

Second Opinion

HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY

FREE

JUNE IS PTSD AND
MENTAL HEALTH
MONTH +



In this issue:
SCHOOL'S OUT
*Now?
what?*

*It's
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*Hello,
Summer!*

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How to Support a Veteran Facing Mental Health Challenges

by Stokes, Prock & Mundt Funeral Chapel

Veterans sacrifice so much in service to their country, but many return home facing battles that are not as visible as those fought on the battlefield. Mental health struggles, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety, are common among veterans. If you have a friend or relative who is a veteran dealing with these issues, your support can make a significant difference. There are some practical and compassionate ways to help them through their journey to healing.

Understanding the mental health challenges veterans face is a crucial first step. PTSD, depression, and anxiety can manifest in various ways, including nightmares, flashbacks, withdrawal from social interactions, mood swings, or difficulty maintaining employment. By learning more about these conditions, you can better understand what your loved one is going through and offer more effective support.

There are many resources available online from organizations such as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and the Wounded Warrior Project. These organizations provide valuable information about symptoms, treatments, and coping strategies.

Many veterans struggle with opening up about their emotions, either due to stigma or a sense of duty to remain strong. Let them know you are there to listen without judgment. When they do choose to talk, listen actively—avoid offering immediate solutions or minimizing their feelings. Sometimes, just being present and acknowledging their experiences can be incredibly healing.

You can start a conversation by saying something like, “I’ve noticed you’ve been struggling lately. I just want you to know I’m here for you if you ever want to talk.” Keep the conversation open-ended and allow them to share at their own pace.

While your support is invaluable, professional help is often necessary for long-term healing. Encourage your loved one to seek therapy, counseling, or medical treatment. The VA offers a range of mental health services, and there are numerous veteran-focused organizations that provide free or low-cost care.

Sometimes, taking the first step is the hardest part. Offer to help them find a therapist, accompany them to an

appointment, or assist with navigating VA benefits. If they resist seeking help, gently remind them that professional support does not mean weakness—it means taking control of their well-being.

Healing from mental health issues is not a linear process. There will be good days and bad days. Be patient and understand that your loved one may not always respond to support in the way you expect.



Respect their boundaries. If they need space, give it to them, but also reassure them that you are available when they are ready. Avoid pushing them too hard to open up or participate in activities they are not comfortable with.

Encourage activities that promote mental and physical well-being. Exercise, proper nutrition, and sleep can have a significant impact on mental health. Invite your loved one to join you in physical activities such as hiking, yoga, or even simple walks. Engaging in shared activities can provide a sense of normalcy and comfort.

Additionally, be mindful of their substance use. Many veterans turn to alcohol or drugs as a coping mechanism. If you notice unhealthy behaviors, express your concern with kindness and offer alternatives for managing stress and emotions.

Veteran peer support groups can be incredibly beneficial. Talking with others who have had similar experiences can reduce feelings of isolation and provide valuable coping strategies. Organizations like the VA, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and Team RWB offer support groups, community events, and counseling services specifically for veterans.

Supporting a veteran with mental health challenges is not a one-time effort—it requires ongoing commitment. Continue checking in, even when they seem to be doing better. Let them know they are not alone and that you are in their corner for the long run.

Your support, patience, and compassion can help a veteran navigate their mental health journey. By being a reliable and understanding presence in their life, you can make a profound difference and remind them that they are valued, appreciated, and never alone.

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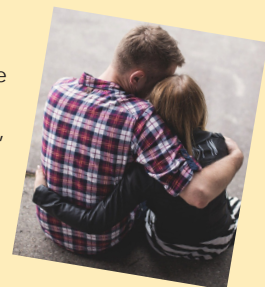
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Poppy Day - Honor and Support Our Veterans

Each year on the Friday before Memorial Day in the United States, members of the American Legion Family hand out small paper or silk poppies for people to wear in honor of our past, current and future veterans. It's celebrated as Poppy Day, and this year it falls on Friday, May 23, 2025.

