

Wellness Resources

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1. SAMHSA's 8 dimensions of wellness

<https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma16-4958.pdf>

This is a 22 page “step-by-step guide to wellness” which walks the reader through 8 aspects of wellness (emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, environmental, financial, occupational, and social). It includes space for an individual plan for wellness in each of the 8 domains.

2. COVID Coach

This is a free smartphone app with numerous stress management tools. It was developed by the VA and is available for iPhone and Android users in the app store.

3. Insomnia Coach

A smartphone app, designed by the VA but offered to the public, with many helpful ways to treat insomnia. Has helpful tools for stress management even if you aren't experiencing insomnia.

4. Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital

<https://www.bensonhenryinstitute.org/>

Founded by Harvard Cardiologist Herbert Benson, MD, this site gives information on stress management services offered at BHI, including their “Stress Management and Resiliency Training”, or SMART, program. This is an 8-week group education curriculum which teaches participants many different stress management approaches, including meditation, mindfulness, cognitive therapy techniques, exercise, adequate sleep, gratitude, humor, and social connectedness. SMART groups have been used in Omaha at UNO, UNL, UNMC and Nebraska Medicine with positive results on overall wellbeing.

The site also has links to important research studies done by BHI on improving physical and emotional health via stress management programs.

5. “The Relaxation Revolution” book by Herbert Benson, MD (2010)

This follows up his landmark book, “The Relaxation Response,” from 1975 in which he details the scientific data on meditation's health-promoting effects on the human body, including the brain. He gives practical applications of the 10-minute per day meditation technique taught at BHI.

6. Relaxation Response website

<http://www.relaxationresponse.org/steps/>

This site has specific instructions, developed by Dr. Benson, on how to elicit the “Relaxation Response.”

7. UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center (MARC)

<https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/>

Numerous helpful resources on this website, including audio and written transcripts of meditations, and info about their own free smartphone app.

8. “How Meditation Can Reshape Our Brains: Sara Lazar at TEDx Cambridge”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8rRzTtP7Tc>

8 ½ minute TED talk by neuroscientist Sara Lazar, on the neuroscience of how meditation can literally reshape brain structure and function. Sara works at Harvard and collaborates with the team at BHI.

9. “Gratitude Works!: A 21-day program for creating emotional prosperity” by Robert A. Emmons

This short book is one of many by Dr. Emmons, a psychologist at the University of California-Davis. He has studied the benefits of the practice of gratitude (e.g., keeping a gratitude journal) on the psyche as well as the brain itself. It gives the reader a taste of the science, but is primarily a really practical guide for implementing gratitude into our busy lives.

10. “Spark: The revolutionary new science of exercise and the brain” by John Ratey, MD

This book by psychiatrist John Ratey gives the reader information on the amazing physiological effects of physical exercise on brain health, including the role of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). BDNF is sometimes called the Miracle-Gro for neurons. Dr. Ratey gives scientific evidence of exercise’s effects on mood, anxiety, attention, and “executive function.”

11. “The Upward Spiral: Using neuroscience to reverse the course of depression, one small change at a time” by Alex Korb, PhD (also has accompanying workbook)

This book, written by a neuroscientist who experienced his own struggles with depression and anxiety, goes into practical strategies, backed up by scientific studies, on making small changes to our daily habits which can lead to big changes in the way we feel.

12. “Blue Zones”

<https://www.bluezones.com/>

Originally a book by National Geographic writer Dan Buettner on 5 cities which have the greatest longevity, the project has now evolved into using principles learned from those 5 communities to help

individuals, teams, workplaces, and even entire communities to improve their health by enhancing social connections, moving more, eating mindfully, and finding meaning and purpose in life.