**Self-Reliance in Health Course**

**Lesson 9 – Nervous System/Mental Health**

Purpose:

​The nervous system is the control and messaging system for the entire body.  It is here we experience the environments of our lives; physical, mental, and emotional.  It has three basic functions: to receive, to interpret, and to respond. It includes the brain which sends messages to the body through the spinal cord and then out to different areas of the body through a complex network of trillions of nerve cells.  These messages move as electrical impulses through the nerve fibers, sending messages throughout our body.  This system is responsible for our senses (smell, touch, taste, sight, hearing), memory, learning, emotions, reflexes, movement, organ control, pretty much everything that happens in the body.

Brain

​The brain is so complex that we do not even know everything it is capable of so in simple terms it controls mental activities, movement, balance, emotions, sensory information, and memory. The brain stem controls the body’s hormones, and vital life functions such as respiration, heart function, sleep, pain, and temperature adjustment.

Spinal Cord

The spinal cord is the pathway for nerve signals to communicate information back and forth between the brain and the rest of the body.

Brain and Nerve Care:

* ​[Nutrition](http://weebly-link/185425031562425003) is vital for a well-functioning nervous system. (Lesson 1)
* [Gut health](http://weebly-link/303618474402508053) is now being linked to brain health, something referred to as the "gut brain" or the "gut brain connection".  Once the nutritional foundation is laid, work on the gut. (Lesson 2)
* Cut out as many environmental toxins as possible, especially [heavy metals](https://draxe.com/health/heavy-metal-detox/), as these are linked to brain function. (Lesson 7)
* Herbs that the feed the brain include: ashwagandha, ginkgo, ginseng, gotu kola, and [turmeric](http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herb-series-turmeric).  They should be used as a tonic over several weeks or months, two or three times a day.
* Foods to feed the brain and nervous system include: fresh sprouts, high-quality protein, whole grains, green leafy vegetables, root vegetables, cultured foods, citrus fruits, seaweeds, nuts and seeds.
* Stress weakens and "stresses" the nervous system so practice regular stress relief measures (see below under conditions).
* Adequate rest (see below if dealing with a sleep disorder).
* Regular exercise.
* Study and learning allow the brain to grow in its capabilities, the more effort put forth, the greater the capability increases.

*"Then opened he (Jesus) their understanding, that they might understand scriptures."*[*Luke 24:45*](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/nt/luke/24?lang=eng) *"...he that receiveth light and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day."*[*D&C 50:24*](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/50?lang=eng)

Herbs for Brain and Nerves:

* Nerve Formulas <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/nerve-formulas>
* Golden Goodness Mix <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/golden-goodness-mix>
* Calcium rich foods and herbs are essential for healthy nerve function. Proper amounts of blood calcium prevent nervousness, irritability, muscle spasms, muscle cramping, hyperactivity, and insomnia.
  + Herbal Calcium <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/dr-christophers-herbal-calcium-blend>
  + Amaranth
  + Chickweed
  + Dandelion
  + Nettle
* Nerve tonics feed, tone, rehabilitate, fortify, and strengthen the nerve tissue.
  + Chamomile
  + Catnip
  + Garlic
  + Lemon balm
  + Linden
  + Skullcap
  + Oatstraw
  + Wood betony
  + Valerian
  + Hops
* Nerve sedatives work to relax, soothe, and nourish the nervous system to help reduce pain, ease tension, and encourage sleep.  They include those listed above as nerve tonics in addition to some of these herbs:
  + Mint
  + Lavender
  + Hawthorn
  + Red clover
  + Sage
  + St. John’s wort
  + Thyme
  + Yarrow
  + Wild cherry
  + Blue vervain
  + California poppy
  + Passionflower
  + Lobelia
  + Motherwort
  + crampbark
* Adaptogen herbs enhance the body's ability to deal with emotional, physical, and environmental stress. They are generally taken over a long period of time to build the body's resistance and endurance to a variety of adverse influences and stressors.
* ashwagandha
* astragalus
* codonopsis
* dang shen
* eleuthero
* ginseng
* licorice
* lycium
* reishi mushroom
* rhodiola
* schisandra
* tulsi (holy basil)

Conditions:

Chronic stress can lead to conditions such as anxiety, depression, weight loss or gain, fatigue, sleep disruption, and hypertension to name a few.  Making lifestyle changes in order to reduce stress levels can prevent some of these conditions as well as strengthen the nervous system.

