths

More Positivity Tools

- Ritualize gratitude
- Meditate on Loving kindness
- Visualize your positive future
- Savor Positivity

Which tools can you incorporate in your life?

Summary

- Life can be painful; suffering is optional
- Do your homework.
- Commit to a practice(s) that brings more happiness to your life.
- When we feel down we tend to “forget” all our self-help techniques. Find a way to remind yourself that you have options.
- Your happiness is related to HOW You Think and What You Do

Resources

- Authentichappiness.org
- **Feeling Good:** David Burns, MD
- **The How of Happiness:** S. Lyubomirsky, PhD
- **Positivity:** Barbara Fredrickson, PhD
- **Taming Your Gremlin;** Rick Carson
