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# NEWSLETTER

## The Importance of “Play” on Mental Health

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**P**lay is an essential component of human development that is often overlooked or undervalued. While play is often associated with childhood, it is important to recognize that play is important for people of all ages. Play allows us to explore our creativity, build relationships, and engage in activities that bring us joy and satisfaction.

At its core, play is a voluntary and self-directed activity that is done purely for the sake of enjoyment. Unlike work or other obligations, play is not done for any external purpose or reward, but rather for the intrinsic pleasure it provides. Play provides an opportunity for individuals to explore their interests and passions, experiment with new ideas, and take risks without fear of failure or judgment.

There are many different forms of play, each with their own unique benefits. Physical play, such as sports and games, can promote physical health and improve cognitive function. Creative play, such as art or music, can enhance emotional regulation, promote self-expression, and provide a sense of accomplishment. Social play, such as group games or collaborative activities, can help to build relationships, enhance social skills, and promote a sense of belonging.

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# BENEFITS OF “PLAY”

## Stress Reduction

Play can be a powerful stress reliever. Engaging in playful activities can help to reduce feelings of anxiety and stress by promoting relaxation and providing a sense of control over the activity. Play can also help to distract from stressful thoughts or situations, providing a much-needed break and helping individuals to feel refreshed and rejuvenated.

## Improved Physical Health

Playful activities can improve physical health by promoting exercise and movement. Physical activity has been shown to have a positive impact on mental health, reducing feelings of anxiety and depression and promoting a positive mood. Playful activities such as sports, games, and dancing can be a fun and enjoyable way to incorporate physical activity into daily life.

## Enhanced Social Skills

Play can help to develop and enhance social skills. Playful activities can provide opportunities for social interaction and cooperation, promoting the development of empathy, communication skills, and conflict resolution skills. Engaging in playful activities with others can also help to build social connections and reduce feelings of loneliness or isolation.

## Improved Cognitive Function

Play can improve cognitive function in a number of ways. Playful activities can help to improve memory, attention, and problem-solving skills. Play can also help to stimulate the brain and promote creativity and innovation. Engaging in playful activities can help to maintain cognitive function as we age, reducing the risk of cognitive decline.



## Increased Happiness

Playful activities can promote feelings of joy, happiness, and well-being. Engaging in activities that are enjoyable and fulfilling can help to reduce feelings of sadness or anxiety and promote a positive mood. Play can also help to foster a sense of purpose and accomplishment, boosting self-esteem and confidence.

## IMPORTANCE OF MAKING TIME

Despite the benefits of play, many people overlook or undervalue this important activity. In a culture that prioritizes productivity and achievement, play is often seen as a waste of time or a luxury that can only be indulged in when other obligations have been met. However, it is important to recognize that play is not only enjoyable, but essential for mental health and well-being.

# IDEAS OF “PLAY”

#1

Board Games  
or Puzzles

#2

Sports,  
Weightlifting, or  
Running

#3

Painting,  
Drawing,  
Coloring,  
or Digital Art.

#4

Playing an  
Instrument

#5

Walking, Biking,  
or Hiking

#6

Yoga and  
Meditation

#7

Book Club,  
Chess Club,  
or other Social  
Clubs

#8

Baking or  
Cooking

#9

Traveling

#10

Videogames  
with Friends

#11

Camping and  
Spending  
Time Outdoors

#12

Learning a New  
Language

#13

Plant a garden

#14

Make a  
sidewalk chalk  
mural

#15

Singing

## Conclusion

It is important to note that play does not necessarily have to be a structured or organized activity. It can be as simple as taking a walk in nature, listening to music, or engaging in a creative hobby. The key is to engage in activities that are enjoyable and fulfilling, and that allow individuals to let go of their usual responsibilities and constraints.

In conclusion, play is a vital aspect of human development and has a significant impact on mental health. Engaging in playful activities can help individuals manage stress, build resilience, develop problem-solving skills, and foster social connection. Play can also provide a sense of freedom and autonomy, and can be an effective way to cope with trauma and difficult life experiences. It is important for individuals of all ages to make time for play in their daily lives, in order to experience the many benefits that it provides.

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