

NETWORK NEWS

UPCOMING EVENTS:

JUNE 5 Professional Boundaries in Action
11:00 am - 12:00 pm ET

JUNE 12 Selective Eating in Young Children with Autism
11:00 am - 12:30 pm ET

JUNE 18 Insurance Principles and Resources
11:00 am - 12:30 pm ET

JUNE 25 Building Resilience Through Relationships
11:00 am - 12:00 pm ET

JULY 10 At Our Best: Caregiving Today | Kids Serve Too!
11:00 am - 12:30 pm ET

Stress: An Issue of Modifiable Lifestyle Factors

For a long time, it has been common knowledge that stress kills. Scientific knowledge has come to the forefront while attempting to answer how stress mediates the stance, in the activities one enjoys pursuing. Distress, on the other hand, is the type of stress associated with feeling overwhelmed or fatigued. Namely among the variables impacted by high amounts of distress are physical activity, sleep, and diet/nutrition. By understanding how psychological distress influences this three-legged stool we get a better sense of how we can address them. Thankfully, there has been much research examining this matter.

Lack of sleep stemming from significant stress can be problematic because it also affects the other two legs of the three-legged stool we have identified (diet and physical activity). Studies have demonstrated that a lack of sleep can cause an increase in the amount of calories we consume on a given days. Negative mood stemming from psychological stress and lack of sleep may also be responsible for evening-time overeating patterns⁴. The way that decreased sleep may impact eating patterns is by its effect on our hunger hormones⁵. Lack of sleep may also contribute to a lack of engagement in physical activity, which then leads to poorer outcomes and a higher risk of stress and chronic illness⁶.

Importantly, however, is that the other two legs of the stool (diet and physical activity) also exert effects on sleep quality. A 2017 study done on 5,062 women found that those women who exercised more tended to be protected from insomnia⁷. In a meta-analysis review of multiple studies looking at the effects of exercise on sleep, researchers found that regular exercise imparts benefit on and impacts total sleep time, sleep efficiency, sleep onset latency, and on sleep quality⁸.

The question of how diet can affect sleep is also an interesting one that has gained attention. In a cohort study of 3,816 men that examined eating and sleeping patterns in men, researchers from Penn State and Harvard Universities found that those that over consumed calories had low intakes of fruits and vegetables, and had the greatest intakes of sodium and trans-fat also tended to have the highest likelihood of experiencing insomnia⁹. Several studies have suggested that

consuming a diet that is more Mediterranean in nature may be a way of combating insomnia^{10,11}. Research focusing on specific dietary nutrients that may be associated with sleep quality and insomnia have narrowed in on the importance of getting adequate amounts of vitamin D₁₂ (which we obtain primarily from the being outside and exposed to sunlight!).

The 3-legged stool framework examined and explored here was only modestly addressed. The extent of the research on the effects of combatting stress through a comprehensive lifestyle and wellness regimen that focuses primarily on sleep, diet, and physical activity, is massive. Nevertheless, the following big-picture conclusion is substantiated by the research reported as well as novel and ongoing research: following a plan that focuses on consuming a diet that revolves primarily around whole-foods, limits the consumption of high-fat and processed foods, and incorporates a daily physical activity regimen is likely to, in some way, impart benefit to the psychological distress you face in your life¹³.

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SAVE THE DATE!

We're excited to announce our 2019 Virtual Conference!

Relationships for Readiness invites service providers and educators to amplify the work and the good they do. Join us to explore what's possible when we connect relationships to readiness!

Mark your calendars for **September 17-19, 2019!**

[NEWSBITES]



12 Successful Ways to Save Money

Like dieting, saving money is hard to start, even harder to maintain, and requires patience and discipline. When you achieve your financial goals, however, the results are so worth it. This blog post has 12 time-tested ways to save!

Supporting Siblings of Children with Autism

How can siblings of children with autism be supported? They need to feel informed, and should be encouraged to advocate for their needs and the needs of their sibling with autism. Check out this blog post for information and resources.

Nutrition for Combat

Do you know the three high risk times for weight gain for military communities? Find out in this blog post along with dietary recommendations for military service members and their families.

Military Marriages Matter: How Deployment Affects Marriages and Couples

Deployments can cause strain on a variety of familial relationships, including parental and marital. Many service members in the military are married and have children. Therefore, the impact of deployments extends beyond the service member to the family unit as a whole.

Anchored. Episode 17

A Discussion about Problematic Sexualized Behaviors in Children and Youth

Children and youth experience self-exploration and curiosity as a natural part of childhood development. As children's behaviors and understanding of their sexuality are formed, problematic sexual behaviors may arise. Understanding potential sexual development challenges is essential to supporting families and children during this crucial time of growth.

[Listen to this podcast episode.](#)

New Podcast Episode!



The Family Resiliency Center, with Brenda Koester, Assistant Director

In this podcast episode, Robin Allen, MSPH, RDN, LDN speaks with Brenda Koester, Assistant Director of the Family Resiliency Center (FRC) at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign to discuss the research FRC is conducting around the benefits of family mealtimes.

The FRC is a transdisciplinary research and policy center and a leader in translating research into practical information for policymakers, providers, and families. The center is housed in Doris Kelley Christopher Hall on the campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Listen to discover more about the FRC and their research which is benefiting families around the world.

[Listen to this podcast.](#)



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