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Lauren Gustin
Northeastern Illinois University

Andrew Thomas

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BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ON MENTAL HEALTH

Lauren Gustin and Andrew Thomas

Department of Health Sciences and Physical Education, Northeastern Illinois University,
Chicago, IL 60625

More than 50% of the U.S. population will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder and can affect people of all ages. Mental health includes emotional, psychological, or social well-being which can affect how one thinks, feels, and acts. Mental health can impact how one handles stress, interacts with others, and makes choices. Poor mental well-being can lead to long-lasting physical health conditions such as stroke, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease. There are many factors that can contribute to mental health problems including biological, environmental social, psychological, and life experiences. Fortunately, there are many ways to help overcome mental health disorders and appropriate services can make a difference in improving the lives of those with mental disorders. However, access to healthcare providers who can offer services varies by location and community resources. Research shows that participating in at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, such as brisk walking, dancing, and household chores can reduce the risk of many chronic diseases and poor health outcomes. Exercise and physical activity (PA) can be used, not only to prevent mental disorders, but treat them as well. Positive outcomes to engaging in PA include maintaining a healthy weight, bone strength, heart health, cancer prevention, social benefits, brain health, academic achievement, and mental health. The feeling of belonging that comes from joining a fitness community, as well as the sense of accomplishment from finishing exercises, can have a positive impact on mental health. A single session of moderate to vigorous exercise can provide immediate mental health benefits such as reducing feelings of anxiety and depression and improving quality of sleep. The purpose of this presentation is to share the benefits of PA on mental health. As future physical educators, it is necessary to teach school-aged children and adolescents how to maintain and improve overall mental health. We are responsible for educating students how to live an active and mentally healthy lifestyle in order to be a healthy adult. Our findings will be shared through a brief presentation and participants will be asked to participate in minimal PA as well as offer feedback from their experience.