CFBNJ COMMUNITY FOODBANK OF NEW JERSEY

HEALTH AND WELLNESS POWERED LIVING (SENIORS/ADULTS)

MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN

WHAT'S INSIDE

Page 3: Welcome Letter
Page 4: Mental Health & Mindfulness: A Perfect Match
Page 5: Depression: Causes & Complications
Page 6: Resources & Supporting Materials
Page 7- 8: Hand Outs and Resources

CFBNJ COMMUNITY FOODBANK OF NEW JERSEY

DEAR PARTNERS,

We are committed to working with you to support the health and wellness of your community and site. As part of our partnership we provide you with tools and materials to support your health and wellness goals. Each quarter, we share a campaign toolkit on a specific area of focus.

These campaign toolkits provide resources, learning tools, and reading materials. We ask that you share the information with your site attendees. Hang and post these materials throughout your site to raise awareness for the topics shared.

This quarter (October - December) our focus is: Health & Wellness Powered Living (Seniors/Adults). The toolkit will focus on Mental Health & Mindfulness. This is an important topic because Mental Health & Mindfulness go hand-in-hand with overall well-being and longevity, especially for senior populations.

The materials and resources shared in this toolkit will help your participants identify ways to incorporate mindfulness practices into their day in order to improve mental health and overall well-being.

Best,

Nutrition Education Team
Community Food Bank of New Jersey

CFBNJ COMMUNITY FOODBANK OF NEW JERSEY

MENTAL HEALTH & MINDFULNESS

What is Mental Health?

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

DAILY MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICES:

- Breathe intentionally.
- Practice gratitude.
- Be real with those you trust.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Take care of your body.
- Have downtime away from technology.
- Set boundaries & say "no."
- Give yourself grace.
- Celebrate your wins.

Does Mindfulness help mental health?

Mindfulness plays a big role in improving your overall mental health. According to research, the practice helps people manage stress, depression, addiction, and anxiety. It has shown to be effective in people with health conditions like hypertension, chronic pain, and heart failure.

Practicing mindfulness makes it easy to identify stress, anxiety, or depression signals early on. You become more positive in the way you respond to signs of mental health problems. It's like making peace with your body by listening and responding to each sensation you experience.

DEPRESSION & YOU

Depression VS Season Affective Disorder (SAD)

Depression is a chronic feeling of sadness, emptiness and inability to create or find pleasure in one's life. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a subtype of Major Depression. The main difference between the two being that SAD only occurs during a set time of year or within seasonal patterns, while Major Depression can occur at any given time.

Causes

With depression, many things can cause or trigger episodes some being:

- stressful life events
- medications or medical problems
- changes in hormone production
- genetics

There is no root cause to SAD but some factors should be taken into consideration:

- **Your biological clock (circadian rhythm)**. Reduced sunlight during the winter months can disrupt your internal clock and lead to feelings of depression.
- **Serotonin levels**. A drop in serotonin, a brain chemical (neurotransmitter) that affects mood, might play a role in SAD. Lack of sunlight can be related to sudden drops in serotonin levels.
- **Melatonin levels**. Seasonal changes can disrupt your body's natural production of melatonin which is linked with sleep behaviors.

Complications

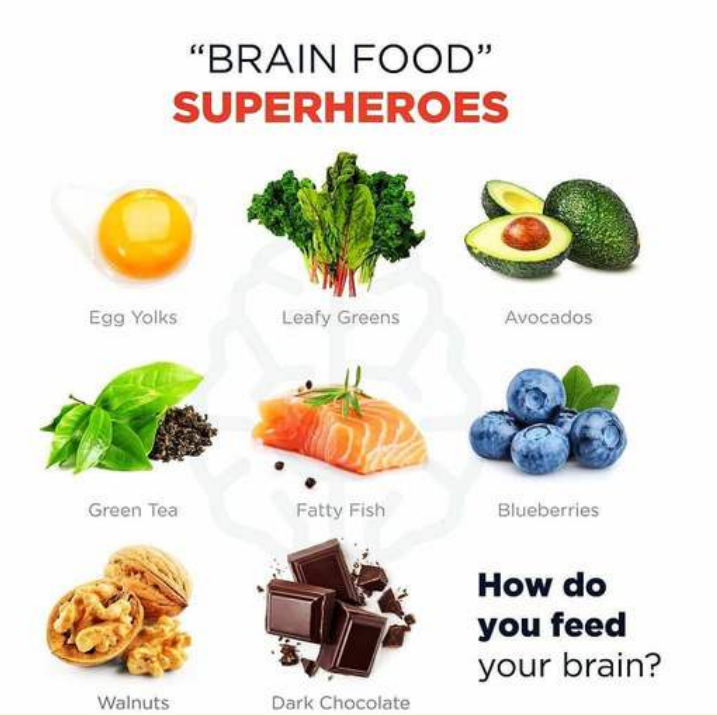
Take signs and symptoms seriously. Untreated, other issues can arise. These can include:

