

**in this issue >>>**

- Yale Lawsuit*
- Quarantine Aging the Brain*
- Self-Care Over the Holidays*
- Muscles and Mental Health*
- Human Rights Day*



Issue  
**SEVEN**

A Monthly Insight into Mental Health Trends

*Mental Health* **newsletter**

**current topics >>>**

***Students Suing Yale Due to Discrimination Against Students with Disabilities***

*Current students and an advocacy group are suing Yale University due to allegedly forcing students to withdraw from the school after showing severe mental health disability.*

Yale officials were reportedly pressuring students to take voluntary leaves of absence otherwise they would be forcibly withdrawn from the college. They were also mandated to leave the dorms within 48 hours and banned from attending any events, visiting the campus, or attending classes (including summer classes open to non-students) without permission from the school. A Yale alumnus stated that “in some instances, taking time off is a healthy decision. In other cases, it separates students from their primary support group.” Yale President has stated that their student affairs and mental health professionals are looking at the withdrawal policy, as a close look at other colleges has shown that Yale’s policies are far more egregious.

To read more about this story, click [HERE](#).

**Quarantine Aging Brains**  
*Teenagers brains aged three years!*

*“The stress of pandemic lockdowns prematurely aged the brains of teenagers by at least three years and in ways similar to changes observed in children who have faced chronic stress and adversity, a study has found.”*

The journal of Biological Psychiatry: Global Open Science was the first to begin comparing brain scans of teenagers before the pandemic to scans after the pandemic. We knew that teens have been struggling with higher levels of depression, anxiety, fearfulness, and a decrease in academic performance and social skills, but we haven’t looked much into the biological changes that were happening too. It was assumed that the changes would be closely related to those with children who experience adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) or general adversity, but no one expected the findings to be so significant. “The researchers found growth in the hippocampus and amygdala, brain areas that respectively control access to some memories and help regulate fear, stress

and other emotions...thinning of the tissues in the cortex, which is involved in executive functioning.” These changes are normal over time, but the pandemic seems to have accelerated the process which not positive. When someone experiences more ACEs, it raises the risk of cancer, diabetes, heart disease and other long-term negative outcomes. Although it is too soon to tell whether these effects will be long-term or not, many fear that their teens may never be able to get back on track. One parent exclaims, “I really think the way his high school years unfolded are going to have ripple effects for years to come” while another parent expressed “the adversity thrown at the feet of our teenagers I believe will make them stronger and more resilient.”

**“It has both methodological implications and potentially societally relevant implications,”**  
**Chen said.**

### Remember This

Your Instagram grid or social media newsfeed does not define your worth!

### Think On This

How can you make more time to take care of yourself? When was the last time you scheduled your routine health exams? Is it time to make an appointment before the end of the year?

### Try This

Test out the tidy house, tidy mind theory by organizing one tiny corner of your space. It could be anything from the cereals in your pantry to your ever-growing TBR pile of books. See how you feel once the clutter is cleared.

# Setting the Stage for Higher Self-Worth and A Clearer Mind



## Holiday Hits!

*Take some time to listen to this playlist of the top 200 Christmas Songs...over 10 HOUR of listening pleasure!*

It has been shown that listening to holiday music can improve your mood and memory, lessen stress, and even reduce pain! Some people may feel overwhelmed when hearing Christmas songs because it brings up traumatic memories or remind you of your to-do list. I always say to listen with caution and know yourself, but if you can, try to focus on the instruments and take some deep breathes!

## National Stress Free Family Holidays Month

*This month is filled with holidays and can be a bit stressful, but it is important to remember that this month is not all about the gifts or staying busy, but rather about making memories that could last a lifetime! Let's take a look at some ways you can lower the stress and create more memories this holiday season, regardless of what you are celebrating!*

### Ways to Lower Stress

1. Keep a planning calendar
2. Ask for help – divide and conquer!
3. Brainstorm shopping lists as a family
4. Reflect on the positives in each day
5. Communicate with one another every day – heart to heart huddles!
6. Set boundaries with loved ones – say “no” when you need to!

### Holiday Family Fun

1. Visit a mall Santa – write cards to Santa
2. Send hand written cards for the holidays (Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, New Year's, etc.)
3. Make a holiday scrapbook/do holiday crafts
4. Go outside and play in the snow (once we get some) – [Do You Want to Build a Snowman?!?](#)
5. Create your own family traditions
6. Play games together (dreidel, create your own game)
7. Create coupons for gifts
8. Bake cookies or treats
9. Find community winter/holiday events
10. String popcorn
11. Donate gifts, clothes, etc.

