Make Stress a Laughing Matter

What is Laughter?

A Physical and Psychological response of our bodies to stimulus

Intensity frequency levels vary from individual to individual

Laughter is basically, extensive physical activity for our bodies or a form of exercise

Humans are the only animal who can laugh

Why is Laughter so important for my health?

The thymus gland is a regulator of our immune system. It secretes lymphocytes which are a part of the T cells in our bone marrow that fight parasitic invaders. The thymus gland shrivels when we are stressed and expands when we are relaxed.

By reducing our stress levels and anxiety through laughter we strengthen our immune system, decreasing levels of heart disease, stroke, depression, and cancer

*Life does not cease to be funny when people die, any more than it ceases to be serious when people laugh.*

-George Bernard Shaw

Will Rogers-
"We’re all here for a spell, get all the good laughs you can."

Roger Williams University
Health Education Office
Center or Student Development
Room 211
Health Potentials of Laughter

Physiological Effects of Laughter:

- Leads to an increase in respiratory activity and oxygen exchange.
- Leads to an increase in muscular activity of the respiratory system and of the arms, legs, and face.
- Stimulates the cardiovascular system.
- Produces a state of arousal, followed by a state of relaxation where respiration, heart rate, muscle tension, and blood pressure go below our prelaughter levels.
- Is stress reducing.
- Releases endorphins, which are natural painkillers, into our system.
- Left and right sides of the brain are engaged bringing our creative/logical and intuitive/factual capabilities into play.

Wellness Potential of Laughter

Contagious
Laughter is contagious, and most people like being around others who laugh, enhancing social support.

Spiritual Dimension
The goal is to not laugh at our tragedies but to allow the human spirit to triumph over life’s traumas. Laughter then becomes the symbol of triumph. Life is more than the traumas of war, violence, and disease. In this way laughter may be seen as the verbal expression of the spiritual dimension.

Cosmic Laughter
Laughter may signal the ability to perceive and accept the paradoxes of life...

“One who can see himself and others in the world in a somewhat distant and detached way... has the ability to perceive life comically without losing any love or respect for himself or for humanity in general.”

Dr. Raymond A. Moody Laugh After Laugh, The Healing Power of Humor.

How to Laugh More

1. Give yourself permission to laugh
2. Believe in the power of laughter
3. Substitute hostile, aggressive, disconnecting humor for connecting, cosmic, or creative humor
4. Spend more time with people who already laugh a lot
5. Laugh out loud
6. When something funny or embarrassing happens to you during the day, share it with your family or friends
7. Play more
8. Practice, practice, practice