- Social withdrawal
- Family or Work problems
- Substance abuse
- Other mental health disorders such as anxiety or eating disorders
- Suicidal thoughts or behavior

References: Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) vs. Depression | U.S. News (usnews.com)
Aging and the immune system: Strengthening your body's defenses - Mayo Clinic Press
Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) - Symptoms & causes - Mayo Clinic

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- CREATE A WALKING OR JOURNALING CLUB
- IMPLEMENT SIGNAGE THAT ENCOURAGES MINDFULNESS
- HOST YOGA AND/OR MEDITATION SESSIONS
- ENCOURAGE SELF-CARE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE
- PRIORITIZE SLEEP
- MAKE SURE YOUR VACCINES ARE UP TO DATE
- CONSIDER TAKING VITAMIN D DAILY



Depression Signs:
Feeling listless, fatigued, sluggish or sad most of the day, losing interest in activties you once loved, problems with sleep, difficulty concentrating and overeating.

Fall/Winter Depression Signs:
Oversleeping, appetite changes (craving specific carbs), weight gain, tiredness or low energy.

Spring/Summer Depression Signs:
Trouble sleeping (insomnia), poor appetite, weight loss, increased irritability, agitation or anxiety .

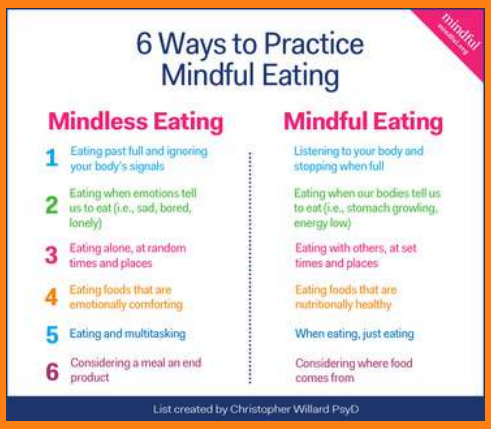
Do I Have Depression? Free Self-Assessment:
Depression Test – Free mental health tests from Mental Health America (mhanational.org)

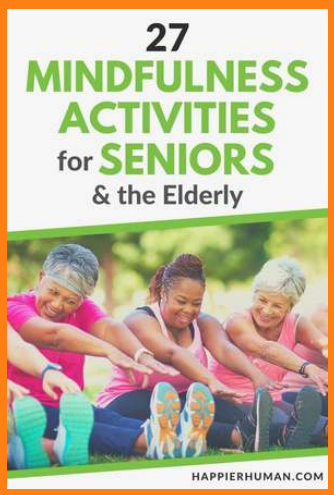
REFERENCES

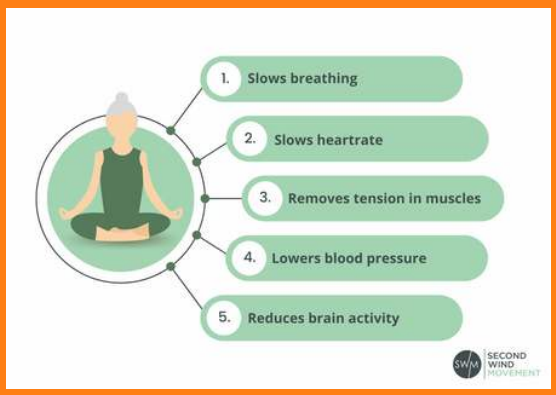
HTTPS:WWW.CDC.GOV/MENTALHEALTH/LEARN/INDEX/HTM
HTTPS://WWW.NCBI.NLM.NIH.GOV/PMC/ARTICLES/PMC6350815/
HTTPS://WWW.NIMH.NIH.GOV/HEALTH/TOPICS/CARING-FOR-YOUR-MENTAL-HEALTH

Resources, Handouts & Flyers

Mental Health & Mindfulness







Click on the images to download and print them to share with your organization, partners, and neighbors!

Resources, Handouts & Flyers

Where to Seek Help:

Formerly the NJ Foundation for Aging

njaaw
NEW JERSEY ADVOCATES FOR AGING WELL
YOUR TRUSTED RESOURCE

Shatterproof Treatment Atlas

Let's find treatment that's right for you.

Enter location or facility name

New Jersey MentalHealthCares

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

NRH NATIONAL REHAB HOTLINE.ORG

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

Need to vent?

Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a volunteer Crisis Counselor

Free confidential 24/7 support at your fingertips.

Click on the images to download and print them to share with your organization, partners, and neighbors!