The Benefits of Fresh Air on Mental Well-being

With the end of winter and the beginning of spring, many people are anxious to get outside. However, the recent spread of novel COVID-19 have required many to self-isolate, thereby increasing the amount of time that people are spending indoors. While many are feeling anxious, bored and stressed with the requirement to stay home, it is important to acknowledge the benefits of fresh air during this unprecedented time.

*Spending 20 minutes outside each day, preferably in a green space, can reduce blood pressure, heart rate, stress and prevent development of psychiatric disorders.*

A study published in the International Journal of Environmental Health Research found that simple being in a green space seemed to be enough to spark a change.  94 adults were given a fitness tracker and instructed to spend time in an urban park doing whatever they pleased.  In addition, each participant answered questions about their mood and life satisfaction to measure well-being both before and after the park visit.  On average, researchers found that well-being increased in 60% for participants who spent time in the park.

If you can’t get outside, another way to increase fresh air is to simply open the windows in your home. Even when the outside temperature is cooler, opening the windows in your home can achieve many benefits:

1. Decreases water vapor in the air produced by humans and pets
2. Increases oxygen
3. Improves mental focus
4. Allows for venting of airborne chemicals and odors

These small changes can improve quality of sleep, immune function, as well as the overall air quality within the home.

The importance of social distancing during a pandemic is of utmost importance; however, among other habits and precautions, the improvement of mental well-being in your daily routine should be a priority. Incorporating exposure to fresh air can be an incredible benefit to your physical health but also to the environment in which you spend much of your time.