



May 2024 Newsletter

Aloha OTS ohana,

In honor of Mental Health Month, UHA Health Insurance and Kaiser Permanente are here to help with *mental health* related tips and resources. If you have questions about the Ola newsletter, please email

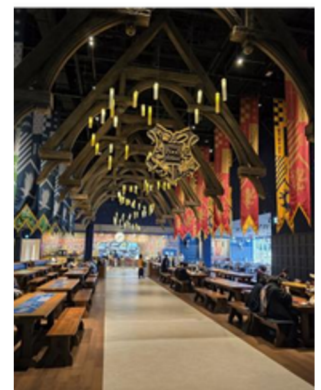
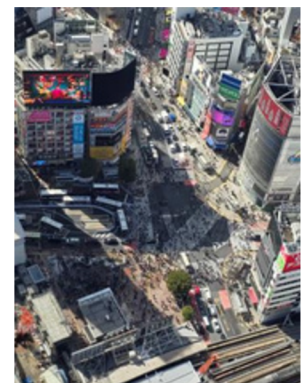
Mental Well-Being featuring Jay Tamashiro

OTS' very own Jay Tamashiro shares what he does for his mental health. In this edition, he shares his recent travel experience overseas to Japan.

What do you do to maintain your mental well-being? Mental health can be maintained by your positive engagement with family and friends. Sometimes if they are not so positive, it's best you stay away from them and look for other ways in which you have the control to help maintain your mental sanity. Create your own positive mental outcome that best suits you through meditation, exercise, adequate sleep, healthy eating, music, gratitude and travel.

Traveling has always been a wonderful way that helps me with my mental well-being. It transports you to a surrounding that expands your horizons, increases happiness, provides calmness and relieves stress. The purpose of my recent trip to Japan was mainly to eat delicious food. I really enjoyed the tonkotsu ramen, miso tonkatsu filet, tempura, salmon & ikura chazuke, wagyu hamburger, and kabayaki unagi. Let's not forget the desserts such as the Hokkaido cheese tart, apple custard pie and the yubari melon soft serve.

Traveling is also about exploration of the destination. If you love how movies are made, you got to visit Japan's Warner Bros Studio, the making of Harry Potter. Though not an avid Harry Potter fan, I gained a greater appreciation of the movie after learning the incredible effort it took from so many dedicated people to produce that movie series.



From the creation of the movie sets, costumes and soundtrack, the attention to detail is simply amazing. The renewed digital art at TeamLab Borderless in Azabudai Hills Mori Tower was just as enjoyable as the first time I have seen it when it debuted in Odaiba. Japan has many observation decks in buildings and towers. After staying on the 54th floor of the Yokohama Royal Park Hotel (a 70 floor building), I pondered whether it would be worth experiencing Shibuya Sky (a 58 story building above Shibuya train station). I'm happy to inform you that it is worth experiencing once. The unobstructed 360 degree views from the rooftop is amazing. As a result of exploring the many sites of Japan, I was easily able to get my 30,000 plus steps of exercise each day.



Just a few of the delicious dishes I enjoyed.

With exposure to external stresses being at its highest level, it is no surprise that mental health disorders are on the rise. In order to be well and stay well, prioritize your mental well-being and health. Mahalo Jay for sharing your latest adventure!

UHA Health Insurance Updates

UHA Connecting the Dots with Dr. Mestisa

HI Now's Rachel Pacarro and Dr. Mestisa C. Gass, Program Director for Mental Health America of Hawaii "connect the dots" on *Lifting the Veil on Mental Health*.

Dr. Gass is passionate about bringing education, support and resources to all communities, especially rural areas like the town she grew up in. In this episode Dr. Gass explains how mental health can affect your body and mind, provides tips on how parents can normalize conversations about mental health with their kids and talks about ways to support a family member or loved one experiencing mental health issues.

Listen to her podcast [here](#).



