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Lifestyle Modifications to Support Mental Health

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Lifestyle Modifications to Support Mental Health

Lexi Rosenthal

Family Medicine Clerkship, March 2022

Mentors: Dr. Whitney Calkins, Dr. Michael Sirois

No easily accessible resource for lifestyle changes

- In PCP visits sometimes there isn't enough time to address all of the lifestyle factors involved
- Mild/Low level mood alterations might not require medication
- Mental health is multi-faceted and can be supported with many modalities

Public Health Cost and Unique Cost Considerations in Host Community

- Mental Health (specifically depression) has a sizeable cost burden in the United States.
 - \$225 Billion in 2019, has only increased since COVID-19

Community Perspective on Issue and Support for Project

- Whitney Calkins: Has designed the “Skills before Pills” workshop to teach patients lifestyle medicine skills in a group format (to reach more people in a set amount of time). One of the sessions focuses on social connection. Loneliness/social connection is becoming a major public health crisis in the US. Dr. Calkins agreed a handout/dot phrase could be a useful tool for PCPs to use with patients.
- Michael Sirois: Agreed this would be a useful resource to provide patients (specifically a dot phrase). Uses a three-tiered approach to talk to patients addressing diet, exercise, social connection/spirituality in addition to trialing medication options if appropriate.

Intervention and Methodology

- Create a “dot phrase” to be included in patient handout instructions that lists lifestyle tips that are supported with Evidence Based Medicine.
- Will address three major pillars: Diet, Exercise, and Social Connection
- Will create a pamphlet to also hand to patients
- It is designed to be a resource that is easy to read and non-intimidating.

Results and Response

- Only qualitative data: will ask patients if they have found the information helpful and if they have been able to utilize some of the recommendations.

Evaluation of effectiveness and limitations

- Talk with providers to see how often the resource is handed out / provided in patient instructions.
- Follow up with patients given the handout/instructions to see if they were able to experiment with any of the recommendations.

Recommendations for future interventions/projects

- Continue to update/edit the handout for optimal use based on patient feedback
- Encourage patients who are interested in the handout to follow up with **Pills before Skills** workshops

References

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- “Nutritional Psychiatry for Healthcare Providers.” Drew Ramsey, MD.
- <https://www.ucsfhealth.org/treatments/integrative-psychiatry>
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<https://integrativemedicine.arizona.edu/resources.html>

Interviewed Practitioners

- Dr. Whitney Calkins
- Dr. Michael Sirois
- Dr. Andrea Fossati