The origins of Poppy Day come from World War I, specifically starting in France and Belgium. It is believed that the rubble left by the war there enriched the soil with lime, and the poppy flourished during and after the war. Shortly after seeing the beautiful, bright red flowers on the front line, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, M.D. penned the haunting poem "In Flanders Fields." The poppy soon became a symbol for all the blood shed during the war.

On September 27, 1920, the American Legion began to use the poppy as the official flower to memorialize soldiers from WWI, and then began nationally distributing them in 1924. Today, the flower honors all the living and those who have fallen in service to our country.

Your donation helps support the medical and financial needs of all veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families.

Ways to participate in honoring our veterans on Poppy Day:

- Wear a red poppy and explain it to people who ask
- Distribute poppies (see website below for details)
- If you accept a poppy from someone, make a donation
- Collect donations for the Poppy Program (see website below for details)
- Share on social media

Source: American Legion Auxiliary. "National Poppy Day."
<https://www.legion-aux.org/national-poppy-day>



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Now, Trinity is stepping into a bold new chapter—one that expands that life-changing work to include first responders—and the Strength in Service Summit is how they're kicking it off.

Held October 3–4, the Summit is a high-impact, two-day event designed to equip veterans, first responders, and the people who support them with real-world tools to strengthen stress recovery and emotional stamina, and manage trauma, identity loss, and burnout. But don't picture a conference center full of lectures. Picture a big-top tent, crisp fall air, horses in the arena, a Friday night bonfire, and an unforgettable Saturday packed with powerhouse speakers, practical insights, live music, and connection that goes soul-deep.

Keynote speaker and former POW Jessica Lynch sets the tone early, and the day rolls into messages from law enforcement, fire and EMS professionals, trauma experts, authors, and those with lived experience—each adding a layer of hope, insight, and restoration.

The day wraps with a faith-forward capstone message from Pastor Paul of Jacobs Well Church: Permission to Be—Inspiration to Grow, followed by live music from *The Voice* finalist Chris Kroeze.

And while most summits end with a handshake and a handout, this one ends with clarity, next steps, and a reason to come back next year.

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Butch Nehring: A Vietnam Veteran Story

By Kristi Gay, Freelance Writer



"We have a better future when we remember the past, learn from it, and move forward together." - John McCain, Vietnam POW

On May 26 this year, we will celebrate Memorial Day. Partially inspired by my high school daughter's weekly Advanced World History quizzes, which I'm helping prepare for, I decided to write an article about the Vietnam War. Butch Nehring, a family friend and resident of Bloomer, Wisconsin, was kind enough to talk to me about his time in the service. In 1967, as a 20-year-old studying social services at UW-Stout college, Butch was drafted, deployed and fought for nearly two years in the Vietnam War.

The Vietnam War is particularly difficult for our veterans to talk about because of how they were treated by our country upon returning home and finding out Americans were so against it. Young men who are drafted agree to serve because they believe in our country and are willing to sacrifice to protect it. However, they rarely know the details of wartime decisions made by the President or generals, and they simply are trained to follow orders and protect each other.

After World War II, which generally felt like a clear fight against evil, the Vietnam War seemed confusing and distant. Also, for the first time, the war was televised. People could see the brutality on the nightly news, horrifying them, which create a credibility gap between what they saw and what the government said about how the war was going. With massive civilian casualties from bombings and chemicals like Agent Orange, people started to believe it was an unjust or even immoral war.

As hard as the war was, Butch did have some good memories with whom he describes as "his brothers." Their regular schedule would rotate between "recon" (surveying a region by foot or on the road for the enemy) and "stand-by" (waiting to be called in for back-up if the recon crew found the enemy). During this stand-by down

time, Butch and his brothers used large wooden boxes from mortars (short cannons) to build a full porch for their bunker, complete with roof and porch furniture. Butch recalled, with mischievous giggle, they tapped into the communications station's 110V electricity to add porch lights to their otherwise completely dark living area—until it caused radio issues and the lines were tested. They were also limited to two beers per day, but their first sergeant looked the other way if they exceeded that while playing cards on their homemade porch. This bonding made it horrifically traumatizing when his buddies got blown to pieces in front of his eyes, and Butch was emotional multiple times during our meeting, even while remembering good days.