* Adaptogen herbs from above.
* Exercise (clears the stress hormone, cortisol).
* Yoga, get the benefits of clearing cortisol plus the breathing that can calm and balance the mind and body.
* Hot baths
* Breathing exercises we discussed in [Lesson 9](http://weebly-link/259898251607863122).
* Massage
* Meditation, spiritual time, prayer, “you” time doing what you enjoy.
* Cuddling with pets or people.
* Adequate sleep.
* [Tapping](https://www.tappingsolutionfoundation.org/)
* Nervine tonic and sedative herbs and formulas from above.
* [Dr. Christopher Relax-Eze](https://drchristophersherbshop.com/search?type=product&options%5Bprefix%5D=last&q=relax) formula

Headaches:  
When pain sensitive areas in the head are stimulated, a headache occurs. There are several types of headaches: dull and aching, tension, migraine, and cluster. There are many causes including inflammation, congestion, low blood sugar, fatigue, stress, eyestrain, muscle tension, heat exhaustion, allergies, medication, hormone imbalance, environmental toxins, dehydration, injury or illness inflammation to name a few. Finding the root of the problem can help in relieving the headache, maybe all you need is a beverage, food, or rest.   
   
Prevention Measures:

* Drink plenty of water.
* Follow nutrition guidelines from [Lesson 1](http://weebly-link/185425031562425003).
* Be aware of your body: are you holding tension somewhere, bad posture, exercise too hard, eating foods that don’t agree, not enough fluids, etc.
* Be mindful of environmental toxins.
* Use stress relief practices from above.
* Keep a food journal to pinpoint triggers and avoid them.

Remedies:

* Apply icepack or herbal pillow to pain area. Place a hot compress on the back of neck, while at the same time you place a cool one on the forehead.
* Take a warm bath or shower.
* Take a nap.
* Headaches can be caused by an over toxic body so cleansing the liver can help. Lesson 10.
* Exercise and get outside in some fresh air.
* Walk barefoot in the grass, in water, over rocks, any type of earth element.
* Soak feet in as hot as you can stand water with a few drops of lavender essential oil – while sipping on herbal tea.  After hot soak dip feet in cold water.
* Apply pressure to where the pain is for several minutes at a time - for best results use one of the essential oils listed below as well.
* Massage shoulder blades, the neck and back of head, all over head like shampoo.  For migraines, massage the earlobes as well.
* [Pain Salve](http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/uploads/5/1/9/7/5197349/5890946.jpg?399) - apply to the temples, back or neck as well as area of pain.
* [Raw Honey](http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/1/post/2013/10/raw-honey-gods-amazing-healer.html) - dissolve 1 teaspoon in a glass of warm water and sip at the onset of headache.  Repeat every 20 minutes.
* Lobelia Tincture - apply to temples, forehead and along the spine.
* Herbs: lavender, basil, willow bark, wintergreen or birch, feverfew, catnip.
* Essential oils: lavender, rosemary, peppermint, eucalyptus, frankincense, chamomile, copaiba. Young Living Deep Relief roll on.
* See blog for headaches <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/headaches-and-migraines.html>

Sleep Issues:  
Sleeping is vital for all body processes. It is a time to store memories and all that was learned throughout the day, restore energy, renew cells, and heal and fix up any problems. The inability to easily fall asleep or to stay asleep long enough to feel rested upon waking is considered insomnia. It can be caused by stress, anxiety, illness, excitement, fatigue, jet lag, irritability, and life changes.  Chronic insomnia lasts longer than a few days and can be caused by pharmaceuticals, drug and alcohol abuse, sleep apnea, aging, obesity, chronic depression, asthma, chronic pain, and certain bacteria and viruses to name a few.    
  
Long term insomnia can cause other problems due to the lack of sleep including decreased ability to function emotionally and physically, impaired memory, concentration, and attention, learning capacity, decreased reaction time, depression, decreased immune function and increased risk of other chronic disease. Strive to find the root cause of the problem and work on treating that while using these other means to get some rest.

