Greetings!

Welcome to the spring edition of the CARE Services Newsletter. CARE Services is the free and confidential Employee Assistance Program for UC Berkeley faculty, staff, post-docs and visiting scholars. The CARE Services newsletter features information related to the mental and emotional health and well-being of those in our campus community.

This issue will profile notions about Mind-Body Health, and the common practices or techniques that can promote physical and emotional health.

The Mind-Body Connection: Your Health

Overview:

What is mind-body health?

Mind-body medicine is a form of treatment that has its roots in the practices of traditional Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine. These healing practices emphasize the importance of the connection between the mind and body in the treatment of illness and disease. Mind-body health can be the connection between your physical health and your state of mind or well-being. There is a growing body of evidence about how the power of your thoughts and emotions can influence your sense of resiliency and health. When we’re under physical stress or in emotional distress for prolonged periods, our bodies release stress hormones which can lower our immune system, and potentially cause damage to our heart, and our respiratory and nervous systems. Research has shown that practicing various mind-body techniques can have a positive impact on boosting your immune system and reducing some of the signs and symptoms of anxiety, depression, chronic pain, illness, and stress.
Usually with the assistance of a person trained in administering biofeedback, an individual can see and understand what causes these body functions change. With this knowledge, you can learn how to focus your mind and breathing in order to regulate these changes. Biofeedback typically is used to treat such conditions as chronic pain, sleep disruption, headaches, and migraines.

II. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy:

CBT is a form of therapy based on the concept of what we think affects our emotions, our behaviors, and our physiological reactions. Studies have shown that negative thoughts can be connected to inaccurate perceptions or negative feeling states. CBT provides specific skills to see the connection between these thoughts and upset emotions, and to assess the accuracy of these thoughts, in order to regulate these upset negative feelings. CBT has been used to treat depression, anxiety, phobias, obsessive-compulsive behaviors, and some forms for eating disorders (e.g., bulimia).

What are mind-body techniques?

They are different methods used to train your mind to focus on your body, your thoughts and your emotions in a calm and relaxed state.

Some of the most commonly used techniques:

I. Biofeedback:

Biofeedback is a method of bringing awareness to some of your biological functions that are under your conscious control. It's a technique that involves the use of electronic monitoring devices to measure and report back (give biofeedback) on information such as heart rate, blood pressure, muscle tension, and electrical brain surface activity. These measures tend to rise as someone’s stress or distress builds.
III. Relaxation Techniques:

- **Autogenic training.**
  
  This is a method that uses techniques of guided imagery and body awareness as a way of creating a state of deep relaxation. For example, you might create an image of a calm and peaceful place, or while doing deep breathing, you bring awareness to your body sensations or imagine your breath as a soothing, calming color.

- **Meditation.**
  
  Meditation involves drawing your consciousness and attention on your thoughts and sensations in a gentle and focused way. This may involve sitting quietly and very still, or may involve repeating a single word or phrase (mantra). Transcendental (chanting) meditation and mindfulness (moment by moment focus) meditation are two commonly practiced forms that are used for stress reduction. Meditation can lower heart rate and blood pressure, and can be as a technique of pain management.

- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation.**
  
  PMR involves focusing on each muscle group in your body. You start by slowly tensing (for several seconds) and releasing muscle groups starting from your legs and feet, to your midsection, to your shoulders and top of your head. Each time you start to tense a muscle group, take in a deep breath, hold it, and exhale as you release that muscle group.

- **Hypnotherapy.**
  
  This is a form of hypnosis, adapted for Western practice. When put under hypnosis, a person is in a deeply relaxed and attentive state, which allows the trained hypnotherapist to provide the person suggestions and images that can change behaviors and improve health. An individual can be taught self-hypnosis techniques. Hypnotherapy is commonly used to treat addictions, chronic pain, anxiety disorders, and phobias.
In addition to these techniques, Pilates (exercises to build core strength and flexibility), and various forms of yoga or movement-oriented disciplines (dance therapy, martial arts) are also methods which promote mind-body health.

CARE Services and the University Health Services (Tang Center) offer a number of free workshops related to mind-body health for UC Berkeley faculty and staff. This 2010 spring semester, CARE and UHS are offering these Mind-Body Health related lunchtime workshops: Stress & Biofeedback, Restorative Yoga, and Somatic Techniques.

For workshop descriptions and online registration information, click on this training link: (Go to the CARE Website: [http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/facstaff/care](http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/facstaff/care) and click ‘Training Information’ under Educational Training/Groups)

Other Helpful Resources:

- **Article:** “Mind/Body Medicine,” from the Encyclopedia of Alternative Medicine, 2001. Web link: [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_g2603/is_0005/ai_2603000526](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_g2603/is_0005/ai_2603000526)

- **Greater Good Science Center:** UC Berkeley based nonprofit center that studies the biological roots of positive emotions, and how these emotions can affect individual and community well-being. GGSC has an online magazine, and also offers local seminars, guest speakers, parenting books and blogs. Web link: [http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/)

- **UCSF Osher Center:** The center conducts research on integrative approaches to healing and health through the study of established medical practices found throughout the world. Web link: [http://www.oshер.ucsf.edu/](http://www.οsher.ucsf.edu/)

- **Books:**

  3. **Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life,** by Jon Kabat-Zinn; publisher, Hyperion, ; 1994
Community Workshops/Training:

1. **StressCare** - provides training and workshops that teach mindfulness meditation and relaxation for stress, pain, and anxiety reduction. Classes taught in Berkeley, Orinda, Walnut Creek.  
   Website: [http://www.Stresscaretraining.org](http://www.Stresscaretraining.org)

2. **Kaiser Permanente** – Offers various workshops on mindful meditation, anxiety and stress reduction. Open to Kaiser members and the public.  
   Website: [http://www.kp.org/classes](http://www.kp.org/classes)  
   Key words: mindfulness, stress, anxiety

Check out our CARE webpage for more information about our services and links to additional campus and community resources
[http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/facstaff/care](http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/facstaff/care).

---

**CARE Services**
for Faculty and Staff
3100 Tang Center
2222 Bancroft Way
Berkeley, CA  94720

Phone:  (510)643-7754
Email:  careserv@uhs.berkeley.edu
Website:  [http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/facstaff/care](http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/facstaff/care)