The estimates vary but the overall death toll in the Vietnam War was likely somewhere between 2.5-3.5 million people including civilians and soldiers from all sides. Nearly 60,000 of those deaths were US military, with hundreds of thousands of US military wounded.

Even when offered \$8,000 and a promotion to Staff Sergeant, Butch declined a re-up. He returned home in December 1968 and proceeded to return to college. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in Speech Pathology while running the

night shift for a food processing plant in Bloomer, where he was eventually hired to be Plant Manager. He recently celebrated 50 years of marriage with his wife, Sue Nehring, and they share three kids and many grandchildren.

Even after his struggle with PTSD and losing most of his friends in the war, Butch said he would support his kids or grandkids if they were ever interested in joining the military. There are many benefits to being in the military including country pride and leadership training. Butch said, "there is risk in anything," so follow your dreams.

Thank you to all of our servicemen and women, regardless of what war you represented us in, and prayers and immense gratitude for all of those lost protecting our freedoms.





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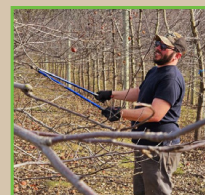
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The Effect of Sleeplessness on Thermography

By Thermography of Wisconsin



.....
Ah, those elusive sheep! Perhaps you've had an occasional night of counting those fuzzy images, tossing and turning as you ponder the meaning of life, formulate the perfect response to that jibe, or recite the chorus of a song over and over....

Sleep directly affects your health and well-being. Chronic sleeplessness contributes to a myriad of physical health issues by impacting your autonomic nervous system. This system manages involuntary bodily functions, including heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, digestion and sexual stimulation, and is key in your ability to manage stress.

The autonomic nervous system is divided into parasympathetic (rest, digest, reproduce) and sympathetic systems (fight, flee). These two systems constantly jockey back and forth and must be balanced to maintain good health. Sleeplessness interrupts the balance of the two systems, tipping to the sympathetic side and increasing your body's stress response. This can negatively affect your body's immune function and increase inflammation leading to autonomic dysfunction and disease.

Your skin helps to maintain the balance of these two systems. Digital Infrared Thermal Imaging (clinical thermography) visualizes your body's autonomic balance/imbalance state as expressed by temperature emitted through the surface of the skin.

The hypothalamus gland of your brain is responsible to balance the body's internal temperature by heat transference through the skin's surface. Think goose bumps when you are chilled and sweating when you are very warm. Just like the thermostat in your house, the hypothalamus receives internal body temperature signals from blood flow through the brain and external temperature signals from the trunk of your body.

The hypothalamus, in turn, sends signals to the surface of the skin to respond and bring the body temperature back into balance.

These thermal patterns, visualized with thermography, provide doctors with information about your body's autonomic state. Early detection provides you and your care provider with a better opportunity to offset and perhaps reverse potential autonomic disease.

While having an occasional sleepless night is annoying, chronic sleep disruption will affect the balance of your autonomic system and may affect your health. Be sure to report any sleep issues at your next thermography screening.

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Sleep, Mental Health, and PTSD in Veterans: A Holistic Health Perspective

by Tammie Delveaux Rubenzer

Sleep is a cornerstone of physical and emotional well-being, yet for many veterans, it remains elusive. The connection between sleep, mental health, and conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is profound, and a growing body of research underscores the importance of addressing these issues through a holistic lens. Veterans often carry the invisible wounds of service—psychological and emotional trauma—that can significantly impact their sleep patterns and overall health.

PTSD, which affects a large percentage of veterans, often disrupts normal sleep due to nightmares, hypervigilance, and heightened anxiety. Insomnia and fragmented sleep are common, creating a vicious cycle where poor sleep exacerbates PTSD symptoms, which further deteriorates sleep quality. Sleep disturbances are not merely symptoms, they are also contributors to the persistence of mental health challenges including depression, anxiety, and cognitive decline.

From a holistic health perspective, healing must go beyond symptom management. It involves addressing the body, mind, and spirit as interconnected parts of a whole. For veterans, this means not only treating PTSD and sleep disorders with medication or therapy, but also incorporating practices that restore balance and promote resilience.

