Wake Forest Baptist Health Center for Integrative Medicine

Promoting Calm/Confidence -- Easing Anxiety/Worries

Dr. Kathi Kemper's Tips

- 1. Check your thyroid, ferritin, and vitamin D levels to make sure they are appropriate.
- 2. Keep a gratitude journal. Write daily 3+ things, people, pets, or circumstances for which you are grateful. Write thank you notes. Ask your family to share what they are grateful for at dinner.
- 3. Extend lovingkindness and compassion to others: "May you be safe and secure. May you be healthy and comfortable. May you be happy and peaceful. May you be free from suffering and the causes of suffering."
- 4. Exercise vigorously at least 30-60 minutes daily.
- 5. Sleep at least 8-9 hours per day. Read Chapter 4 in Mental Health Naturally for tips on sleeping.
- Learn to manage stress skillfully. Effective stress management practices include music, prayer (CareNet 336-716-7339). Guided imagery (Jeff Feldman 336-716-8400 or CDs from Health Journeys).
 Biofeedback from HeartMath (either portable EmWave PSR or PC-based) or Relaxing Rhythms/WildDivine (PC only). Meditation class (Ann McCarty, PA-C 336- 722-7266 or UCLA's Mindful Awareness Research Center's online resources).
- 7. Food. Keep your blood sugar stable. Eat breakfast. Junk food is bad for brains and hearts. Eat plenty of locally grown fruits and vegetables. Avoid fried and fast foods. Egg whites, whey powder and turkey are rich in tryptophan. Nuts, seeds, and whole grains are rich in magnesium. Green veggies are rich in B vitamins.
- 8. Drink herbal tea such as chamomile, lemon balm, hops, and/or passionflower (e.g., Sleepytime or Tension Tamer). Drink green tea. It contains theanine, which is calming. Minimize caffeine intake; it can causes jitteriness and palpitations. Do NOT drink alcohol. It can cause rebound anxiety and hyper-alertness.
- 9. Avoid nicotine; it can cause jitteriness and irritability.
- 10. Turn off the TV and computer. Spend more time in nature.
- 11. Aromatherapy: Lavender is calming. Also consider neroli (Citrus aurantium), vanilla, and rose.
- 12. Build social support.
- ♦ Participate. Check out scouts, sports groups, leagues, civic clubs, book clubs, and religious groups.
- ♦ <u>Volunteer.</u> Humane Society, library, Y, Meals on Wheels, Arbor Acres, Children's Home, Habitat for Humanity, Ronald McDonald House, Yadkin Riverkeepers, Little Theater, Red Cross.
- 13. If you are religious, pray. "The Light of God surrounds me. The Love of God enfolds me. The Power of God protects me. The Presence of God watches over me. Wherever I am, God is; all is well."
- 14. Massage. Schedule a massage appointment with one of our professionals by calling 336-716-8304. Gift certificates are available in our Gift Shop. Have someone you trust learn massage, and provide it to you regularly (3 to 5 times weekly), especially before bed while giving positive suggestions about the next day. If Therapeutic or Healing Touch helps today, consider having someone in your family take training classes (WFBH 336-716-6067).
- 15. Supplements. Consider with your doctor. (See CIM website for brand information.)
- ♦ Magnesium. Deficiencies are linked to irritability and anxiety. Nearly ½ of Americans are deficient. Consider 250 500 mg daily of magnesium citrate. Excess can cause diarrhea.
- ♦ Omega-3 fatty acids (1000 2000 mg daily of EPA+DHA) to promote calm, clear brain function; it takes about 3-6 weeks for this to build up in your system. It is not an instant fix.
- Other Considerations:
- 5-HTP (50 100 mg three times daily) or tryptophan (50-200 mg up to three times daily, especially before bed)
- St. John's wort 300 mg three times daily or 450 mg twice daily; AVOID with other medications or if you are in the sun. Quality counts.