* Adaptogen and nervine herbs from above.
* Essential Oils: lavender, chamomile, vetiver, orange. Sleep blend from company.
* Dream pillow <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herbal-dream-pillow-blend>
* Acupressure
* Yoga and exercise
* Kiddie Calm blend <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/childrens-calming-bedtime-glycerite>
* Walk barefoot on the grass, this releases static electricity which can interfere with sleep, among many other things.

Pain:  
[*The Gift of Pain by Dr. Paul Brand & Phillip Yancey*](https://philipyancey.com/books/the-gift-of-pain) is a great book about why we have pain, its importance and what we can do about it.  Pain is a message the nerves send through the body that there is a problem. If that problem is just covered up with a pain reliever, the problem was not solved and can just turn into chronic pain or other conditions. You need to seek out the cause of the pain, work on nourishing and healing the issue, and then apply pain relieving methods from that point on.

* Herbs:
* Willow, birch (poplar family)
* Chamomile
* Hops – nervine, sedative, and anodyne pain reliever
* Turmeric (curcumin) – natural anti-inflammatory that has been found to significantly reduce pain.
* Comfrey – using comfrey topically and turmeric internally make a great combination for many forms of pain. (*The Healing Power of Trauma Comfrey by Holly Lucille*)
* California Poppy (morphine is derived from the opium poppy)
* Lavender
* Lemongrass (analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties)
* Peppermint – mild pain reliever
* Skullcap – relieves cramping and muscle/organ spasms, sedative
* Valerian - highly sedative, relaxes to relieve pain
* Wormwood – narcotic type qualities
* Cayenne
* Cloves
* Essential Oils: wintergreen, eucalyptus, peppermint, copaiba, clove, lavender, Pain blend (Paine- Butterfly Express, Panaway and Deep Relief roll on – Young Living)
* Pain Salve <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/pain-salve-useful-for-arthritis-and-muscle-pain>
* Pain formula blend <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/pain-relief-blend>
* Dr. Christopher Stop Ache (internal), Dr. Christopher Cayenne Ointment, MPR spray, or Sen Sei Menthol Rub (external).
* Pain management:
  + Stimulate sensations in other areas of the body - like walking barefoot on rocks for example.
  + Distraction – work, serving, reading, hobbies, pets, anything to divert the mind from pain.
  + Beauty – art, nature, poetry, music, fresh air, garden walk, feeling sensations of plants and inhaling their aroma, barefoot on grass, etc.
  + Positive thoughts
  + Music therapy
* ​A note on over-the-counter pharmaceuticals:  
  Pain relieving medication sends a message to the brain to stop sending a pain signal that there is an issue in the body. They only cover a problem; they do not heal it.
* Ibuprofen and aspirin slow down blood clotting and may prolong bleeding so they work against the body when dealing with injury pain.  (Trauma Comfrey)
* Acetaminophen (Tylenol) - is easy to overdose on because it is included in more than 500 medications; it causes half the cases of acute liver failure in the U.S. and is responsible for 26,000 hospitalizations and 500 deaths annually. (Trauma Comfrey)
* NSAIDs (aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen, etc. pain reliever) - can cause serous toxicity problems and gastric bleeding.  200,000 hospitalizations and 30,000 deaths each year.  Doubles the risk of heart attack and stroke due to the decrease in kidney function.
* I personally keep Ibuprofen in my emergency kit for conditions where it is needed, such as kidney stones, which my husband deals with.  It is with constant use where the problems lie.

Class Projects

* Music Therapy for stress relief and pain management
* Herbal Pillows
* Sleep Spray

Resources:

* *Three Brains: How the Heart, Brain, and Gut Influence Mental Health and Identity* by Karen Jensen, ND
* *Feelings Buried Alive Never Die* by Karol Truman
* *A Better Way to Think* by
* *The Gift of Pain* by Paul W. Brand and Philip Yancey
* *Curcumin: The 21st Century Cure* by Jan McBarron
* *Trauma Comfrey* by Holly Lucille
* Herbal Legacy Article: Herbs for Pain<https://archive.aweber.com/herbal-legacy/7ZLQl/h/Herbs_for_Pain.htm>
* *The Tapping Solution* by Nick Ortner <https://www.tappingsolutionfoundation.org/>

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