

Good morning and happy Monday team!

I hope you all had a great long weekend and were able to stay warm through the ice storm. I know that I am looking forward to this week and 70-degree days!

I want to remind everyone that Dr. Patrick Mulick will be presenting on PTSD symptoms Tuesday March 8th from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM. This presentation will be in IH 103. I encourage everyone to attend this class. Dr. Mulick is a wonderful teacher and will explain how trauma impacts the brain.

Speaking of learning new things... this week let's talk about self-care related to cognition.

By **engaging in activities** that keep your mind sharp, you are **better able to deal with the problems and challenges** that life invariably throws at you. In fact, "if you maintain the attitude that stress is a challenge – rather than a threat, you are better able to handle it" (Scott, 2018). The benefit is in the challenge, the presence and focus, and the feeling of accomplishment when we win, finish, or even just get through most of it.

This week's invitation: Build your brain muscles.

Learn something new: Learn to garden, try orienteering, or ride a tandem bicycle with a friend. Consider embroidery, weaving, or felting. Woodworking projects might be fun. Once you choose something new to learn, practice that new thing regularly. The greater the novelty, complexity, and challenge, the greater the benefit for your brain.

Get better at something you already know how to do: Challenge your brain by increasing your skills and knowledge of something you already do.

Memorize information: Start with something short and then work your way up to something longer or more challenging. You can utilize rhymes and word associations to strengthen your memory connections.

Enjoy strategy games and puzzles: Spend some time working a crossword puzzle or playing a board game, card game, or word and number games.

Follow the road less traveled: Take a new route to work, experiment with eating or brushing your teeth using your nondominant hand or try parting your hair on the opposite side. Varying your habits in this way creates new brain pathways (Smith et al., 2019).

"The capacity to learn is a **gift**; the ability to learn is a **skill**; the willingness to learn is a **choice**."

- Brian Herbert