

MENTAL HEALTH

Stephanie Brenner, Social Worker
Ostomate since 2012

Presented by Marina Chávez, OAA Member

AGENDA



- IDENTIFY
- EXPLORE
- LEARN
- FINANCIAL

What Does the Literature Show About Ostomates' Mental Health?

- 48% of people with ostomies experienced anxiety
- 41.6% experienced depression
- Both patients and caregivers had higher depression and anxiety than non-stoma patients and caregivers
- Lower adjustment scores, more negative emotions, lower acceptance and lower social engagement
- Negatively influences quality of life



Variables that Can Influence Ostomates' Mental Health

- Some chose timing, others did not
- Some ostomies came with medical trauma (complications/revisions)
- Varying degrees of social support
- Financial support
- Age when you got your stoma
- Your self-esteem
- Your emotional awareness/self-talk

2019 UOAA National Survey of Ostomates

412 ostomates

Prior to ostomy surgery:

- ▶ 60% didn't receive resources to connect to organizations like UOAA for support
- ▶ 68% didn't receive info about support groups
- ▶ 70% weren't provided info to connect to another patient who has an ostomy
- ▶ 78% weren't asked to talk about potential emotional impact of surgery with a provider

4 Feel-Good Chemicals for Stress Relief

- **DOPAMINE**
- **OXYTOCIN**
- **SEROTONIN**
- **ENDORPHINS**

Feel-Good Chemicals for Stress Relief

DOPAMINE

- 50% of dopamine is made in the gut
- Helps us temporarily feel pleasure/reward as well as helping with motivation and concentration
- Try adding foods with tyrosin, exercising, starting a meditation practice, completing a task on your to-do list

Feel-Good Chemicals for Stress Relief

OXYTOCIN

- The love/bonding hormone
- Can try touch (20 second hug, 6 second kiss), playing with a pet, spending time with friends, holding a baby, massage

Feel-Good Chemicals for Stress Relief

SEROTONIN

- 95% of serotonin is made in the gut, helps prevent depression
- The mood stabilizer chemical
- Can also get from exercise, exposure to sun/SAD lamp, trying something new, doing something creative, being in nature, practicing gratitude

Feel-Good Chemicals for Stress Relief

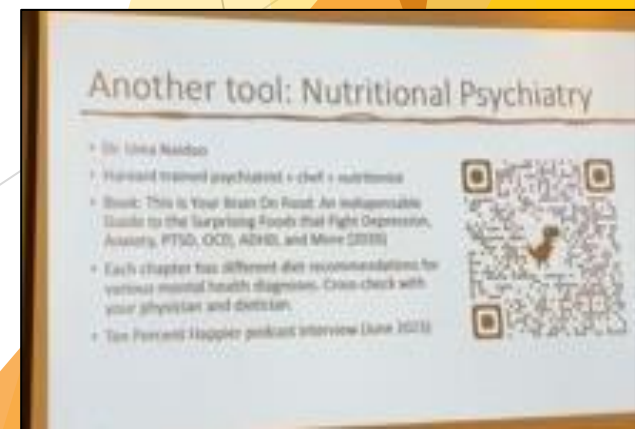
ENDORPHINS

- The body's natural pain reliever, enhances immune system
- Sources of endorphin release include exercise, sex, watching something funny, music, meditation, taking a bath, yoga, creative practices

Another Tool: Nutritional Psychiatry

Book: THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON FOOD

- ▶ Guide to surprising foods that fight depression, anxiety, PTSD, OCD, ADHD, and more
- ▶ Each chapter has different diet recommendations for various mental health diagnoses. Cross check with your physician or dietitian
- ▶ Ten Percent Happier podcast interview (June 2023)



Healthy Habits

2021 Ostomy literature review

- ▶ The following things increase the ___ for ostomates: exercise, preoperative stoma site identification, family support, maintenance of social network, education, spirituality, and financial stability are all potentially modifiable factors.
- ▶ Other ideas: Any physical movements that bring you joy, meditation, cooking foods you can tolerate, get outside in nature, find a creative outlet, figure out and engage with your purpose, rest (from _____ book)

Healthy
Habits

2021 Ostomy Literature review study found the following things increase the QOL for ostomy patients: Exercise, preoperative stoma site identification, family support, maintenance of social networks, education, spirituality, and financial stability are all potentially modifiable factors.

