

Body, Mind & Spirit all work together.

Self-Care & Stress

■ by Kim T. Pronoitis, MA, LCPC

At one time or another, everyone experiences the pressures and stress of life. Looking at it from a mental health perspective, it is not the stress of life, but how one handles it.



Body, Mind, and Spirit

Our body, mind, and spirit all work together. When we struggle in one of these areas, we are destined to struggle in another. As it states in Romans 12:4, we each have one body with many members, but the members do not all have the same function.

As Paul states, the members do not all have the same function. Many times when someone is experiencing a stressful period we tend to forget about taking care of ourselves. Many of us do not focus on a healthy outlet for our stressors and our self-care often takes a backseat to our well-being. Worry does not serve a healthy purpose and many people do not have a healthy outlet. Internalizing our negative feelings and/or thoughts along with the pressures and burden of stress can create many health issues. When things become hectic or difficult, time always seems to be a factor. However, this is when we need to take care of ourselves the most. It is during these difficult times that our resistance runs low and we leave ourselves open to physical as well as mental struggles. Practicing self-care can have a positive influence on our outlook and helps us to feel better about ourselves; therefore, being able to function better.

6 Self-Care Tips for Body, Mind, and Spirit

- **Eat properly and get plenty of sleep.** Two basic, essential things we can do for our health and physical body.
- **Physical exercise.** For many years, I worked with women through ministry and physical exercise. This has allowed them to function better in all aspects of their lives.
 - ◇ Exercise wards off many ailments as well as negative thoughts. Exercise affects our (PMA) positive mental attitude.

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- ◇ Exercising as little as three times a week for twenty minutes is beneficial. Exercise and the brain work together on many levels, aerobic exercise increases our heart rate which in turn pumps more oxygen to the brain and promotes the growth of brain cells. It also aids the body to release a plethora of hormones (ie: the runners high.)
- ◇ People with anxiety and depression benefit greatly from exercise. Exercise is one of the basic self-care essentials for those who struggle with bi-polar depression and serves a calming purpose for anxiety. In Ecclesiastes 11:10 it states “So then, banish anxiety from your heart and cast off the troubles of your body.”
- **Self-Talk Awareness.** Having a positive thought process is vital to our mental health. Our cognitive thinking patterns absolutely influence our feelings and emotions. Just being aware of what we say to ourselves is a positive starting point. A favorite scripture verse of mine, Philippians 4:13, says “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”
- **Counseling.** Sometimes it is helpful to gain insight into stressful circumstances by going to counseling and learning healthy coping skills for life’s stressors. Talking about our issues to a professional can have a very cathartic affect.
- **Mindfulness.** Stress can also be reduced by staying in the moment and being mindful. There are many mindful techniques one can do to stay in the moment. For example: Adult coloring books are a new thing as of late and coloring can be very relaxing for the young and old alike. Word searches, or simple puzzle books, listening to soft music, imagining your favorite place, or just bringing yourself to a center (an awareness of your thoughts and your body) in the moment are good for this as well.
- **Spiritual Relationship with God.** The Lord asks us to be still. In Psalm 46:10 he says “Be still and know that I am God.” Letting go and letting God is one of the hardest things we as human beings struggle with. Many times we give the Lord our issue and take it back – back and forth we go many times like that of a slow ping pong game, but the main thing is to keep the faith and pray, pray, and pray. Being in touch with the Lord and staying connected with the Holy Spirit keeps us grounded. We don’t have to do this on our own as the Lord tells us in 1 Peter 5:7 to “cast all your anxieties on Him because he cares for you”. Knowing that we have a friend in Jesus helps us to let go of our stress and know that we are not alone. ■



Kim T. Pronoitis, MA, is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and sees clients in our Tinley Park, IL location.

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