The Connection Between Mental and Physical Health

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Illness does not ask.
It demands.

Marie Seren Cohen, Ph.D. (1999)
Mental and Physical Health Connection

• Stress:
  • Body’s response to any demand placed on it

• Resilience:
  • Ability to withstand and rebound from disruptive life challenges

• You
  • Practical approaches to self-care
STRESS:
What makes living with PI so stressful?

- Invisible illness
- Difficulty in understanding the disease
- Unpredictable
- Requires regular treatments
- Expensive
- Additional diagnoses over time
- Genetic concerns
- Sense of loss of control
- Fatigue
- Disruptive to personal and family life
How health and mental health symptoms worsen

- Body changes
- Relational changes
- Thought changes
- Behavioral changes
- Feeling changes
RESILIENCE:
Developing skills for living with PI

• Basic Resilience Formula:
  • Reducing the Risk Factors
  • Increasing the Protective Factors

• Other Guiding Principles:
  • Accurate information
  • Early intervention
  • Trusting relationships
YOU (and Team Zebra)

1. Reducing anxiety and increasing problem solving
2. Reducing self-blaming
3. Reducing blaming by others
4. Reducing isolation and enhancing attachments
5. Increasing self-esteem and self-efficacy
6. Increasing creative play to foster creative problem solving
7. Enhancing nurturing relationships beyond the playroom
8. Learning to make meaning of life’s experiences
How health and mental health symptoms improve

Body changes

Relational changes

Thought changes

Behavioral changes

Feeling changes
Rx Care for your body

• Sleep hygiene
• Regular physical activity
• Nourishing food
• Consistent medical treatment
• Meditation and mindfulness strategies
Rx  Care for your thoughts

• Manage your incoming messages
• Manage your incoming messengers
• Meditation and mindfulness strategies
• Spiritual resources
Rx Care for your feelings

• Remember to play!
• Expressive and creative arts
• Journaling
• Have a range of entertainment
• Meditation and mindfulness strategies
Rx Care for your behaviors

- Plan behaviors for each change area
  - Body
  - Thoughts
  - Feelings
  - Behavior
  - Relationships
- Set Goldilocks goals for your behaviors
Care for your relationships

- Help family and friends to understand how to be supportive with your PID
- Care for others
- Set limits with difficult people
What’s your $R_x$ for the rest of today?

- Body changes
- Relational changes
- Thought changes
- Behavioral changes
- Feeling changes
Questions and comments?
Resources for Team Zebra

• Immune Deficiency Foundation
  • www.primaryimmune.org

• Mental Health America
  • www.mhanational.org
PI Conference
PRIMARY IMMUNODEFICIENCY IN FOCUS