



Monthly Newsletter

September 2025



**Clinician Spotlight:
Rachel Sandritter,
M.S, LADC**

Rachel Sandritter, M.S., LADC Rachel is a Licensed Associate Practicing Counselor (LADC) under supervision toward becoming a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). While under supervision, Rachel is working with clients of a variety of age groups ranging from 9-60+ within a private practice setting. Rachel also has experience providing individual school-based therapy to children between the ages of K-4. While working with children as a school-based therapist, Rachel had the privilege of meeting and working alongside parents, family and school staff to gain a more holistic view of the client for best treatment. Rachel is passionate about and utilizes several therapeutic styles including mindfulness-based, trauma-informed, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), reality therapy and others depending upon the needs of the client. Rachel wants to empower her clients by supporting and working alongside them while they pave the path to living a healthier, more fulfilling lifestyle.

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Transforming Daily Habits: A Journey Toward Health and Balance

The alarm buzzes... for the third time. The muscle memory from my hand immediately snoozes the alarm. I realize I barely have to fully wake up when I snooze the alarm over and over again, until I look at the clock. My heart is pounding, I am up and out of bed within the same second of noticing the time. I'm thrown into the ever stimulating abyss of modern day life. My sleep was broken due to falling asleep doom scrolling and playing video games. I have no time to make a nutritious breakfast, so I settle for McDonald's on the way to work. Once I am at school or work I sit down at my desk for the next 8 hours and perform on auto-pilot fantasizing about the moment I get to clock out. But, today is different. When I arrived home, I chose to do some research on making healthier choices to curate the lifestyle I often daydream about.

First, I discovered that over 90% of our serotonin is created in our gut. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter and hormone that plays a vital role in regulating our sleep, mood, appetite and other bodily functions; more commonly referred to as the "happy chemical". Some of the foods that support the production of serotonin include tryptophan rich foods such as turkey, chicken, cheese, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds; complex carbohydrates such as whole grains (rice, oatmeal, quinoa) fruits, vegetables, and legumes; omega 3 fatty-acids such as fatty fish (salmon, tuna and mackerel), walnuts, flaxseeds and chia seeds; vitamin D such as fortified foods like orange juice, yogurt and cod liver; fermented foods such as yogurt, Kefir, and other fermented foods; and lastly dark chocolate in moderation. By incorporating a balanced diet, rich of a diverse variety of the foods listed above and other whole foods, this could drastically increase mood and overall well-being. Creating a meal plan weekly to stay on track and reduce overall stress around what meals to have throughout the week will support long-term sustainable lifestyle habits. After some consistency, and nourishing my body, a newfound energy for life and creating new healthy habits is fueled.

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After nurturing healthy diet habits, my journey of a new lifestyle is complimented well with some movement and exercise. Another mood-boosting chemical is released during exercise called endorphins. Endorphins are released during workouts and neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine are released for that extra mood boost which lowers feelings of depression, anxiety and stress. Exercise can help lower the production of the stress hormone, cortisol. Healthy cortisol levels play an important role in regulating metabolism, the immune system, the stress response and reducing inflammation. Increased cortisol levels can result in critical health conditions such as bone loss, cardiovascular problems, digestive issues and elevated blood sugar levels which could potentially lead to type 2 diabetes. In addition to the mood-boosting benefits, exercise is a powerful tool to support mental health and has proven to lessen symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADD/ADHD and PTSD. A few exercise regimes to explore include walking, running, strength training, yoga, Pilates, dancing, swimming, boxing, karate, etc or a combination. Lastly exercise has a positive impact on sleep hygiene, quality, and supports falling asleep faster and for longer.

Our sleep plays a crucial role when it comes to our overall physical, mental and emotional well-being. Research states that our sleep hygiene can severely impact our mental health causing mental health challenges like depression and anxiety. The good news is some of these symptoms of depression and anxiety can be lessened once developing a sleep routine. First, establishing a healthy sleep routine is key. Create a bedtime or aim for a time to wind down and be in bed, curate a relaxing sleep environment and limit screen time at least an hour prior to going to sleep. Screens emit a blue light that interferes with the natural process of melatonin production; this is a hormone that regulates sleep. Further, the stimulating content on screens keeps our brains active and alert making it more difficult to fully relax and fall asleep. It's important to have a quality sleep routine, especially those struggling with mental health. Sleep can detrimentally impact brain regions that play a role with emotion regulation, memory and our ability to cope and manage everyday stressors.

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Now it's time to put the research and knowledge into action. I make a plan to reduce my screen time before bed and first thing upon waking in the morning. Next, I created a list of simple meal preps to ensure I am eating a balanced diet. Lastly, I came up with an exercise routine that works for my lifestyle and doesn't cause added stress to my schedule. I'm feeling confident and in control; my stress is no longer in the driver's seat. With some consistency and time, I know I will be feeling like a healthier me.

I hear my alarm buzzing from the other room; I get up out of bed to turn it off. I set my intentions around being more mindful of my screentime, so I put my phone away for the first hour after waking and limit screens an hour before bedtime to feel more rested. Now that I am up out of bed with more than enough time before heading out the door for the day, I begin to make my breakfast. I ensure that I have enough protein to keep me full for longer and create an overall balanced plate consisting of eggs, turkey bacon, berries and multi-grain toast. After breakfast I take myself on a walk to get some vitamin D and fresh air before work. Before preparing to leave, I set aside time to check in with myself. I incorporate mindfulness and grounding exercises such as deep intentional breathing, expressing gratitude and positive self-talk and affirmations. I am capable of hard things, I am strong, I am resilient and I am always learning, growing and changing.

If this sounds like it could help you, remember—you don't have to take this journey alone. We have many qualified professionals ready to support you on your health and wellness journey. Reach out today!