One crucial element in this holistic approach is establishing healthy sleep hygiene. This includes creating a calming nighttime routine, limiting exposure to screens before bed, and maintaining a consistent sleep schedule. Simple lifestyle adjustments can help recalibrate the body's circadian rhythm and improve sleep quality over time.

Equally important are complementary therapies such as yoga, meditation, acupuncture, and mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR). These practices have been shown to reduce stress hormones, regulate breathing and heart rate, and

foster a sense of inner peace. For veterans with PTSD, such therapies can provide powerful tools for grounding and self-regulation, helping to ease the mind into rest.

Nutrition and physical activity also play vital roles in this integrated approach. Diets rich in omega-3 fatty acids, quality proteins (both plant and animal), brightly colored fruits and vegetables (which contain necessary vitamins and minerals), beans and legumes, and complex carbohydrates all support brain function and mood regulation. Regular physical activity, especially outdoors, can help improve both mental health and sleep by reducing anxiety and promoting the natural release of endorphins.

Social support is another pillar of holistic health. Many veterans feel isolated after leaving military service. Group therapy, peer support networks, and community involvement can create a sense of belonging and safety, essential for emotional recovery and better sleep. Programs that connect veterans with nature, animals, or creative outlets like art and music therapy also offer healing avenues that engage the senses and soothe the nervous system.

Veterans' health must be viewed through a broader, more compassionate lens—one that recognizes the deep interplay between mind and body, past trauma and present healing. A holistic approach doesn't just treat symptoms, it fosters a renewed sense of agency, dignity, and hope. Sleep is not a luxury, it's a fundamental right and a key to healing. By addressing sleep and mental health together, we empower veterans to reclaim their well-being and build a healthier, more peaceful future.

Tammie Delveaux Rubenzer, FNTPT, Integrative Nutrition & Holistic Health, and Nutrition Response Testing Practitioner. Owner of Belly Love Holistic Wellness - www.bellyloveholisticwellness.com.





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Chiropractic Care and Improving Sleep

By Dr. Abby Bachmeier, Smith & Prissel Chiropractic and Massage

Sleep is crucial for overall health, affecting both physical and mental well-being. Chiropractic care, which focuses on diagnosing and treating musculoskeletal disorders, particularly those related to the spine, aims to improve body function.

Chiropractic care involves adjustments that improve spinal alignment. The spine houses much of the nervous system, which controls body functions, including sleep patterns. Misalignments, called subluxations, can cause nerve interference, leading to discomfort, pain, and sleep disturbances.

Benefits of Chiropractic Care for Sleep

1. Pain Reduction: Chronic pain is a prevalent issue that significantly disrupts sleep patterns. It often leads to restlessness and frequent night waking. Chiropractic adjustments play a crucial role in alleviating musculoskeletal pain, which can be a major contributor to sleep disturbances. By addressing and correcting misalignments in the spine and other joints, chiropractic care can help reduce pain levels. This relief enables individuals to find more comfortable positions essential for maintaining uninterrupted sleep, allowing for a more restful and rejuvenating night.

2. Stress Reduction: Chiropractic care is often recognized as a helpful method for reducing stress. By aligning the spine, chiropractors aim to improve the overall function of the nervous system. When stress levels are reduced, individuals may find a greater sense of relaxation. This relaxation can significantly enhance sleep quality, making it easier for people to fall asleep and stay asleep. As a result, chiropractic care not only addresses physical issues but also contributes to mental well-being by promoting a more balanced and stress-free lifestyle.

3. Improved Nervous System Function: An adequately aligned spine is crucial for maintaining overall health, especially the nervous system. The spine houses and protects the spinal cord, which transmits signals between the brain and the body. Correct spinal alignment minimizes nerve interference, optimizing nervous system function. The nervous system regulates various bodily functions, including the sleep-wake cycle (circadian rhythm). Disruptions to the nervous system can affect this cycle, leading to sleep disturbances like insomnia or restless sleep.

Chiropractic care focuses on correcting spinal misalignments that impede the nervous system's function. Adjustments and other therapeutic techniques restore spinal alignment, enhancing nerve communication throughout the body. This improved neural function regulates the sleep-wake cycle more effectively, leading to better sleep quality and duration. Regular chiropractic care often improves sleep onset and sleep duration.