Other ideas: Any physical movements that bring you joy, meditation, cooking foods you can tolerate, get outside in nature, find a creative outlet, figure out and engage with your purpose, rest (from Burnout book)

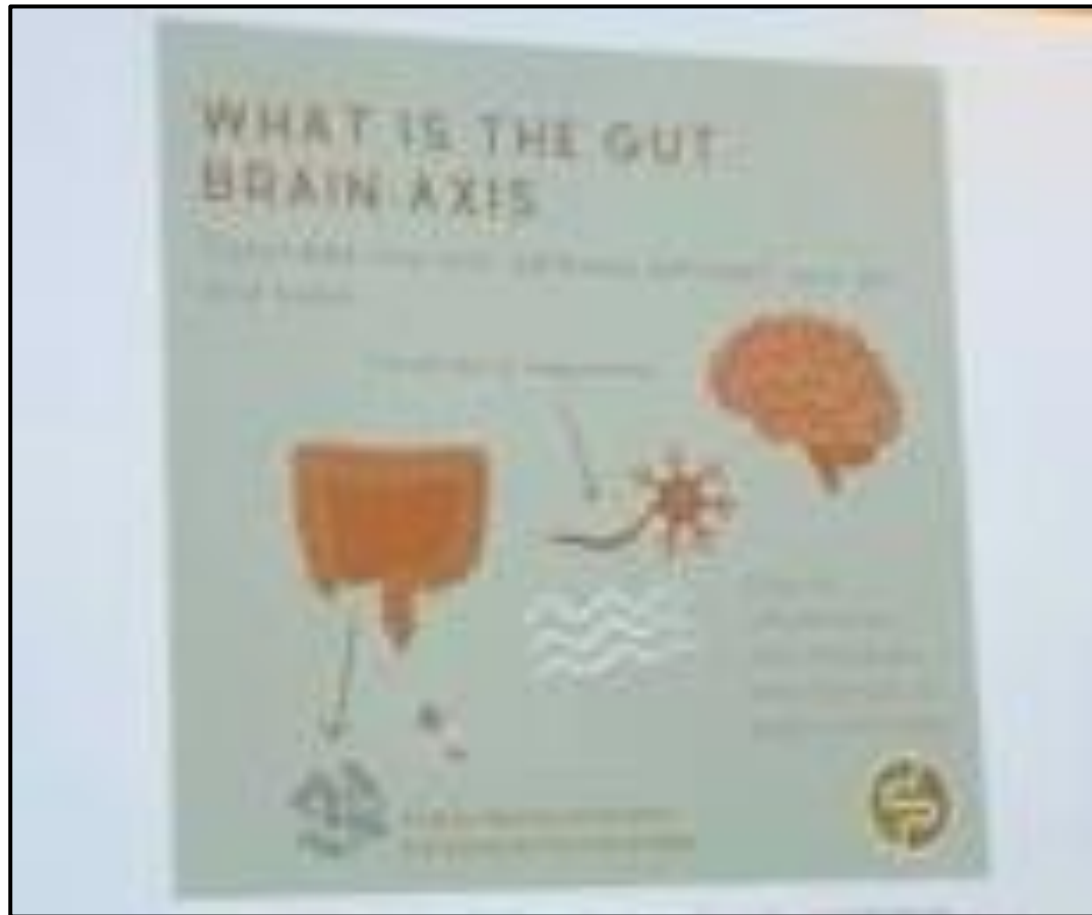
Fatigue Strategies

- ▶ Check in with your physician to rule out dehydration, nutritional deficiencies, sleep disorders, IBD flares, etc.
- ▶ Engage in light physical movement whenever possible.
- ▶ Online(?) pacing as an activity management strategy.
- ▶ Evaluate your schedule and prune as necessary; it's ok to say no!
- ▶ Reach out to your support system and delegate.
- ▶ Integrate rest breaks into your daily life
- ▶ Capitalize on the time of day you have the most energy.
- ▶ Come up with list of activities you enjoy for the times you have to rest.

Fatigue strategies

- Check in with your physician to rule out anemia, dehydration, nutritional deficiencies, sleep disorders, IBD flares, etc.
- Engage in light physical movement whenever possible
- Utilize pacing as an activity management strategy
- Evaluate your schedule and prune as necessary; it's ok to say no!
- Reach out to your support system and delegate
- Integrate rest breaks into your daily life
- Capitalize on the times of day you have the most energy
- Come up with a list of activities you enjoy for the times you have to rest

What is the Gut Brain Axis?



