

# 5 Reasons You Should Invest in Your Mental Health

*Editor's Note: This is the first of a two-part series. Watch for part 2 later this week!*

The benefits of taking care of our minds may seem inherent to taking care of your overall health, but there is still a resistance to taking the steps to improved mental care. Allow me to review 10 sound reasons why you should invest the time, energy and resources into your mental health. (The next five will come in part 2).

## **1. Your brain is ever-changing.**

The term for this is “brain plasticity,” meaning the overall adaptability of the brain to trauma and life changes. We all experience trauma and change in life. Especially at early ages, traumatic encounters can have a more significant impact on brain growth and plasticity. It is shown that infants who witness the same amount of conflict in the home as their older siblings develop and grow up to have more setbacks. However, the younger you are doesn't dictate the ability to heal. Just like those who have had strokes in later years are able to recuperate their cognitive capacities in many cases, the sooner the help in response to the brain damage, the better the chance for recovery.

As you care for your mental health and condition it to be more resilient, remember your brain still has the capacity and potential to change and grow as you age. You may have heard it said “You can't teach an old dog new tricks,” but, in caring for your mind and its ability to improve and adapt to stressors, as they say, “Where there's a will, there's a way.”

## **2. Effects of childhood post-traumatic stress disorder and trauma can linger.**

Think about how life events at a young age shape and mold your character. The reason you have fears. The reasons you avoid new events or change in general. Something happened to you at a young age that, over time, has been embedded and you have either repressed, ignored or fought with it internally and silently. That has, in turn, likely affected your development in personality or personal character, and it has created unhealthy connections in the brain that leave unhealthy ways of dealing with them. PTSD and similar unresolved brain trauma are also the reason why so many abused become abusers, and why hurting people hurt themselves and others.

Christian psychotherapy is one way you can retrain your brain to process past traumas and crises. Resolving those past issues and hurts through godly counseling can help you set yourself free with much needed salve to deep soul scars.

## **3. Ever-increasing social technology.**

Social media and technology usage in this day and age is growing at a hyperbolic rate. In my opinion, as rates of devices and screen usage increase, attention spans and abilities to comprehend layered abstract complexities decrease. Your mind is wired for not just comprehending but experiencing layers of interpersonal connection and meaningful community. The rise of technological babysitting “smart” toys is dumbing down and dimming the light on cognitive-behavioral (and intellectual) capacities. I believe the ability for our younger generations to relate to others is becoming shallower and narrower, resulting in social ineptitude, slowing the recognition of social cues and hampering the ability to mature socially.

Taking a break from all the internet offers is good for everyone. “Everything in moderation,” is something my Grandma

says. Frequenting your phone less and fighting those urges to check your notifications may be a beneficial thing. Make time for the real messages in life: God's Word and other people in face-to-face conversation.

#### **4. Suicide rates are on the rise.**

Hopefully, you aren't unaware of the news of suicide rates increasing. Life is too precious to end prematurely, but people commit suicide for various reasons. To me, it appears that there may be a correlation with celebrities taking their lives, the media propagating stories about it (as in the Netflix series, *13 Reasons Why*) and our society in general with underlying tones of little respect of life (ease of access and wide acceptance of abortion, the tearing down of traditional family structure, the erasing of our country's moral standards).

Spiritually speaking, America has seen brighter days when God's truth was marching on. Nowadays, "truth" is a relative term, where individuality reigns, and collective moral absolutes are the things of yesteryear. So what do suicide rates have to do with my personal mental health? I'll give you a big hint: our selfie-istic culture has something to do with it. You must understand the importance of absolute truth in relation to the human right to life, as your purpose and reason for living must hold against the world's mainstream current of self-worship. This rising tide fights to undermine God's holy value on life itself, and nowadays, you have to have a better reason to live than the answer the world gives.

#### **5. The past can tangle our present and blur our future.**

Have you ever had flashbacks or recordings replay the negative or undesirable thoughts that create guilty feelings or shameful condemnations? What struggles in your past that you haven't faced yet will ever be a bother or in some way an

obstacle if you don't address them? They cause a sidetracked vision and can blindside you in some cases, showing up in everyday conversations, occasional Freudian slips and unconscious motives. These notions progress into fast-held beliefs that shape your thinking and therefore your expectations of life as well as your aptitude for future productivity and pathways.

It's always a good idea to learn ways to stop negative self-talk and improve positive self-talk and self-image. God lovingly and thoughtfully created you, and you were worth dying for to Him. Learning to accept God's way of seeing you is a step toward a healthier mindset to be reminded of daily.

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**Katie Dale** *is the mind behind and the e-book GAMEPLAN: A Mental Health Resource Guide. She works full-time at a behavioral outpatient clinic, ministering to those with mental illness. She can be found on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.*

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