4. Addressing Sleep Disorders: Some sleep disorders, such as insomnia and restless leg syndrome, may be linked to underlying issues with the nervous system, chronic pain, or nutrient depletion. Chiropractic care, as part of a comprehensive treatment plan, can help manage these conditions.

Chiropractic care enhances sleep quality by reducing pain, which could interfere with sleep. It also lowers stress levels by promoting relaxation, improving body alignment, easing muscle tension, and creating well-being. Additionally, chiropractic treatments optimize nervous system function by correcting spinal misalignments that impede nerve communication, supporting better sleep regulation and restorative rest.



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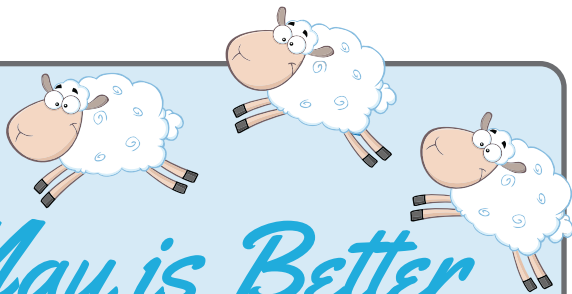


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Reduces Anxiety & Stress: CBD has been shown to have calming effects, which can help reduce anxiety — one of the biggest reasons people struggle to fall asleep.

Eases Pain & Discomfort: If pain or chronic discomfort keeps you awake, CBD may help by interacting with the body's endocannabinoid system to reduce inflammation and pain perception.

Regulates Sleep Cycles: Some studies suggest that CBD might help regulate circadian rhythms and REM sleep cycles, especially at certain doses.

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Cannabinol for Better Sleep

Cannabinol (CBN) is a non-psychoactive compound derived from the cannabis plant. It is a degradation product of THC—meaning as THC ages or is exposed to heat and light, it breaks down into CBN—however, CBN does not produce a “high” like THC. CBN specifically binds to receptors in the body’s endocannabinoid system (ECS), a complex system of receptors and neurotransmitters located primarily in the brain and immune system that play a role in regulating processes including sleep, mood, appetite, and pain. Although CBN is not as well-known as THC or CBD, research suggests that it may offer significant benefits for those struggling with sleep issues, particularly insomnia.

Key factors that suggest CBN may play a role in improving sleep:

- 1. Sedative Effects:** Studies on animals have shown that CBN has the potential to increase sleep duration, particularly when used in combination with other cannabinoids like CBD. Some anecdotal evidence also points to CBN’s ability to promote deep, restorative sleep. It is thought to interact with the brain’s receptors in such a way that it reduces the time it takes to fall asleep, while increasing overall sleep duration.
- 2. Reduction of Sleep Disruptions:** Research has suggested that CBN may help reduce frequent awakenings during the night and promote a more stable and uninterrupted sleep cycle. This could be particularly useful for individuals suffering from conditions like insomnia or chronic pain.
- 3. Anxiolytic (Anti-Anxiety) Effects:** Anxiety is one of the leading causes of insomnia and poor-quality sleep. CBN has demonstrated potential anxiolytic (anti-anxiety) effects, helping to calm the mind and reduce feelings of restlessness. People who experience racing

thoughts or stress before bed may benefit from CBN’s calming properties.

- 4. Pain Relief:** Like other cannabinoids, CBN has been shown to have analgesic (pain-relieving) properties. By alleviating pain, CBN may enable individuals to sleep more soundly without discomfort disrupting their rest.

This can be especially beneficial for people dealing with conditions like arthritis, fibromyalgia, or back pain.

