

Mind-body therapies promote well-being

By **Katy Yoder**
Correspondent

Pain happens. Sometimes it starts in the mind, sometimes from an injury. As we live with the discomfort, the true origins of that limp or lower back pain or headache or stiff knee are hard to pin down. We get used to it. We accommodate it; and quite often, our mood is affected by it. Stoicism, finances and, these days, fear of COVID-19 can stop us from seeking help.

The mind-body connection can be described as a person's feelings, thoughts, or behaviors and how they physically manifest in the body. Thoughts, feelings, beliefs and attitudes can positively or negatively affect biological functioning. Our minds affect how healthy we are. On the flip side, how we manage the body as it relates to nutrition, exercise, and other activities can either benefit or undermine our mental states.

A deep dive into beliefs about mind-body connections is complicated territory. Finding a guide to understand and navigate mental and physical challenges can get you closer to feeling better. Mind-body modalities abound in Sisters. Practitioners offer a wide variety of treatments used to overcome chronic and acute pain.

Kendra Littrell manages the Shibui Spa, known for its tranquility and oasis-like environment. "We specialize in Ayurvedic treatments. Our owner went to school for Ayurvedic medicine," said Littrell. Ayurveda is the art and science of tuning the body into balance. It harnesses the natural intelligence of the body to bring people into optimal health. "We're one of a few places that use it on a spa level. We have five different Ayurvedic treatments at Shibui," said Littrell. After COVID mandated closures, Shibui reopened June 1, to deeply appreciative clients. "We saw clients who were almost in tears... there's no one hugging and touching. People need touch." Littrell says people are screened to make sure they are healthy and understand COVID rules. "We want to make sure we are keeping our clients and our employees safe. We're operating at 50% capacity for physical distancing. Shibui's therapists are trained in modalities like lymphatic drainage for people recovering from cancer, physical-therapy-type massages and cranial sacral. In the end, it's all about peace of mind," said Littrell.

Alana Vernon is a physical therapist and the clinic director for Step & Spine Physical Therapy. She's learned that a successful treatment

plan includes finding the right combination of physical-therapy modalities and exercises that address each patient's unique circumstances. "We teach patients how our nervous system changes based on what we apply to it. We retrain your brain so it's not reproducing the pain stimulus. Listen to your body and don't go so far that it increases pain. You want that perfect spot where you make positive changes without making further harm. We help our patients find that sweet spot, recognizing how their body feels. Too many people ignore what their body feels; or they may be too sensitive and overreact to a sensation that's normal. You're training your nervous system with mindful actions. The more your mind recognizes that certain movements are benefiting healing, the faster the physical therapy can make positive changes. We're trying to get away from medications. There's the five M's: meditation,

mindfulness, movement, modalities as necessary (ice, heat, laser) and mixing it up. We don't want to get caught up with a sixth M — monotony. Doing the same thing over and over can be boring, and sometimes harmful. That's why mixing it up is so important," said Vernon.

Greg Zadow is the owner of Green Ridge Physical Therapy that just celebrated their 20-year anniversary. Zadow says recent research has shown what all good practitioners have known for years: Whatever intervention you are administering, its affects will be magnified if you can



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Beth Hummel treats a patient with laser therapy.



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issues, Therapeutic Associates can help you recover and learn to move better, avoid injury and perform better in your activities.

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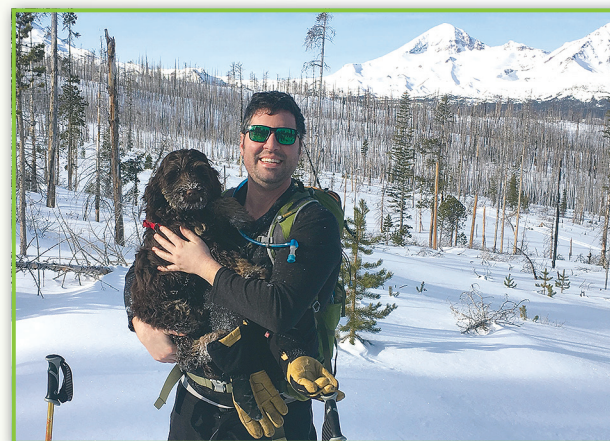
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