

The Hidden Benefits of Mental Health

As we commemorate Mental Health Awareness Month, you'll hear a lot about the importance of developing and maintaining positive mental health practices, but it's also important to understand the reasons behind it. We obviously want to avoid the negative consequences of having mental health issues that become overwhelming and disruptive, such as excessive stress, depression, and anxiety. But let's consider a motivation beyond merely avoiding suffering. Engaging in constructive mental health practices also has a host of undervalued, positive benefits that extend beyond the individual, enriching the lives of family members and the wider community.



So, what are some of those hidden perks?

1. **Get more done.** People who have good mental health practices typically have more focus and motivation, which can lead to higher productivity. This elevated state of focus and motivation can clear the path of the distractions that come with worry, rumination and second guessing. People who are more productive are more likely to be praised and rewarded, leading to higher job satisfaction, thereby reinforcing positive, productive behaviors.
2. **Become more attractive.** Deepak Chopra is quoted as saying, "The secret of attraction is to love oneself." This suggests that the secret to attraction is related to how one regards themselves; how comfortable they are in their own skin and how well they accept themselves. It says that people who love themselves have an aura of self-confidence and contentment that is attractive to others; how they stand and carry themselves, how they look at others and interrelate. While mental health may not give you six pack abs, it can help you present the best version of you.
3. **Set your children up for success.** Parents who practice positive mental health strategies are more likely to produce children who experience few mental health challenges. Parents are the primary templates for children to base themselves after (until the teen years); how they manage frustration, how they cultivate relationships, how they motivate themselves. These early impressions can have a profound and life-long impact on a person's functioning and overall well-being. Working at improving mental health is not only good for the individual, it's good for the entire family, perhaps for generations to come.

4. **Make more money.** Mental health is linked to greater productivity, job satisfaction and employment retention, which can lead to economic stability for both the individual and their family. People who engage in positive mental health habits are also less likely to develop chronic physical conditions or require frequent medical care which means less health care costs. Simply put, an investment in your mental health is an investment in your financial health.
5. **Strengthen your community.** There is a link between mental health and criminal activity. Although not everyone who suffers from mental health challenges will become a criminal, research suggests that they are statistically at risk for illegal behaviors due to impaired judgment, impulsivity, lack of support, and maladaptive coping skills. By prioritizing mental health for ourselves and our families, we contribute to a thriving, healthy community with reduced crime risk. Additionally, individuals with fewer mental health challenges are more likely to volunteer for community and civic opportunities, strengthening the connection to the community and the community itself.
6. **Enjoy Better Health.** The ancient Roman poet Juvenal is famously quoted as saying "Mens sana in corpore sano," which translates to "a healthy mind in a healthy body." He promoted the idea that healthy thinking and habits are connected to our physical well-being. Scientific evidence supports the link between mental health and physical well-being. Individuals who engage in positive mental health practices tend to experience less stress, leading to lower levels of the hormone cortisol which can cause inflammation and accelerate the aging process. Additionally, employing positive mental health habits promotes better sleep, which is essential for cognitive functioning, muscle repair, and immune system functioning. By prioritizing our mental health, we can improve our physical health and overall quality of life.

So, as we begin a new month with a renewed focus on mental health, let's appreciate all the various aspects of our lives that can benefit from having a sound mind – from our personal relationships to our careers to even how we present ourselves. By prioritizing our mental well-being, we not only improve our own health but also the well-being of our loved ones and communities. For more great ideas, contact your Life Advisor consultant today to learn more about how you can enhance your mental health.

For more information, tools, resources, or app information, call your Life Advisor Employee Assistance Program!



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