



Helpful Reminders for Your Therapy Experience

One of the messages I like to give early on is the difference between purely biomedical interventions and integrative (holistic) and mind-body interventions. Hearing this now can reduce frustration and improve the potential for healing and transformation...

Mind-body techniques produce proven, slow, but lasting change.

Remember the saying “slow and steady wins the race”? Today the average person is impatient for change. We want relief, and we want it now! The media emphasizes that there is a rapid solution to every problem. Often, we prefer passive, easy fixes over active solutions and effort.

As an integrative/mind-body oriented therapist, I often hear, “This isn’t working for me, I tried it 3 times and didn’t notice much”. Unlike medications, which often have impact on day 1 (part of which is from our belief in them → the strong conditioned positive response rooted in our expectation for benefit), mind-body techniques are skills that require practice and repetition before acquiring sustained or “visible” effectiveness. For longer term impact, be sure to include sustainable active practices in your care approach, that benefit your well-being over time...

Some helpful guideposts as you embark on this journey:

- Patience is a virtue.
- Be gentle and kind with yourself as you go along. Cultivating self-compassion is required.
- Remember you are not alone. Pain/distress/illness comes to all of us in different forms. It is not *if*, but when. Developing an improved self-care program will serve you well your entire life.
- Balance the challenges by finding what is right with your body/mind/experience – we are hardwired to detect and focus on negativity and have to challenge that tendency.
- What we resist, tends to persist. If possible, “soften in” to your challenges. This supports *acceptance as empowerment*.
- It is possible to build “comfort with discomfort” by using these practices. This idea promotes the possibility of greater well-being, despite the presence of the challenge as part of our overall life experience.
- Remember that usually, there is not going to be a *purely* “physical fix”. Think “both/and” when it comes to “mind/body”.
- Create healing environments and conditions to support the impact of your new tools and practices. The conditions in which we live and grow are vital to our health. Some aspects of our environment are not necessarily easy to remedy or change, but if such change is possible, take steps in this direction...
- Focus on cultivating healthy, supportive relationships, which are part of our “environment”.
- Reach out and give to others. Research supports that giving to others in a healthy way is a condition that significantly can mediate stress and improve well-being, promoting your own healing. There’s the opposite too – giving too much or without boundaries that compromises your own well-being. Find a balance...
- See if you are “hooked” by certain thoughts and beliefs. Examine the “storylines” that you are hearing about your experience. If our behavior is strongly linked to thoughts, we must “unhook”. It is possible to look *at* thoughts rather than *through* them.
- Regularly name/label and express your emotions and feelings.
- Discover what needs you have and what support(s) would be helpful in getting them met. We must actively contribute to getting our needs met – internally (inner work), and externally (reach out! to those in a position to help you get your needs met).