Approaches to Holistic Wellness

Meditation and Mental Health by David Snebold

Meditation has been found to have benefits for many different aspects of mental health. Mindful meditation is a semi-common practice that is focused on concentrating on neither the past nor the future but on the present. It usually involves sitting in a very comfortable position and paying attention to your breathing.

It is unfortunate that meditation has not found its way into mainstream health practices, due in part to the fact that people who would volunteer to be in a meditation study are probably already sold on the benefits of meditation. “But when researchers from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD sifted through nearly 19,000 meditation studies, they found 47 trials that addressed those issues and met their criteria for well-designed studies. Their findings, published in JAMA Internal Medicine, suggest that mindful meditation can help ease psychological stresses like anxiety, depression, and pain.” (Corliss)

It is worth mentioning that, along with dealing with such issues as anxiety, depression, and pain, meditation can help with regulating negative emotions such as anger. “A small study published in February 2016 in the journal Consciousness and Cognition suggested that meditation may help people cope with anger. . . . Furthermore, improvements were seen with just one session of meditation. For the study, researchers examined 15 people who were new to meditation and 12 who were experienced practitioners. The participants were asked to relive experiences that made them angry. Those who had never practiced meditation before experienced an increase in heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing rate, while those with experience in the practice did not have much of a physical reaction to the exercise. As a second part of the experiment, those who had never meditated before did so for 20 minutes. When asked to relive the anger-inducing episode once more, they had much less of a physical response.” (Welch) This is very encouraging news about the positive power of meditation in dealing with negative emotions.

Anxiety and stress are another area that meditation can affect in a positive manner. “A study published in April 2018 in the journal Psychiatry Research found that patients with generalized anxiety disorder who took a course in mindfulness-based stress reduction, where they learned several different strategies to manage stress, had lower stress-related hormonal and inflammatory levels than people who did not practice mindfulness.” (Welch)
Bibliography