Fight/Flight vs. Rest and Digest

- ▶ Our nervous system is made of two branches: sympathetic. Together they consist of the brain, spinal cord and nerves.
- ▶ Sympathetic—controls fight or flight responses like increased heart rate, pupils, slows digestion, and diverts energy to other parts of the body.
- ▶ Parasympathetic: Controls rest and digest responses like lowering heart rate and blood pressure, increases digestion.

Fight/Flight vs. Rest and Digest

Our nervous system is made of two branches: sympathetic and parasympathetic. Together, they consist of the brain, spinal cord, and nerves.

- Sympathetic: Controls fight or flight responses like increased heart rate, dilated pupils, slows digestion, and diverts energy to other parts of body
- Parasympathetic: Controls rest and digest responses like lowering heart rate and blood pressure, increases digestion

Our stress response is necessary for survival, but we have a hard time turning it off. The vagus nerve is one of the main nerves that help turn off the stress response when stimulated. After we talk about benefits, let's learn a length practice to turn off the stress response together.

Fight/Flight vs. Rest and Digest

- ▶ Other stress response is necessary for survival but we have a hard time turning it off.
- ▶ The vagus nerve is one of the main nerves that helps turn off the stress response when stimulated. After we talk about benefits, let's learn a tangible practice to turn off the stress response together.

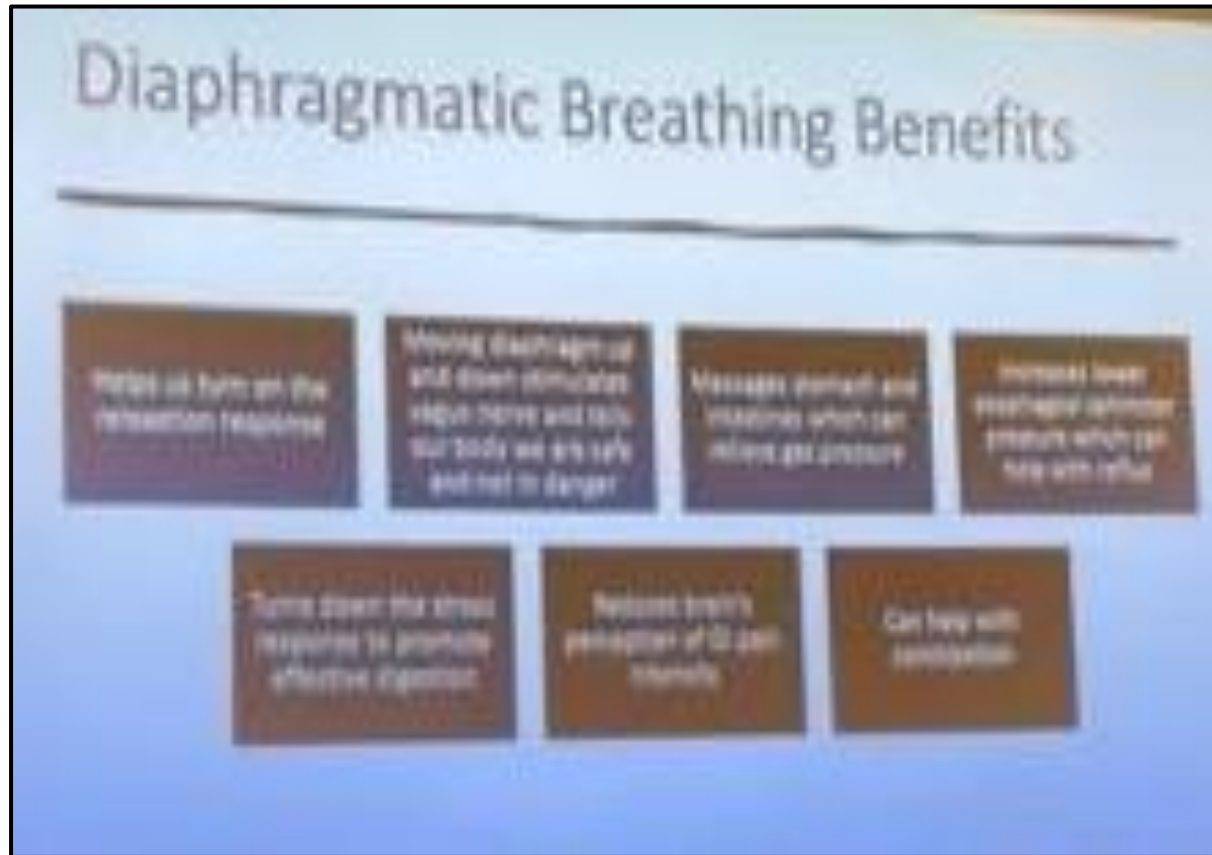
Fight/Flight vs. Rest and Digest

Our nervous system is made of two branches: sympathetic and parasympathetic. Together, they consist of the brain, spinal cord, and nerves.