Dr. Mestisa Gass
Mental Health America
of Hawaii

How Traveling Nurtures Mental Wellness



In a world where stress and anxiety have become commonplace, the quest for mental well-being has taken center stage. Amidst this pursuit, an age-old remedy stands out as a beacon of hope: traveling. Beyond its aesthetic appeal and cultural enrichment, travel possesses a profound capacity to heal the mind and soothe the soul. Let's explore why it's more than just a leisurely escape.

Stress Reduction through Novel Experiences:

Traveling offers a break from routine, introducing individuals to new environments, cultures, and activities. By stepping out of familiar surroundings, travelers can distance themselves from daily stressors, gaining perspective and rejuvenating their mental state.



Enhanced Resilience and Adaptability:

Navigating unfamiliar territories cultivates resilience and adaptability, valuable traits for managing adversity in daily life. Traveling exposes individuals to diverse perspectives, challenging their perspectives and fostering personal growth.

By confronting unfamiliar situations, travelers develop resilience, learning to navigate uncertainty with confidence.

Connection and Social Support:

Human connection is a fundamental aspect of mental well-being, and traveling offers ample opportunities for social interaction. Shared experiences foster a sense of belonging and camaraderie, combating feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Mindfulness and Self-Reflection:

Removed from the distractions of daily life, travelers can immerse themselves in the present moment, savoring each experience mindfully. Through travel, individuals can cultivate mindfulness, nurturing a deeper understanding of themselves and their emotions.



Promotion of Well-Being and Happiness:

Numerous studies have highlighted the positive correlation between travel and overall well-being. The anticipation of a trip, the excitement of exploration, and the cherished memories created during travel contribute to an enduring sense of fulfillment. By investing in travel experiences, individuals prioritize their mental health and prioritize self-care.

In conclusion, the therapeutic benefits of traveling

extend far beyond mere escapism. From stress reduction and resilience-building to fostering social connections and promoting mindfulness, travel serves as a holistic remedy for mental well-being. As we navigate the complexities of modern life, let us embrace the transformative power of travel and embark on a journey towards greater mental wellness.

References:

Cohen, S. (2016). The mental health benefits of travel. Retrieved from <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/the-mental-health-benefits-of-travel-2016092310531>
Global Commission on Aging and Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies. (2013). Health and aging: The 2013 Transamerica retirement survey. Retrieved from https://www.transamericacenter.org/docs/default-source/retirement-survey-of-workers/tcrs2013_sr_health_and_aging.pdf

Mental and Emotional Well-being Resources



Life happens for all of us and many things can affect how you think, feel, and behave. Stress levels continuously change and evolve depending on your stage in life and the circumstances around you.

These resources are a starting point for your journey in improving your mental well-being towards Better Health—Better Life.

[Learn more by visiting our website.](#)

How Sitting Affects Your Mental Well-being



In today's fast-paced world, many of us find ourselves glued to our desks for hours on end, but what we may not realize is that prolonged sitting can take a toll on our mental well-being. Here are a few tips:

The Sedentary Mindset:

When we spend extended periods sitting, our bodies may become lethargic, and our minds may follow suit. So, if you find yourself struggling to concentrate or feeling mentally foggy after a long day at the desk, your sedentary habits may be to blame.

Stress and Anxiety:

Sitting for prolonged periods can contribute to increased stress and anxiety levels. When we remain seated for too long, our bodies produce fewer mood-boosting hormones like endorphins, while stress hormones like cortisol may accumulate, leading to feelings of tension and unease.

Sleep Disturbances:

Believe it or not, your sitting habits during the day can impact the quality of your sleep at night. By incorporating more movement into your day, you can improve sleep quality and enhance your overall well-being.

In summary, prolonged sitting results in consequences to more than just your physical health—they can significantly impact your mental well-being as well. By adopting simple strategies to reduce sedentary behavior and incorporate more movement into your day, you can safeguard your mind against the negative effects of sitting. So, whether it's taking regular breaks to stretch, opting for a standing desk, or scheduling walking meetings with colleagues, prioritize movement and reap the rewards of a healthier, happier mind.