

A nurse looks at *Mind*, *Body*, and the Patient

How does the nurse see the mind and body in regards to the patient?



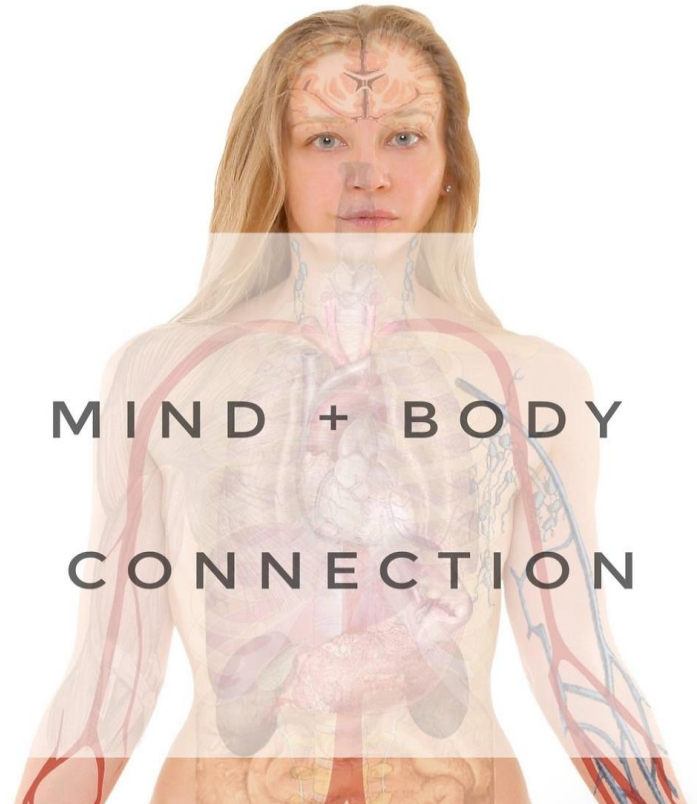
7 facts regarding the mind-body connection!

- ▶ **1. We All Have The Mind-Body Connection (butterflies in the stomach)**
- ▶ **2. Our Bodies React To How We Think (state of our emotional or mental health)**
- ▶ **3. We Can Make Ourselves Sick And We Can Make Ourselves Well (chronic stress or stress reduction)**
- ▶ **4. We Also Have A BODY-Mind Connection (illness vs. exercise)**
- ▶ **5. Food Affects Both Our Bodies & Minds (nutritional intake and what it is composed of)**
- ▶ **6. Regular Sleep Is A Must For Mind And Body (The brain stores memory/neural pathways are reinforced or pruned)**
- ▶ **7. Meditation Can Help Our Hearts (relaxation, calming effects, restoring HR/BP to more normal numbers, moderate anxiety and depression)**



What is this connection and why is it important to healthcare and the patient?

- ▶ The mind-body connection provides a framework for exploring a **psychophysiological explanation** for the therapeutic properties of some traditional nursing interventions to potentiate health and healing. **This model allows nurses to move from tradition-based practice to knowledge-based practice.** (clin Nurse Spec 1995 Jan;9(1):59-66. doi: 10.1097/00002800-199501000-00017.



Why is understanding and knowledge of the mind-body connection so important to a nurse?

Comprehensive care requires treating the physical and psychological concerns of the patient.

In other words, if you don't look at the whole patient you have missed half the concerns!

Illnesses and accidents can present temporary or permanent changes to body image and quality of life.

Nurses have multiple demands on the job that now include the mind-body connection and this is not just for mental health RN's.

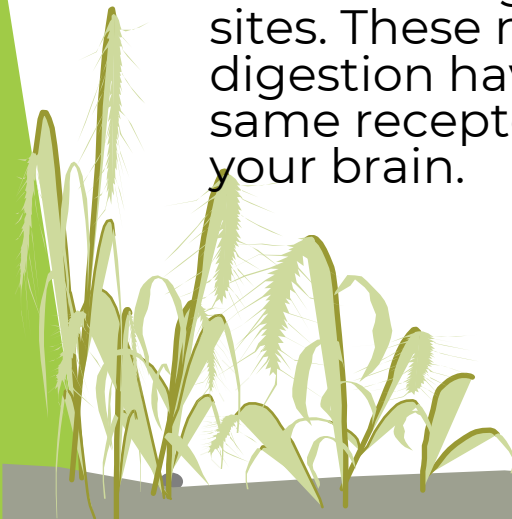


What has science and research found?

- ▶ “It’s essential we consider all of the important aspects of functioning, which include emotional and cognitive pieces,” said Rebecca Lehto, PhD, RN, OCN, assistant professor at Michigan State University College of Nursing in East Lansing. “Patients often won’t be able to focus on their illness or what they need to do to feel better if they are emotionally distraught.” (Nursing News, 3/16, 2016 **Addressing the Mind–Body Connection in Nursing**)
- ▶ Calm body, calm mind, say the practitioners of mindfulness. A new study by researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis indicates that the idea that the body and mind are inextricably intertwined is more than just an abstraction. The study shows that parts of the brain area that control movement are plugged into networks involved in thinking and planning, and in control of involuntary bodily functions such as blood pressure and heartbeat. The findings represent a literal linkage of body and mind in the very structure of the brain. [Mind-body connection is built into brain, study suggests \(medicalxpress.com\)](http://medicalxpress.com)

Why is Your Mind-Body Connection Important? Who is affected?