- Sympathetic: Controls fight or flight responses like increased heart rate, dilated pupils, slows digestion, and diverts energy to other parts of body
- Parasympathetic: Controls rest and digest responses like lowering heart rate and blood pressure, increases digestion

Our stress response is necessary for survival, but we have a hard time turning it off. The vagus nerve is one of the main nerves that helps turn off the stress response when stimulated. After we talk about benefits, let's learn a tangible practice to turn off the stress response together.

Diaphragmatic Breathing Benefits



Diaphragmatic Breathing practice

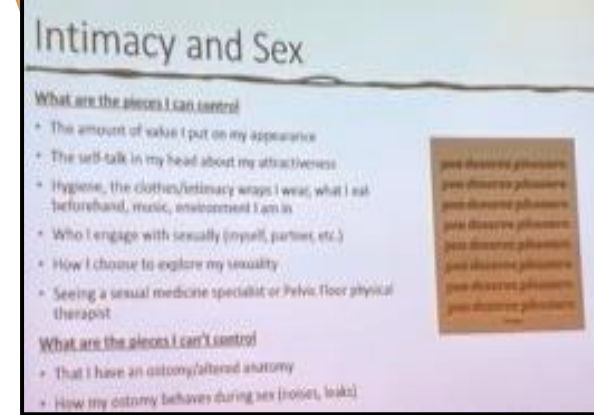
- Sit comfortably with feet on floor, legs crossed, one hand on chest, one hand on belly
- Breathe in through nose, out through mouth like blowing a candle
- Focus on bottom hand rising and falling with the breath, imagine a balloon filling and emptying, leave the top hand still
- Focus after the exhale for a moment; exhale should be a few moments longer than inhale to get all stagnant out. (Try 4-7-8 or 4-4-4.)
- Slow, steady pace. Can keep eyes open or close them. Feel less stressors, body relax
- Practice a calming place, can use a calming phrase/mnemonic



Intimacy and Sex

What are the pieces I can control?

- ▶ The amount of value I put on my appearance
- ▶ The self talk in my head about my attractiveness
- ▶ Hygiene, the clothes/intimacy wraps I wear, what I eat beforehand, music, environment I am in
- ▶ Who I engage with sexually (myself, partner, etc.)
- ▶ How I chose to explore my sexuality
- ▶ Seeing a sexual medicine specialist or Pelvic Floor physical therapist
- ▶ What are the pieces I cant control



Intimacy and Sex

What are the pieces I can't control?

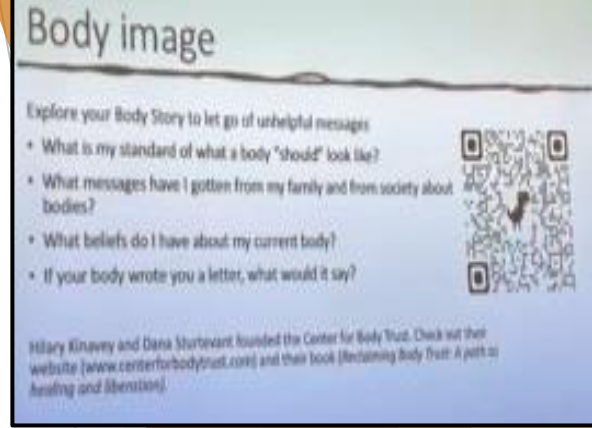
- ▶ That I have an ostomy/altered anatomy
- ▶ How my ostomy behaves during sex (noises, leaks)

You deserve pleasure!

Body Image

Explore your Body Story to let go of unhelpful messages

- ▶ What is my standard of what a body “should” look like?
- ▶ What messages have I gotten from my family and from society about bodies?
- ▶ What beliefs do I have about my current body?
- ▶ If your body wrote you a letter, what would it say?



