



What is Your Mental Health Resolution?

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As the New Year begins, so do the annual resolutions. Many of these resolutions are to work towards a healthier lifestyle: to quit smoking, to exercise more, to reach a goal weight, to lower cholesterol, to eat healthier, to run a 5K or even a marathon. One aspect of a healthier lifestyle we often forget about is our mental health, which is just as important as our physical health.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mental health is considered a state of well-being that includes your emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Your mental health is the foundation for your healthy lifestyle because it affects how you think, feel, act, handle stress, and make choices. It is important to check in with yourself and your mental health to ensure your life has balance; balance between work, relationships, health, fun, and all of your other responsibilities.

When life gets out of balance, it can affect your mental health and cause feelings of sadness and anxiety. If you are feeling down and like your life is out of balance, you are not alone; 1 in 5 Americans experience an issue with their mental health in a given year. Depression is the most common type and affects 1 in 4 adults in the U.S. The good news is that there are several basic steps you can take to help improve your mental health.

One important step is to talk to someone. Tell a friend, family member, spiritual leader, significant other, or a professional how you are feeling. Sometimes the simple act of getting things off of your mind or hearing another perspective can provide relief. Exercise is also a great way to release some of those feelings and may help clear your mind, helping you to work through your stress. Many people find meditation or quiet time helpful, and journaling or writing can be therapeutic as well. Eating a healthy diet and getting plenty of sleep are also important in getting yourself back on track with your mental health.

As we move through 2014, try to remember your mental health. Check in with yourself, and take care of yourself. The solution may be as simple as changing your perspective or taking small steps towards solving a larger problem. Make a commitment to yourself, and make your mental health a priority this year.

References: <http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/basics.htm>;
<http://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/myths-facts/index.html>

