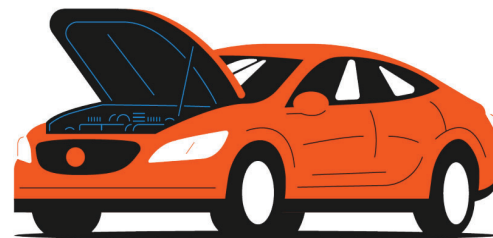


The Oaks Wellness Model Nutrition Worksheet



Welcome, friend! In this course, we hope you will learn about the importance of nutrition to your overall wellness. Your nutrition is a vital part of both your mental and physical health. Remember, The Oaks is staffed by mental health professionals, and we do not have all the answers. The information covered in this course is meant to be educational, and not used for medical advice. We know that nutrition can be a difficult topic for many, so please take time to be gentle with yourself as you reflect on how this course applies to your life.

Did you know that your brain is actually an organ? In fact, it is a very important organ in your body, as it controls so many functions that you need for life (ex. Breathing, thinking, heart rate, sleep, hunger, etc.) You can think of the food you eat as brain fuel. Just like a car, it is important to put the right kind of fuel into your body (aka. car) so your brain (aka. engine) can run properly.



Take a moment to think about the foods you usually eat. If you find this task difficult, that's okay! It can be hard to think about, but being aware of your nutrition can help you improve your wellness. Awareness is the first step in changing your nutrition. Remember, be patient with yourself as you try to change your nutrition. Progress is made in small steps, and you don't have to be perfect to reach your wellness goals.

Benefits of Healthy Eating

When we incorporate healthy foods into our lives, anxiety _____, focus gets _____, sleep _____, and the severity of depression _____.

Ultimately, eating healthy means eating foods that have nutrients to restore our bodies. These nutrient-rich foods bring us lasting energy, regulated blood sugar, better memory, and overall better brain and body health.

Effects of Poor Nutrition

When we eat unhealthy foods, especially things like artificial sweeteners, we impact our body in a negative way. Brain toxins increase, we get poorer sleep, and ultimately we have lower levels of energy and focus. Additionally, poor nutrition places unnecessary stress on organs in our bodies and often leads to imbalanced hormones and other health issues.

Take a moment to reflect on the following question: **What motivates you to have a healthy lifestyle?**

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Think back to our analogy about food being brain fuel. Remember, the foods we eat can help our brain & body work the way they are supposed to. The brain releases important chemicals into the body, like serotonin & dopamine, that affect both mental and physical health. Take a moment to write about each of those chemicals in your own words:

Serotonin

Dopamine

Now that you can see the importance of these chemicals, let's explore the types of foods and nutrients that impact how the brain produces serotonin and dopamine. Below, write some of the foods that help your brain release the following chemicals:

Serotonin

Dopamine

Take some time to reflect on the foods you have eaten today. How did the choices you made help or hurt your brain? Consider how you might change or continue your choices tomorrow to help your brain health.

Remember, the little choices we make have **BIG** differences in our wellness. Keep working on making progress to strengthen your nutrition as you pursue your wellness goals, even if it is the smallest of steps. **We believe in you!**