_____

Can Travel Help In Improving Mental Health?
_____

Pinky Kumari, IIM Sirmaur

Abstract

This article examines the therapeutic potential of travel for improving mental health amidst growing concerns, especially post-pandemic. Drawing on research and personal insights, it argues that travel enhances happiness, reduces stress, and fosters cultural understanding, thus promoting overall well-being. Additionally, travel combats workplace burnout, boosts productivity, and strengthens interpersonal bonds, aligning with Maslow's hierarchy of needs. By advocating for travel as a holistic mental health strategy, the article highlights its transformative role in nurturing resilience and fulfillment.

Introduction

Mental health is the new major concern of the youth today, especially after the pandemic. We can say that Mental health is a person's overall psychological well-being. It includes a person's emotional, psychological, and social functioning, as well as how they think, feel, and behave. Living a fulfilling life, forming, and maintaining relationships, and contributing to the community all require good mental health. In a recent study in America, it has been found that more than 50% of the population is diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lifetime. It is quite evident that a person suffering from any mental health issues can be treated with medical and psychological help.

Research Question

But my question is- can traveling around the world help a person suffering from mental health issues?

Personally, I believe, a person who travels more frequently is happier than a person who does not. According to a 2013 study of people aged 25 to 70+, 80% said travel improves their general mood and outlook on life, and 75% said travel helps them reduce stress. Travel is an excellent way to maintain mental well-being and, as a matter of fact, to live a happier and more fulfilling life. Even if you travel for a day or two, it provides you with exposure and allows you to try new things and meet new people, which brings a change in your monotonous life. It brings people together and allows them to learn about new and different cultures, which can help them develop empathy for others. Traveling and meeting new people can help you improve your overall tolerance, reduce biases, and even reduce frustration. I want to paint you a picture of yourself hiking up in the mountains and while doing so, you were totally aware of your surroundings and objects around you. This hike will let you become more hopeful, courageous, and upbeat than

you were earlier. A similar situation you can imagine like what could be better than taking a walk in the breathtaking scenery of a new destination while hiking or skiing down a beautiful slope?

According to Adam Gilinsky," Foreign experiences increase both cognitive flexibility and depth and integrativeness of thought, the ability to make deep connections between disparate forms," which means If you immerse yourself in new cultures, it will help increase your mind's ability to move between different ideas and think more deeply while integrating thoughts which will help your brain function better and boosts creativity. We know that most youngsters feel burned out doing 9-5 regular jobs affecting their mental health and hence resulting in lower productivity. So, taking time away from work and making yourself travel trips can increase energy as well as productivity at work.

According to a Harvard Business Review study of over 400 travelers, 94% of respondents had as much or more energy after returning from a good trip. Even if you are someone who does not have a great history of physical health and cannot do trekking or skiing, you should always try a wellness retreat program like Yoga, Meditation, and mindfulness and come back home with a new beneficial habit.

Moreover, According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, love and belongingness are the key psychological human needs. Traveling with your loved ones can help you fulfill your needs for love and belonging. Sharing your incredible travel experiences with loved ones strengthens your bond with them while intensifying feelings of love, belonging, and gratification.

Conclusion

These benefits result in improving one's mental well-being and if you are someone who is struggling with your mental well-being and does not want to go through the typical medical process, you should definitely try traveling. Travel solo, in groups, with family, or with strangers, just travel your heart out and you will surely feel the difference in your mental health.

References:

1. https://worldtraveltourismcouncil.medium.com/

2. https://creativeenso.com/how-travel-boosts-creativity-well-being/