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The Mind-Body-Spirit Connection: Finding Balance and Wellness

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Have you called in sick at your place of work or didn't go to school because you were upset about an event and could not face the day? We have all done that at one time or another. You intuitively understood the relationship between mental health and physical illness. If you are mentally upset, it would be a matter of time before you would begin to feel the effects of physical illness, i.e., headache, stomachache, tiredness, diarrhea. If you became physically ill, it would be a matter of time before your mental outlook might head toward depression, stress and/or anxiety. If a tragedy led you to question the wisdom and belief in a Higher Power, your spiritual outlook might suffer and lead to a decline in physical and mental well-being.

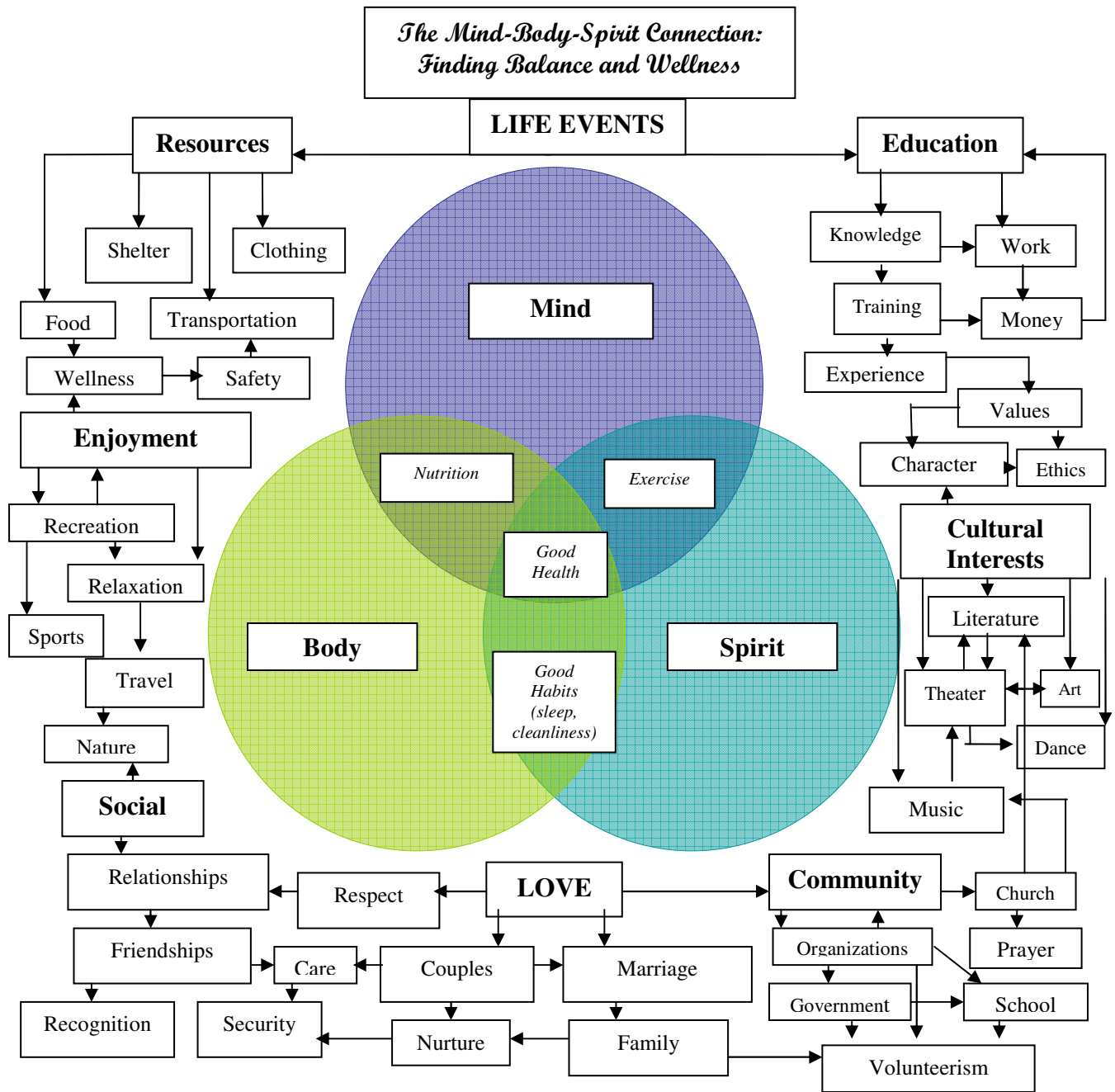
To maintain good physical health, it is important to understand the elements of good mental and spiritual health, and vice versa. Our bodies depend on positive self-talk to keep us motivated to follow good habits of nutrition, sufficient sleep, exercise and daily rituals to keep us strong. A positive mental outlook is a key factor in maintaining good physical health. Our spiritual outlook is a key factor in maintaining good mental health. Our physical well-being is tied irrevocably to our spiritual and mental well-being. And, so it goes. To maintain balance and wellness, it is necessary to understand the mind-body-spiritual connection.

To put this concept in perspective, imagine the Mind-Body-Spirit in three equal spheres that intersect in the middle. Within those intersections, imagine that Nutrition, Exercise and Good Habits (such as sufficient sleep, cleanliness) are necessary for Good Health which is found at the core of the three spheres. Now imagine that radiating from each of those spheres are Life Events that help us meet our needs. They are Education, Resources, Cultural Interests, Enjoyment, Social, Community, and Love. When we understand the flow from each of the Life Events, we begin to understand the interconnectedness that keeps our lives in balance and wellness. (See diagram.)

As Cognitive Behavioral Therapists, we assist our clients to learn new methods and ways to change old thinking patterns and habits to lead to better mental health. We ask you to become more focused and listen to your inner self-talk to stop automatic negative thinking. If you are always expecting the worst, then you will continue to suffer. However, if you can re-train your mind to think and respond differently, then you can be conditioned to think in positive, healthy ways.

The results are amazing! Rational and self-help statements become permanent with automatic responses to formerly negative events. You are able to listen to your new voice and reject the old lies or distortions. When you achieve better mental health habits, your physical health will begin to improve. This is not to say that you won't get a disease or become disabled, but you are better equipped to cope with the side effects while receiving treatment.

When your mind and body are functioning at capacity, you have opportunities to explore the spiritual side of your life leading you to more enlightenment about the meaning and sanctity of life. Spiritual rituals such as prayer, worship and study lead us to calmness and peace. The more our brain is quiet and relaxed, the easier it becomes for us to process information and knowledge to crowd out the anxieties and fears that we experience. Whatever your religion, Christian, Judaism, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or even Wicca, the coming holidays are opportunities to use your spiritual resources to obtain optimum mental and physical health.



If you or anyone in your family needs marriage and family counseling or personal counseling to address changes in your life, check out our web site at www.texasicounselors.com. Our rates are affordable.