



Brain Business - Do You Know What You're Thinking?

"How can it be snowing today when yesterday was so warm and sunny?"
Have you noticed how your thoughts can often change just like the weather?

At times our thoughts seem predictable and stable, however, in a moment the smallest thing changes our thinking and can leave us feeling annoyed and irritated.

Have you ever heard a sound outside your room and wondered what it was? Was it a tree branch breaking? An animal? Or just the wind? These quick thoughts or images that show up suddenly are often called *automatic thoughts*. The messages we tell ourselves or our "self talk" can reinforce our thoughts and can influence how we act or behave. *Automatic thoughts* happen so quickly that it seems we often react without thinking. Being tired, lonely, angry, and even hungry can influence our self talk and *automatic thoughts*. Have you ever felt so annoyed at someone in the evening, and then after a good night's rest you have a different perspective? The *automatic thoughts* we have are not always accurate or true!

We challenge you to try an experiment over the upcoming weeks. Pay attention to your self talk and those *automatic thoughts*. Notice how your self talk affects your mood and behavior. This might take practice, but don't give up! Give it a try!

Stay tuned for the next issue! We'll discuss how our thoughts can lead to action. Take care of yourself, be kind and practice positive self-talk. And make sure that you are ready for when the snow does come to stay. Some thoughts to consider ahead of time: Do I have my mitts ready? Do I need to give myself more time to get where I need to be? Are my snow tires on? Do I have my window scraper on hand? Planning ahead can improve our mood and ability to manage the automatic thoughts we might be having about the snow!

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OTHERS. THERE'S
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Did You Know?? - Cannabis Edition

- **Smoking cannabis causes the most harm to your body compared to other forms of consumption because it directly affects your lungs.** While they also come with risks, vaping and consuming edibles are safer ways to use cannabis.
- **People with a personal or family history of psychosis or substance use problems, are more likely to develop problems from using cannabis.** Be self aware!
- **The higher the THC content, the higher the risk of developing mental health problems and addiction.** It is safer to use cannabis products with lower THC levels and a higher ratio of CBD (cannabidiol) because CBD can counteract some of the psychoactive effects of THC. Be aware of the THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) content in the cannabis that you use.
- **The earlier in life that you start using cannabis, the higher the risks.** The human brain continues to develop all the way until the age of 25 and cannabis has been proven to negatively affect its development. If you choose to use cannabis, monitor your frequency of use, and reach out for help if you are struggling to control your use.
- **Cannabis use impairs your ability to drive and operate machinery.** Since the effects of cannabis typically last around 6 hours, keep track of when you have used last, in order to keep yourself and those around you safe.

Source: "10 Ways to Reduce Risks to Your Health When Using Cannabis": Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (2018)



Holiday Health Hints!



Christmas can be a very joyous time of year, but can also be stressful at times. Buying presents, decorating, and going to family gatherings can seem overwhelming.

Use these Holiday Health Hints to fuel your brain and help get you through the Holidays!

Water – a lack of water can cause restlessness, irritability, loss of concentration, and reduced ability to think efficiently.

Protein – your brain uses protein (meat, fish, beans, and lentils) for building 'feel good' neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine that help you feel content, motivated, and happy!

Carbohydrates – high fiber carbohydrates (oats, sweet potato, whole grain pasta and bread) provide long lasting fuel for your brain. They can help to reduce mood swings and will give you energy.

Fat – your brain is made up of at least 60% fat. Choosing healthy unsaturated fat (salmon, nuts, seeds, avocados) will provide a healthy structure for your brain

So take care of your brain and focus on the positives of the Holiday!

What is Consent?

- Consent means giving permission for something to happen.
- Consent means a person voluntarily agrees, through words or actions, to engage in sexual activity.
- Consent also means there is a *genuine willingness by both parties* to actively participate in the sexual activity (**only yes means yes**).
- Consent can be taken back at any time by simply saying you want to stop the sexual activity.
- Consenting to one sexual act does not mean consenting to another sexual act.
- Just because you had sex or sexual contact with someone before, does not mean you consent every time.

CONSENT CHECKLIST

IS YOUR SEXUAL PARTNER:

- ☐ Awake?
- ☐ Sober?
- ☐ Safe?
- ☐ Comfortable?
- ☐ Enjoying themselves?
- ☐ Actively consenting to everything?

Consent can be withdrawn at any time.
Make sure you are checking in with your partner.

Talk about consent.

Learn more at: www.manitoba.ca/youarenotalone/

