

What Is Behavioral Medicine And How Can it Help My Medical Problems?

Discover: The connection between brain & body. How changing the brain, changes the body. How changing the body, changes the brain

Explore: Ways to use these discoveries in your life. Stress modification, sleep hygiene, relaxation, recovery, etc.

Heal: Concrete ways to practice skills and track your progress: Empower YOU to be in control in the management of illness and pain.

Illness affects our bodies and our emotions. When we don't feel well...we don't feel well! Sometimes not feeling well can make us angry (Why me? Why can't anyone make it go away?) -or depressed - that we can't do what we want to do, -or anxious that the illness will get worse, -or helpless to do anything about it, -or hopeless that nothing will ever change.

And being sick is stressful and stress causes more problems. All of this just makes everything worse, which in turn... makes everything worse! Stress can suppress our immune system. This makes us more vulnerable to more illness.

What's interesting is that the same brain chemicals responsible for depression and anxiety are also responsible for our perception of pain. Our pain makes our mood worse and our mood makes our pain worse.

The "enteric nervous system", located in the gut, actually plays a key role in certain diseases in our bodies and in our overall emotional health.

Sometimes the answer to the illness does not lie *only* in a medication or surgery. Lots of studies have shown that treatments including: education, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), meditation and relaxation training can bolster the immune system, help our mood, and help manage pain better.

You can learn the ways in which stress and illness interact in your life. You can explore healthier coping strategies. You can learn skills to manage illness and minimize the impact of illness- help you find ways to get the most out of your life despite your illness. You can learn ways to remain as independent as possible. You can learn new ways to help your body heal by teaching relaxation techniques which can help with pain, stress and your immune system helping to fight disease.

Patient quote: "Helped to put my disease into perspective both mentally and physically, and empowered me with the tools to manage my condition more effectively."