

# Nourish to Flourish

Integrative Medical Group Visit Programs for Post-Acute Sequelae of COVID-19

## Week 6: Depression and Self Care

In this session, we discuss inflammation, helpful mind-body approaches, discuss Long COVID and depression and revisit the Body Scan

### Daily Agenda

- Grounding meditation
- Check-in- Challenging communications
- Group Check In- Rose and Thorn
- Discussion: Mind-body approaches for life management
- Break
- Discussion: Depression and Post Acute Covid
- Discussion: Safety Plan
- Activity: Body Scan
- Home Practice
- ?
- Poem

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## Mind-Body Approaches for Life Management

### *Acupuncture*

- Acupuncture is a treatment based on Chinese medicine -- a system of healing that dates back thousands of years. At the core of Chinese medicine is the notion that a type of life force, or energy, known as qi (pronounced "chee") flows through energy pathways (meridians) in the body. Research shows that acupuncture can be an effective part of a treatment plan for several illnesses and conditions including low-back pain, osteoarthritis, high blood pressure, depression, and anxiety.
- Literature review, acupuncture for COVID

### *Meditation*

- Mindfulness meditation is a practice where one focuses their attention on their thoughts and sensations, approaching from a place of non-judgment. Among its many benefits, meditation can reduce stress hormone levels and can reduce many symptoms including pain, anxiety, insomnia, panic disorders, high blood pressure and diabetes. ([ment/relaxation-techniques](#))
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### *Massage*

- Massage is a general term for pressing, rubbing and manipulating your skin, muscles, tendons and ligaments. Research has shown that massage may be beneficial for a range of conditions including anxiety, and stress-related insomnia. ([www.yoclinic.org](http://www.yoclinic.org))

### *Tai chi*

- Tai chi is an ancient Chinese involving a series of movements performed in a slow, focused manner, accompanied by deep breathing. This graceful form of movement puts very little stress on joints and muscles. It is shown to be very effective for stress management. ([w.org](#))

### *Yoga*

- Yoga is a mind-body practice that combines stretching exercises, controlled breathing and relaxation. Yoga can help reduce stress, lower blood pressure and improve heart function. It can also enhance your mood and overall sense of well-being, as well as increase balance, flexibility, range of motion and strength. ([w.org](#))

## Approaches to Depression

### *What is depression?*

- Depression is an illness that can interfere with a person's thoughts, feelings, behavior, and physical health. Everyone feels sad, "blue", or "down-in-the-dumps" at times. Depression is different. It can last for weeks, months, or years and greatly interfere with a person's life. The good news is that for most people, depression can be successfully treated.

### *Depression and Post Acute Covid*

- Neurological symptoms or mental health conditions of PASC may include difficulty thinking or concentrating, headache, sleep problems, dizziness when you stand, pins-and-needles feeling, loss of smell or taste, and depression or anxiety. If you are feeling anxious or depressed, it could be a condition of the disease or situational.
- Major illness is a significant, life changing, often traumatic experience. It is NORMAL for patients to experience a wide range of emotions as they process what has happened to them. Emotional responses are highly individualized and vary widely. There is no right or wrong way to feel during or after a significant illness.
- Patients often have a sense of loss after contracting Long COVID. Sometimes, they even feel that a part of them, or their prior self, has died. It is common to feel like you may have a passive wish to not wake up, or "to be here anymore."
- Causes of suicidal ideation may include perceived insurmountable obstacles, extreme pain and suffering, an inability to foresee any enjoyment in the future, or a wish to not burden others.
- Add reference: link to lecture?