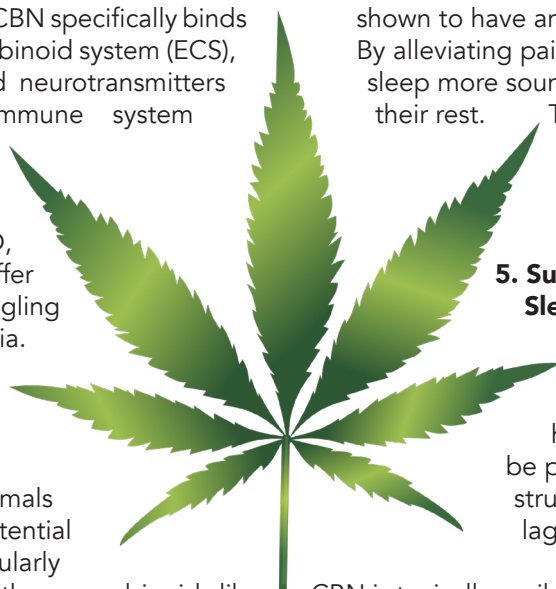
5. Supporting the Body’s Natural Sleep-Wake Cycle:

CBN, when used in conjunction with other cannabinoids like CBD, may help maintain a healthy circadian rhythm. This can be particularly useful for people who struggle with sleep due to shift work, jet lag, or irregular sleep patterns.

CBN is typically available in a variety of forms, including oils, tinctures, capsules, edibles, and topicals. When using CBN to improve sleep, it is important to start with a low dose and gradually increase as needed. The ideal dosage can vary from person to person, depending on factors like body weight, sleep issues, and individual response to cannabinoids.

For those looking to incorporate CBN into their bedtime routine, start with products like CBN-infused gummies or tinctures as they allow for easy dosing and absorption. Consider combining CBN with other sleep-promoting ingredients, such as CBD, for a more comprehensive approach to improving sleep quality.

While more research is needed to fully understand the effects of CBN on sleep, early findings are promising. As always, it is recommended to consult with a healthcare professional before introducing new supplements or cannabinoids into your routine.



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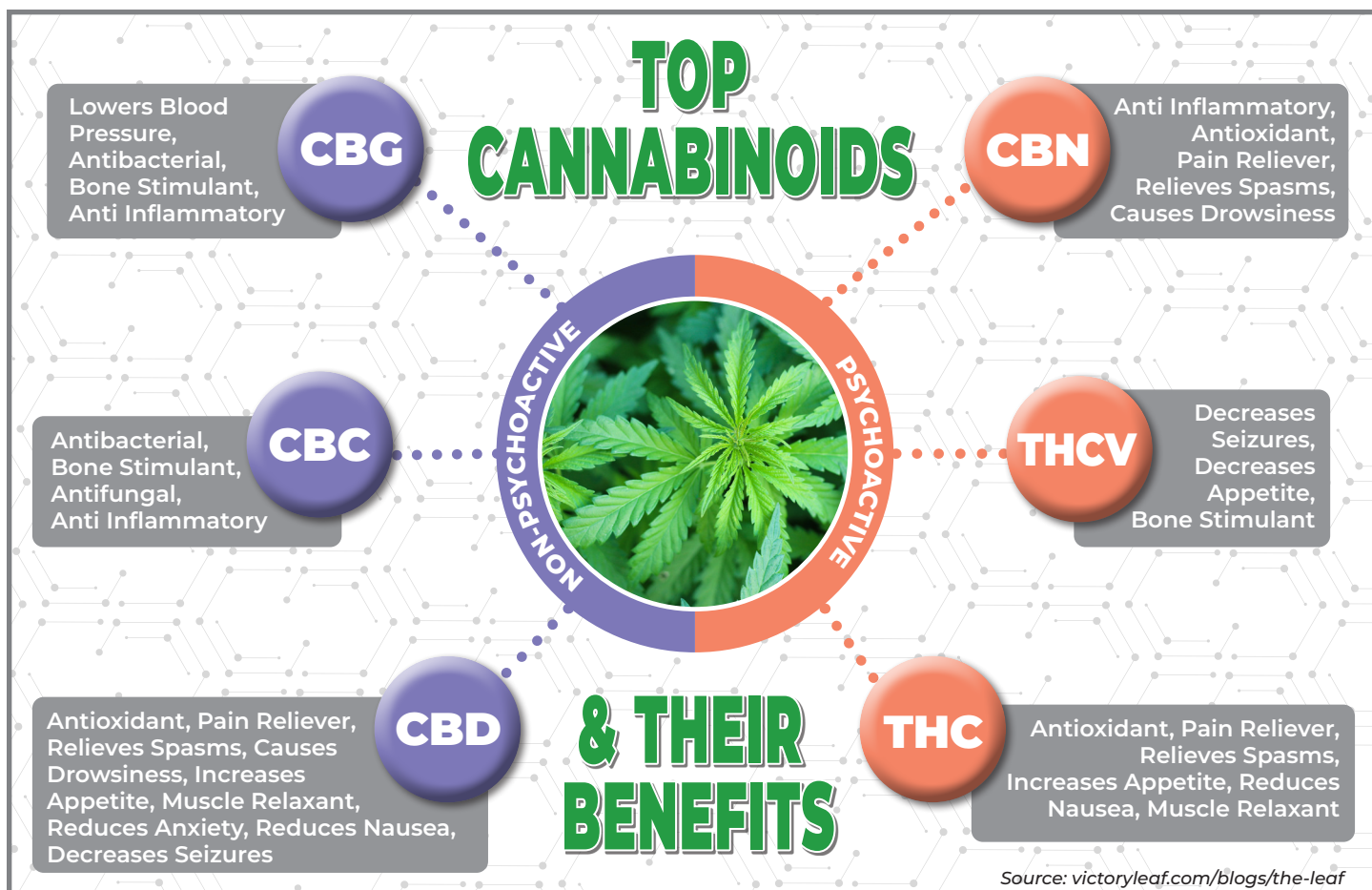
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Source: victoryleaf.com/blogs/the-leaf

