

Will Power

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE PIONEERS ASSISTANCE FUND

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ANXIETY, DEPRESSION & THINKING

Q: Why is it that when I feel depressed or anxious, I find I can't hold a thought in my head?

A: Science supports the link between mood difficulties and cognition. There have been studies that show depression and anxiety equally cause problems with attention, memory and concentration (working memory) and impair one's ability to make decisions (executive function).

Working Memory - Thought process you need to function daily

Executive Function - Thought process you need to problem-solve and make decisions.

Baseline - Initial measure of your normal functioning

One of the things depression-related cognitive impairment does to you is leave you unable to understand when people say to you "It'll get better," or "I love you." When you can't take in these messages, it feeds the depression, and you might find yourself in a vicious spiral that leads to more severe mood problems.

Another thing that happens if you are an older adult experiencing mood-related cognitive impairment is you might start to think you have the beginnings of dementia. If you convince yourself you have early dementia, you might think there is nothing you can do about it so you don't

seek accurate diagnosis or treatment, again leading to a worsening of symptoms.

Dementia is a disease, and not a normal part of aging. Depression at any age is also a disease, for which there are quite a few treatments, including support group, medication, and talk therapy. Severe depression is not a normal response to aging.

Another consideration: Infection in older adults mimics cognitive impairment as well. In much older adults, this is the first thing that must be ruled out with a sudden onset of confusion and memory problems.

If you are prone to depression or anxiety, it's important to make sure your doctor knows your baseline cognitive ability, something to measure changes against. Once you treat your mood disorder (or infection), your thinking should clear up, so be brave and get yourself checked out. At the same time, reach out to friends and family, or to the Pioneers Assistance Fund social workers, who can support you through a difficult time.

Sources:

"How Major Depression Impaired My Cognitive Ability" by Yedidya Erque, available at Nate Kornell Ph.D. Everybody Is Stupid Except You, blog in Psychology Today, Jul 28, 2014.

JOKE OF THE MONTH

*Why couldn't the leopard play hide and seek?
Because he was always spotted.*

WILL CALL

*Do you or someone you know
need our assistance? Call toll-free
(888) 994-3863 or wrpioneers.org*





RE-IMAGINED HYDRATION

We are constantly being reminded to hydrate during heat waves and exercise, to the point where you might say you cannot drink another glass of water. The good news is that there are other ways to hydrate and summer is the perfect time to try them!

But before you do, it is important to understand WHY you need to hydrate and HOW much hydration you need. The truth is that every part of your body functions better when you are properly hydrated. Your heart finds it easier to pump, and your muscles work more efficiently with proper blood flow. Your kidneys filter better. Your skin looks and feels better with adequate moisture.

How much you need might surprise you. It's different for everyone, depending on level of physical activity, climate, medications and other health conditions. One way to determine how much water you need is to weigh yourself before and after an activity to see how much you sweat, whether from activity or being outside on a hot day. "For every pound of sweat you lose, that's a pint of water you'll need to replenish," says John Batson, M.D, a sports medicine physician with Lowcountry Spine & Sport in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.

For those who seek alternatives to drinking water, here are a few ways to get hydration from other sources that are simple and delicious:

1. Fruits & Vegetables with high water content, like melon, oranges, cucumbers, celery.
2. Low sugar sports drinks (sugar is not helpful for hydration or health)
3. Fun summer drinks, such as:

Sparkling Strawberry Mint-Infused Water (puree strawberries, mint leaves, and lemon juice, with a sparkling water. Slowly add more sparkling water to desired ratio).

No alcohol sangria

(3 c. grape juice, $\frac{3}{4}$ c. apple juice, $\frac{1}{4}$ c. each lemon and lime slices, 1 medium orange sliced, 3 c. sparkling water, and ice. Put fruit slices in pitcher + add juice, sparkling water, and ice. Stir. Enjoy.)

Finally, it's best to hydrate before you need it. Thirst is your body's way of telling you it needs water now! Stay on top of it and have a healthy summer.

Resources:

"Summer Thirst Quenchers"

in Diabetes Forecast, May/June 2016.

"10 Ways to Stay Hydrated (That Aren't Water)"

by Emily Faherty on 8/6/2015 at www.dailyburn.com.

"Staying Hydrated - Staying Healthy"

from the American Heart Assn, available at:

www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/PhysicalActivity/FitnessBasics/Staying-Hydrated---Staying-Healthy_UCM_441180_Article.jsp#.VyBOYXA_vM8

“ QUOTE OF THE MONTH

I propose a Father's Day. No flowers, no fuss- just let him use the car himself and go where he wants to. But we will never live to see such a contented day. - Will Rogers