Hilary Kinavey & Dana Sturtevant founded the Center for Body Trust. Check out their website: www.centerforbodytrust.com
& their book, “Reclaiming Body Trust: A Path to Healing and Liberation”

The Ever Elusive Concept of Acceptance

- ▶ What does acceptance mean to you? How would you know when you have fully accepted your new body?
- ▶ Body positivity vs. body neutrality seeing my body as more than my appearance.
- ▶ What was my quality of life like before ostomy? What is it now? Is there anything I can do to improve it?

The ever-elusive concept of acceptance

- What does acceptance mean to you? How would you know when you have fully accepted your new body/self?
- Body positivity vs. body neutrality: seeing my body as more than my appearance
- What was my QOL like before ostomy? What is it now? Is there anything I can do to improve it?
- Like grief, acceptance is not a fixed endpoint. Cycling through feelings both negative and positive is normal.
- Learn your triggers and turn towards with self-compassion
- Find your chronic illness/ostomy heroes

The Ever Elusive Concept of Acceptance

- ▶ Like grief, acceptance is not a fixed endpoint. Cycling through feelings, both negative and positive, is normal.
- ▶ Learn your triggers and turn toward with self compassion.
- ▶ Find your chronic illness/ostomy heroes.

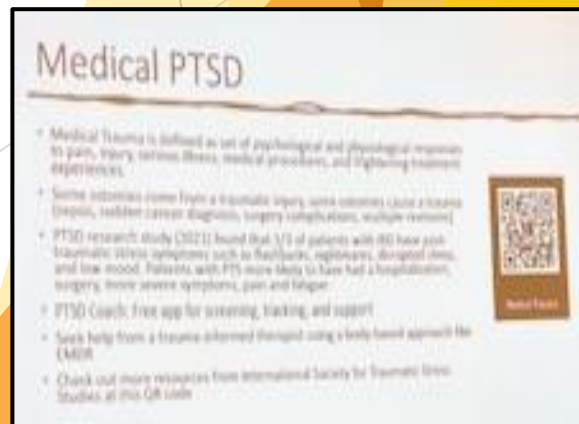
The ever-elusive concept of acceptance

- What does acceptance mean to you? How would you know when you have fully accepted your new body/self?
- Body positivity vs. body neutrality: seeing my body as more than my appearance
- What was my QOL like before ostomy? What is it now? Is there anything I can do to improve it?
- Like grief, acceptance is not a fixed endpoint. Cycling through feelings both negative and positive is normal.
- Learn your triggers and turn towards with self-compassion
- Find your chronic illness/ostomy heroes

Medical Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

- ▶ MPTSD is defined as a set of psychological and physiologic responses to pain, injury, serious illness, medical procedures and threatening treatment experiences.
- ▶ Some ___ come from a traumatic injury, some _____ causes a trauma (sepsis, sudden cancer diagnosis, surgery complication, multiple reasons)
- ▶ PTSD Research study found that 1/3 of patients with IBD have post traumatic stress symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares, disturbed sleep, and low mood.

Conference slide

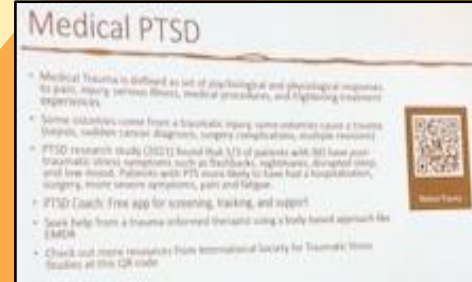


Medical Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

- ▶ Patients with PTS more likely to have had a hospitalization, surgery more severe symptoms, pain and fatigue.
- ▶ PTSD Coach—free app for screening, tracking and support.
- ▶ Seek help from a trauma informed therapist using a body head approach like EMDR (eye movement desensitization & reprocessing therapy) or by CCTP (certified clinical trauma professional).
- ▶ Check out more resources from International Society for Trauma Studies. (QR code not legible on slide)

Medical Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

- ▶ MPTSD is defined as a set of psychological and physiologic responses to pain, injury, serious illness, medical procedures and threatening treatment experiences.
- ▶ Some ___ come from a traumatic injury, some _____ causes a trauma (sepsis, sudden cancer diagnosis, surgery complication, multiple reasons)
- ▶ PTSD Research study found that 1/3 of patients with IBD have post traumatic stress symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares, disturbed sleep, and low mood. Patients with PTS more likely to have had a hospitalization, surgery more severe symptoms, pain and fatigue.