THE BRAIN-BODY CONNECTION

by Judy Soborowicz, Active Health Chiropractic

Opportunities for movement abound—running, lifting weights, yoga, hiking, and biking—and we are so naturally drawn to build physical work into our lives that we continually invent new ways! For over 125 years, the chiropractic approach has been focused on optimal movement and improving the communication between the brain and the body. As the second largest healing profession in the world, this is the very concept the profession is founded on.

Fortunately for those who suffer, our medical system is beginning to look at the impact of the brain-body connection on overall wellness and well-being. A March 2016 article from Harvard Health Publishing, one of the highest ranked medical schools in the world, printed, “recent studies show that the connection between your brain and your body is a ‘two-way street’ and that means movement can change your brain, too!” This article further states, “Your mind and body are intimately connected. And while your brain is the master control system for your body’s movement, the way you move can also affect the way you think and feel” (1).

All organ systems, muscles, joints and tissues in the body rely on two-way communication with the brain—it is all connected. Signal inputs from movements affect brain processes that regulate mood, calmness, sleep, balance, posture, stability, alertness, digestion and overall wellness. Rapid and robust communication between the brain and body are observable through coordination and ease of movement. Changes in the brain are evident in movement and can be relied upon for identifying disease significantly prior to the first symptoms.


Because the way you move affects the way you think and feel, your brain function relies on you to maintain optimal movement. Movement issues can be caused by injuries such as slips, falls, auto accidents, poor sleep habits, stroke, and even the birth process. Your ‘bad’ knee, hip or shoulder may be persisting due to a movement problem that should not be ignored. Specific chiropractic adjustments can release injury on protected areas of the spine column and joints of the body, restoring healthy movement and optimizing brain-body communication. Intuitively and practically, we understand that maintaining stability and healthy movement throughout our lifetime is essential.

Healthy brain function is inseparably interrelated to the quality of movement. The effects of unhealthy movement cause most of the unwanted health conditions people suffer from every day. Chiropractors have a term for the intimate brain-body connection, for which the profession has been both celebrated and condemned: innate intelligence.

Millions of people have received the benefits of chiropractic, yet expert researchers have been unable to fully explain the complete reason for the significant health impacts. With technical advances, medical science continues to move toward greater understanding of our brain and body, and how overall healing occurs.

Chiropractic doctors focus on restoring the master control system of the body and optimizing the brain-body connection. Many experience chiropractic benefits for the physical body, and continue to benefit from mood lifting, improved memory and overall mental health and wellness.

1. <http://health.harvard.edu/blog/how-simply-moving-benefits-your-mental-health-201603289350>.




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