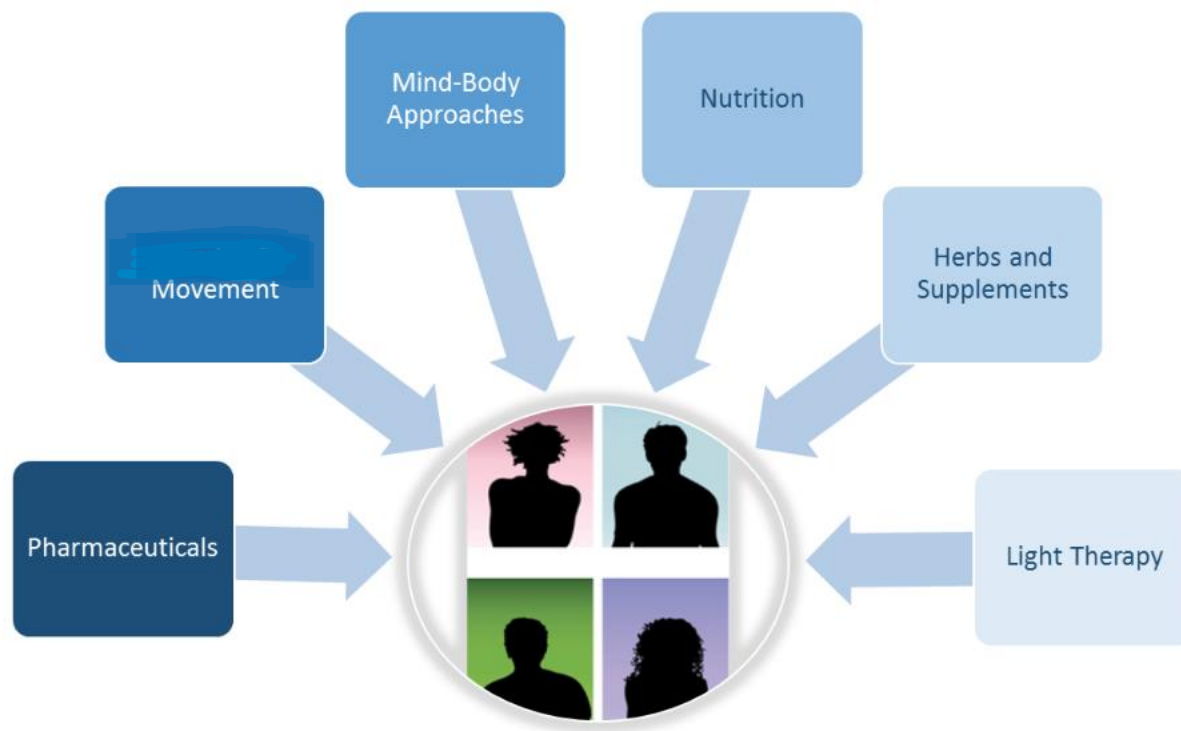
### *How is depression treated?*

- There are many approaches and types of treatment for depression.
- The treatment prescribed will depend on the level of depression (mild, moderate, or severe)
- Lifestyle and behavior changes (examples include: exercise and movement, nutrition, mind-body approaches, supplements).
  - Prescription medication
  - Counseling/talk therapy

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- Combination of lifestyle changes and prescription medication
- It is important to work with your health care practitioner to find the treatment that is right for you. We will focus on non-drug approaches to improving depression.



*What mind-body therapies can be used for depression?*

- Mind-body approaches consider how the mind, spirit, body and behavior are connected to each other. Bringing our awareness to the present moment and noticing our thoughts, feelings and sensations can have a very powerful effect on our overall well-being. These mind-body approaches can include:
- **Movement** enhance the action of endorphins, chemicals that circulate throughout the body. Endorphins improve natural immunity and reduce the perception of pain. They may also serve to improve mood.
  - Easy light walking, even walking around your house is gentle movement
  - Stretching- Can be done anywhere- In bed, in a chair, standing. No need to hold the poses. Gentle, fluid stretching can be helpful.
  - Gentle Yoga: a practice that unites the mind, body and spirit through a series of breathing exercises and holding various postures. There are many different styles of yoga and ways to adapt postures for everyone.
- **Helping others and volunteering** can build connections with others and make a difference in your community.

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- **Art and music therapy** are ways of expressing thoughts through drawing, painting, clay, knitting and music, which is through to improve moods and raise self-esteem.
- **Spiritual practices** can be helpful for many. This can take many different forms, uniting the individual with a sense of oneness and connectedness.
- **Light therapy/phototherapy** consists of concentrated doses of light at specific wavelengths and intensities. It is important to consult your healthcare provider before pursuing this therapy to see if it is the right fit for you.
- **Journaling:** Many individuals find that keeping a journal can be beneficial for depression. Some ways a journal may be positive:
  - Can help manage anxiety
  - Can promote stress reduction
  - Can help to prioritize problems, fears, and concerns
  - Expressing gratitude for positive experiences throughout the day
  - Can provide a space for positive self-talk
  - Can be used to identify negative thoughts and behaviors

## Home Practice

### **Mind-Body Practice**

- Practice the Body Scan or Loving Kindness meditation

### **Activity**

- Create a Safety Plan and tell someone close to you about it

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## Recipe: Curried Greens with Lentils and Brown Rice

This dish is filled with plant-based protein, fiber, and calcium to keep your body strong and healthy!

### Ingredients

- 2 cups of dried brown lentils
- 2 cups of cooked brown rice
- 2 bunches of kale, chard, spinach, or collard greens
- 1 tablespoon olive oil or coconut oil
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1 large carrot, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon salt



### Instructions

1. Making the brown rice: bring 4 cups of water to boil; add 2 cups rice. Bring to a boil again, lower heat and simmer for about 45 minutes, or until rice is tender.
2. In a medium sauce pan, bring 4 ½ cups salted water to a boil. Add 2 cups brown lentils, cover, and reduce heat. Simmer covered for about 20 to 25 minutes, until most of the water has been absorbed.
3. Meanwhile, wash the greens, remove the tough stems, and chop them into ribbons.
4. In a large skillet, heat 1 tablespoon olive oil (or coconut oil) over medium high heat. Add the yellow onion and garlic and sauté until tender, about 3 minutes. Add the tomato paste, curry powder, and diced carrot. Sauté until tender, about 3-5 minutes. Add the greens and sauté for several minutes until tender and bright green.
  - TIP: Only cook greens until they are bright green; this keeps them in the most flavorful and nutrient-dense form.
5. When the lentils are done, add them to the skillet with the greens. Over medium high heat, stir in. Taste, and add additional seasonings as desired.
6. Serve over cooked brown rice.



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## Poem and Quote

### **The Guest House**

This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.  
A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.  
Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still, treat each guest honorably.  
He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.  
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
meet them at the door laughing,  
and invite them in.  
Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.

*-Rumi, Translation by Coleman Barks*

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“If you are moved to such a degree that you feel the pain,  
and that you can feel the tears running down your face,  
then you’re looking at an opportunity to make a change,  
to make a difference in the world.”

*-John Francis (African American environmentalist/founder and author of Planet Walker)*