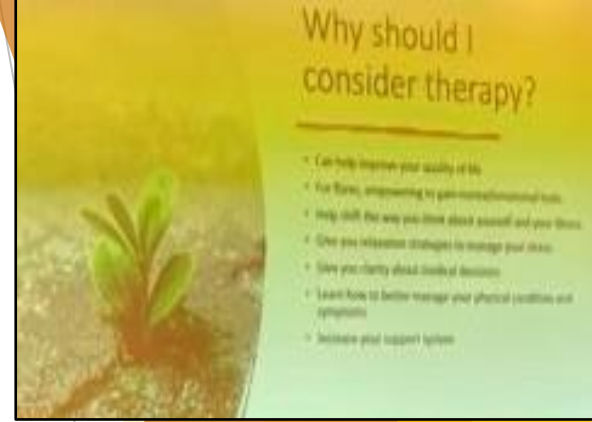
I Think I Would Benefit from More Support - What are My Options?

- ▶ Try to manage it on my own with healthy habits.
- ▶ Increase my social supports (find a UOSS support group)
- ▶ Talk to a mental health professional for psychotherapy.
- ▶ See a psychiatrist for possible psychiatric medication



Why Should I Consider Therapy?

- ▶ Can help your quality of life.
- ▶ For flares, empowering to get mental/_____ tool.
- ▶ Help shift the way you think about yourself and your illness.
- ▶ Give you permission to manage your life.
- ▶ Give you clarity about health and disease
- ▶ Learn how to better manage your physical condition and symptoms.
- ▶ Increase your support system.



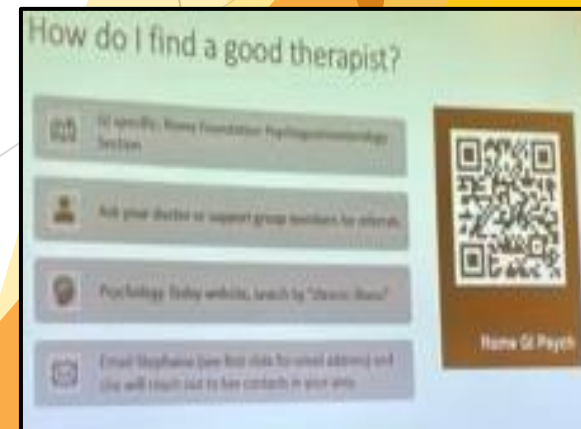
What Can I Expect If I Go to Therapy?

- ▶ The therapist should have experience in chronic illnesses.
- ▶ Therapy can be short term or long term.
- ▶ Some therapists take insurance, some do not.
- ▶ It's ok to try out a few options before you find the right fit.
- ▶ Therapy can be in person or virtual, depending on accessibility and preference.

- The therapist should have experience in chronic illnesses!
- Therapy can be short-term or long-term
- Some therapists take insurance, some do not
- It's ok to try out a few options before you find the right fit
- Therapists have to be licensed in the state the client lives in
- Therapy can be in person or virtual, depending on accessibility and preference

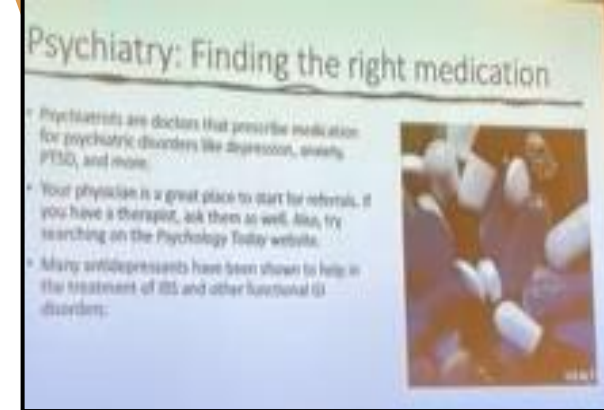
How Do I Find a Good Therapist?