- ▶ How is the mind-body connection explained?
It means that our thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and attitudes can positively or negatively affect our biological functioning.
(SpencerInstitute.com)
- ▶ Your digestive system has been referred to as “the second brain” because it is so rich in nerve endings and receptor sites. These nerves in your digestion have many of the same receptors as the ones in your brain.
- ▶ **Brain and body connection:** The brain and body are connected through neural pathways made up of neurotransmitters, hormones, and chemicals. These pathways transmit signals between the body and the brain to control our everyday functions.
- ▶ The emotional cortex is the part of the brain that deals with emotions. It includes the amygdala, the hippocampus and the pre-frontal cortex. Active in stress response.



What are some of the ramifications of stress and “fight or flight” on the body?

- ▶ If our bodies feel under attack, even without an immediate threat of danger, the brain turns on the fight, flight or freeze response and the body releases stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones automatically send a signal to our lungs to breathe faster and shallower, our heart to beat faster, our skin to sweat and our muscles to tighten. Blood pressure and blood sugar rise automatically too and the immune system is suppressed. This is why some patients' blood pressure can go up when they visit the doctor. It is also why chronic (ongoing) stress may cause us to get sick more often.
- ▶ The fight, flight or freeze response is also known as the physiology of stress. Even when we do not feel distressed, the body may experience stress. Physical symptoms of the fight, flight or freeze response include: nausea, muscle tension, chest tightness and trouble breathing, to name just a few.

Emotions and physical symptoms:

- ▶ **All physical symptoms have an emotional element.** When we are injured, for instance, we feel the pain physically, psychologically and emotionally. We may start focusing on the pain and feel anxious, angry, sad or distressed. (spencerinstitute.com)
- ▶ **Thoughts, Feelings, and Your Health!**
- ▶ **Chronic stress and release of certain hormones(cortisol) can take a toll on the body, everywhere from the immune system, to the heart and other organs systems.**
- ▶ **When we know that the emotions we are going through affect us physically and internally we can begin to see how the mind can have a negative or a positive impact on the body, to do damage or to do good.**



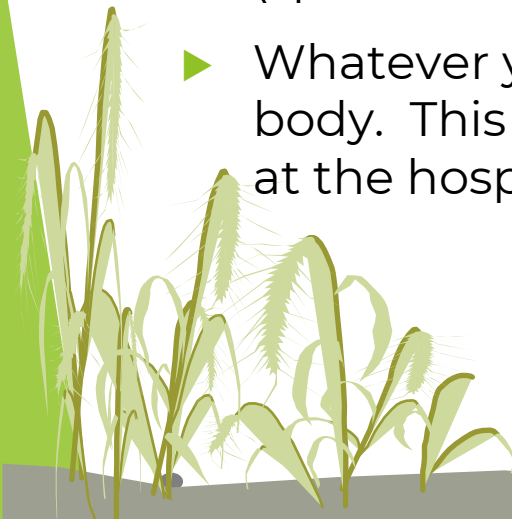
How Your thoughts and Feelings Affect Your Health!

- ▶ Your brain produces substances that can improve your health. These substances include **endorphins**, which are natural painkillers, and **immune factors**, which strengthens your immune system. Extensive research shows that what your brain produces depends in part on your thoughts, feelings, and expectations. If you're sick, but you have hope and a positive attitude, and you believe that you'll get better, your brain is far more likely to produce chemicals that will boost your body's healing power. As a result, you get better more quickly.



Continued.....

- ▶ For example, during a panic attack, your body experiences a surge in adrenaline, cortisol, and immune-system activity. That's a combustible mix for the heart. If that arousal happens too often (people with the worst forms of the disorder can have attacks several times a day), it can cause the heart to beat erratically, increasing heart attack risk. Indeed, one study showed that people with panic disorder (about 3 percent of American adults, twice as many women as men) face a 47% higher risk for heart disease. To counter this type of feeling, you can teach your clients [stress management techniques](#) and [yoga](#). (spencerinstitute.org)
- ▶ Whatever you are feeling or experiencing will have an impact on your body. This is why we stress quiet, dim lights, and fewer interruptions at the hospital as part of our holistic care.



What are some strategies to help you/me become more aware of your emotions?

- ▶ **Pay attention to your thoughts!**
Where are your thoughts and what are they focused on?
- ▶ **Change the way you engage in self talk, or talk to yourself.** What do you say to yourself at those moments both negative and positive?
- ▶ **Modify your emotional state.**
Thoughts need to be in alignment with your emotional state to achieve the desired outcome.
- ▶ What are your mind-body fitness strategies?
- ▶ Therapists?
- ▶ Yoga?
- ▶ Qi Gong?
- ▶ Guided imagery?
- ▶ Music/mood/environment?
- ▶ Exercise?



Thoughts or questions? Stories?
Anyone want to share?

