

Mental Health “Menu”

We have so many tools that we can choose from to help us manage our mental health. Below are examples of modalities you might use that have been shown to have a profound impact on mood and wellness. You might begin with choosing one or two that interest you.

Look through this list with a pencil and put a mark next to any that resonate with you. Trust yourself to follow those that speak to you – the therapeutic impact of the intervention will be stronger if you’re working with your instinct.

Medication	E.g. SSRIs, Wellbutrin, Buspar, Mood Stabilizers, Ritalin
Therapy / Counseling	E.g. CBT, DBT, EMDR, IFS, individual
Exercise	Goal 30 min daily, but every move counts (yoga, walking, chi gong)
Sleep	Sleep hygiene work, Melatonin 5-10mg, Unisom .5 tab, prescription
Nutrition	Systems including Ayurveda, gut health/plant-based diet, gluten free
Inner Work	Self-development through reading, listening to talks, journaling, etc
Mindfulness / Meditation	Learn & daily practice (Thich Nhat Han, Jon Kabat Zinn, etc)
Spirituality	Exploring the meaning of life through various traditions and ideas
Relationships	Reflect on key life relationships (adult children of emotionally immature parents), couples counseling, etc
Environmental changes	Learn about boundaries and strengthen them in areas of stress. Consider practical changes in workplaces, home schedules and environments, etc
Gratitude Practices	Volunteer work, charity, private daily practices
Eastern Medicine	Acupuncture, Chinese herbs, Ayurveda, Indigenous practices
Nature	Grounding practices, daily time in nature, forest bathing, etc

“When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look for reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertilizer, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce. Yet if we have problems with our[selves], friends, or family, we blame the person. But if we know how to take care of that person, they will grow well, like the lettuce.

Blaming has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to persuade using reason and argument. That is my experience. No blame, no reasoning, no argument, just understanding. If you understand, and you show that you understand, you can love, and the situation will change”

- Thich Nhat Han

So much growth can happen in your own reflective practice. I would like to share some books that have made a great impact in my own life, and which I bring to the practice of medicine and understanding of the world. Again, feel free to choose the ones that speak to you, and skip the ones that do not.

Self-Understanding and Inner Work

Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents (Gibson)

It Didn't Start With You: How inherited family trauma shapes who we are and how to end the cycle (Wolynn)

Working Inside Out: Tools for Change (Adair)

The Highly Sensitive Person (Aron)

Reconciliation (Thich Nhat Han)

- Thich Nhat Han canon including Fear, No Mud No Lotus, Taming the Tiger Within, Anger, How to Fight, How to Love, Peace is Every Step, The Art of Living.

Full Catastrophe Living (Kabat-Zinn)

The Wounded Healer (Reda)

Mating in Captivity (Perel) (and many online talks)

The Mountain is you: Transforming Transforming Self-Sabotage Into Self-Mastery(Weist)

Driven to Distraction: Recognizing and Coping with Attention Deficit Disorder from Childhood Through Adulthood (Hallowell, Ratey)

The Gift of Dyslexia (David)

Self-Help

Never Split the Difference (Voss)

Difficult Conversations (Stone, Patton, Heen)

Playing Big (Mohr)

How to do the Work / How to Meet Yourself (LePera)

You are a Badass (Sincero, for a lighter read)

Parenting

The Highly Sensitive Child (Aron)

Planting Seeds (Thich Nhat Han)

Good Inside (Dr Becky)

Raising a Sensory Smart Child (Biel, Peske)

The Out Of Sync Child Has Fun (Kranowitz)

How to Talk so Kids will Listen and Listen so Kids will Talk (Faber, Mazlish)

Siblings Without Rivalry (Faber, Mazlish)

Everyday Blessings: The inner work of mindful parenting (Myla, Kabat-Zinn)

Mind Over Labor (Jones, for my pregnant patients)

For Kids:

What to do when you worry too much (Huebner – whole series of books for kids is great)

I am an Aspie Girl (Bulhak-Paterson, for kids)

Fiction/Memoir:

Teach Us to Sit Still (Parks)

Siddhartha (Hesse)

The Lost Art of Reading Natures Signs (Gooley)

Please share with me what you are reading that you love, so I may learn from you!