- ▶ Rome Foundation, Psychogastroenterology section
- ▶ Ask your doctor or support group members for referrals
- ▶ Psychology Today website, search by chronic illness
- ▶ Reach out to Stephanie Brenner at:
 - ▶ chronicillnesspsychotherapy@gmail.com
- ▶ Stephanie will reach out to her contacts in your area



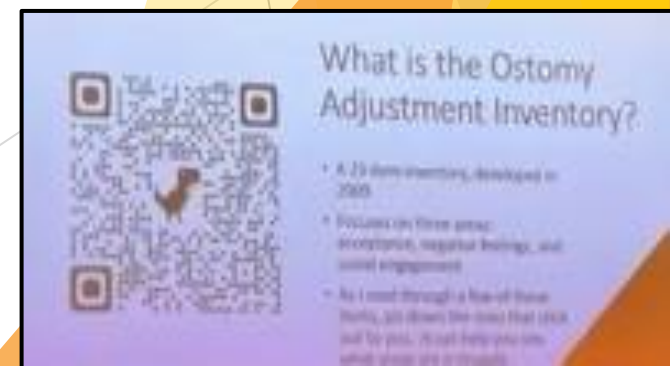
Psychiatry: Finding the Right Medication

- ▶ Psychiatrists are doctors that prescribe medication for psychiatric disorders like depression, anxiety, PTSD, and more.
- ▶ Your physician is a great place to start for referrals. If you have a therapist, ask them as well. Also try searching on the Psychology Today website.
- ▶ Many antidepressants have been shown to help in the treatment of IBS and other functional GI disorders.



What is the Ostomy Adjustment Inventory

- ▶ A 23 item inventory designed in 200
- ▶ Focuses on 3 areas: acceptance, negative feelings and social engagement
- ▶ As I read through a few of these, just focus on the ones that stick out to you. It might help you to identify areas of struggle.



Bibliography (Books)

- ▶ Psychogastroenterology for Adults: A Handbook for Mental Health Professionals, edited by Knowles, Keefer, et al (2019)
- ▶ Reclaiming Body Trust: A Path to Healing and Liberation, Dana Sturtevant and Hilary Kinavey, (2022)
- ▶ The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook, Christopher Germer and Kristin Neff (2019)
- ▶ How to Carry What Can't Be Fixed, A Journal for A Grief by Megan Devine (2002)
- ▶ Burnout: The Secret for Unlocking the Stress Cycle, Emily Nagoski, PhD, Amelia Nagoski, DMA (2020)
- ▶ This is Your Brain On Food: An Indispensable Guide to the Surprising Foods that Fight Depression, Anxiety, PTSD, OCD, ADHD and More, Uma Naidoo, MD (2020)
- ▶ It's In the Bag and Under the Covers, Stories of Dating, Intimacy, Sex and Caregiving about People with Ostomies, Brenda Elsagher (2011)

Bibliography (Articles and Websites)

- ▶ Prevalence of Depression and it's potential contributing factors in patients with enterostomy: A meta-analytical review, Tang, et al. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3001710/full>
- ▶ Emotional Support for Ostomy and Continent Diversion Patients-UOAA 2021
https://www.ostomy.org/wp_content/uploads/2021/12/UOAA_EmotionalSupport_2021_12.pdf
- ▶ Learning to Love My New Body Mini-Doc by Hannah Witten
<https://www.hannahwitten.com/blog2/2018-06-01/learning-to-love-my-new-body>
- ▶ Quality of SexLife in Intestinal Stoma Patients, A Literature Review (2023) by Pasryenka, etal.
<https://www.mdpl.com/1660-0501/20/1/1660>

Bibliography

(Articles and Websites)

- ▶ Diaphragmatic Breathing for GI Health_Northwestern Medicine, <https://www.youtube.com/watch>
unable to discern the last info on site
- ▶ Harvard Health Publishing (July 2021) <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood>
- ▶ The Use of antidepressants in the Treatment of Irritable Bowel Syndrome and Other Functional GI Disorders. https://med.uni.edu/wp_consent/uploads/ ***unable to discern remainder***
- ▶ Development and Psychometric Evaluation of the Ostomy Adjustment Inventory 23, Kingley Simmons, Jane Smith and Abeto Mackana (2005) <https://pubmed>. ***unable to discern remainder***
- ▶ Patient Perspectives on Medical Trauma Related to Inflammatory Bowel Disease (2021) Pothemont et al. <https://> ***unable to discern remainder***
- ▶ Psychological Well Being and Quality of Life in Crohn's in Patients with an Ostomy: A preliminary investigation(2011) Knowles, et al. <https://> ***unable to discern remainder***



Thank you!

STEPHANIE BRENNER

chronicillnesspsychotherapy@gmail.com

Website