# How Moving Muscles Helps Mental Health

## 9 TYPES OF MUSCLE TENSION CAUSED BY TRAPPED EMOTIONS



Shoulder Tension = Burdens and responsibilities.

Neck Tension = Fear and repressed self-expression

Upper Back = Grief, sorrow, and sadness

Middle Back = Insecurity and powerlessness

Lower Back - Guilt, shame, and unworthiness

Stomach = Inability to process emotions

Although this picture may seem outlandish to some, there is scientific evidence that links different types of tension to different emotions and it has been shown that muscle tissue communicates directly with the brain and other parts of our body! This is often why we see that the more inactive a person is, the more likely they are to experience depression. It is also why therapists will talk with clients about physical activity in addition to doing the emotional/mental work!

### ask the experts >>>

**Q:** *Can I exercise during eating disorder recovery?*

**A:** *The answer is complicated...but, maybe.*

Exercise should be monitored closely during recovery for an eating disorder, as the behavior could become obsessive and trigger a relapse. It is important to not replace one maladaptive coping skills for another. "Exercise is a predictor of relapse for approximately 1/3 of individuals after discharging from treatment." One must accept that exercise is not mandatory, challenge the beliefs about what exercise is and the outcomes one expects, and realize that there is no such things as a "best" exercise routine. It is important to listen to your body, recognize the need for rest, properly fuel and hydrate your body before and after an exercise routine, be flexible with skipping exercise days, and have a good social support system!

In 2003 a team of Copenhagen-based researchers reported that "muscles at work secrete tiny chemical messengers called myokines that exert powerful effects on organ function, including brain function." Engaging in "resistance training has been shown to be far more effective for strengthening your bones than any calcium supplement and improves insulin resistance (the cause of diabetes and many other metabolic conditions) better than any prescription medicine." When participants in the study engaged in resistance training 2-3 times per week, ate more protein, and prioritized a healthy sleep schedule (7-8 hours per night), it rivaled the effects of traditional antidepressants!

Click [HERE](#) and on the image (left) to learn more!



## Ways To Move Your Muscles

- *Walking*
- *Climbing*
- *Lifting weights*
- *Resistance bands*
- *Resistance machines*
- *Push-ups*
- *Squats/lunges*
- *Jumping rope*
- *Pull-ups*
- *Yoga*

## Benefits of Working Your Muscles

- Improved memory and learning
- Improved mood
- Improved insulin resistance
- Protects your joints from injury
- Better balance and lowers the risks of falls
- Reduce symptoms of chronic diseases (e.g., arthritis, back pain, obesity, heart disease, etc.)
- Increase bone density and reduce risk of osteoporosis
- Improved range of motion and mobility
- Boosts self-esteem
- Protects against age-related cognitive decline

# human rights day

The 2022 Theme for Human Rights Day is Dignity, Freedom, and Justice for All! "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a milestone document, which proclaims the inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being - regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." The purpose of Human Rights Day, which is observed every year on December 10<sup>th</sup>, is to promote and protect the UDHR and stand up against human rights violations!

DECEMBER 10

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY



## How do you make places more inclusive for those with disabilities?

1. VIEW THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY AS A VALUABLE CONSUMER
2. EMPLOY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES- THEY ARE AMBITIOUS AND WANT TO WORK
3. INCREASE DISABILITY REPRESENTATION IN POLITICAL SETTING
4. INTEGRATE DISABILITY HISTORY IN SCHOOL CURRICULUMS
5. PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION IN SCHOOLS
6. EMPLOY MORE ACTORS WITH DISABILITIES IN MAINSTREAM MEDIA
7. PROVIDE COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS TO ATHLETES WITH DISABILITIES
8. MAKE AIR TRAVEL UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE
9. ACKNOWLEDGE THAT POLICE BRUTALITY OCCURS ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
10. REALIZE THAT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE HUMANS TOO

## What is a disability?

- A disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions) (CDC, 2020).

## What does a disability look like?

- Disability results from the interaction between individuals with a health condition, such as cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and depression, with personal and environmental factors including negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and public buildings, and limited social support (WHO, 2022).
- Everyone with a disability looks completely different...a disability is not always visible in a physical way!

## Who has disabilities?

- 1.3 billion people (16%) of the global population has a disability.



**CELEBRATE DIVERSITY!  
PROMOTE INCLUSION!**

**3 DEC**

**A DAY  
FOR ALL**

**#INCLUSIVEHEALTH**

