Laughing to Ease the Pain: Living with Chronic Illness

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Overview

Gain an understanding of the role therapeutic humor can play in coping with chronic illness.

Explain the physiological, psychological and social benefits of using therapeutic humor as a coping mechanism.

Define and Differentiate between appropriate, healthy humor and inappropriate, unhealthy humor.

Discuss and apply humor strategies that can be utilized to enhance ones use of therapeutic humor.

Official Definition of "Therapeutic Humor":

Any intervention that promotes health and wellness by stimulating a playful discovery, expression or appreciation of the absurdity or incongruity of life’s situations.

This intervention may enhance health or be used as a complementary treatment of illness to facilitate healing or coping, whether physical, emotional, cognitive, social or spiritual.

Physiological Benefits: The Laughter Response

- Deep _______________ •O2 in blood increases •Blood pressure decreases •Muscle tension decreases
- Better digestion •Brain releases _______________

Psychological Benefits

Helps with replacing _________________ - Helps us feel better about ourselves - See new perspective

Stops you from feeling bad - Helps you be more flexible - Helps gain control over situation

Social Benefits

Helps to defuse ____________ - Decrease conflict & fighting - Builds trust - Decreases fear - Eases tension

Helps group activities to be more fun

Inappropriate humor

Puts others down - pokes fun at other people’s _________________ _________________
Reflects anger - Offends with inappropriate use of sexual references or profanity - Uses stereotypes to denigrate a person or group (Racist, Ageist, Sexist, etc.) - Creates a cruel, abusive, offensive atmosphere and is insensitive to others - Divides a group by put downs

Appropriate Humor

Reduces tension by joking about universal human ______________ Delights in poking fun at oneself (self-effacing/ self enhancing) - Encourages people to relax and laugh - Unites people - Creates a supportive atmosphere of fun and caring - Includes everyone in the good time - Builds rapport - Notes the positive aspects of human relationships

Responding to inappropriate humor

The make them think approach - The direct approach - The indirect approach - The educational approach

Spiritual Benefits

Laughter is __________ - Decreases prejudice - Reveals connections of all - Balances mind, body & spirit

Helps you feel more peaceful and calm

"A tree dwelling marsupial of Asian origin, characterized by distinct black and white coloring. Eats shoots and leaves."

Humor Strategy - Use Humorous Fantasies

7 ½ Humor Habits (From the book: 7 1/2 Habits To Help You Become More Humorous, Happier & Healthier by David Jacobson).

The Half Habit – Changes thoughts from ______________ to ______________

Habit One - Treat humor as a necessity, not a luxury

Habit Two - Use Self Effacing Humor

Habit Three - Keep your eyes open for humorous situations and share them!

Habit Four - Use the power and influence of humor to make your life and the lives of others better

Habit Five - Use your humorous imagination to improve your communication

Habit Six - Humorize with Humorgy

Habit Seven - Act Like the highly humorous person you’ve become or are becoming