



## Exercise, diet, sleep all play roles in 'grandma' medicine

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I believe that my grandparents are pretty wise. I guess it comes from years of experience. My maternal grandmother celebrated her 90th birthday in January. My paternal grandmother celebrated her 94th birthday after Christmas. My maternal grandfather also is 94 years old.

When my maternal grandmother turned 90, I asked her, "How do you make it to 90?" She responded, "Keep going on."

I recently went to a seminar where the speaker made a comment about grandma medicine. He defined this as being the things that your grandma would always tell you to do. He related that basic advice to help decrease effects of depression. His grandma medicine was:

- Get enough sleep
- Exercise
- Keep a balanced diet
- Abstain from alcohol and drugs

This advice primarily focuses on proactive behaviors. My grandmother's advice to keep going represents a mindset. Combining the advice could be considered cognitive behavior therapy. In cognitive behavior therapy, people are encouraged to identify the relationship between the thoughts, behaviors, moods and physical reactions that occur in their environment.

It is believed that if a person chooses to change one of these things, then there is a ripple effect on the other aspects of their environment. For example, if a person suffers from depression and chooses to stay in bed most of the day, their thoughts may continue to be

negative. If, instead, a person chooses to get up and brush his hair, this would alter his pattern.

This causes a ripple effect similar to throwing a pebble in a lake. If the person wants bigger ripples, she would need to continue to make more changes. Typically, behaviors are recommended to be altered first because it is easier to try to change behaviors than thoughts or moods.

Other things I have learned from my grandparents include not coloring on basement walls and, by example, that UNO cards shouldn't be microwaved. Sometimes, mistakes will be made. When a person tries to change behaviors, it doesn't always work out the way expected. It's important to keep trying.

If a person has changed his behaviors, but feels that his thoughts are overwhelming, then seeking professional help may be of benefit. There are specific techniques that can be utilized for combating negative thought patterns.

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This column was written by Renae Burns, licensed clinical social worker with Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare Inc. Contact the organization at (812) 436-4221 or [comments@southwestern.org](mailto:comments@southwestern.org).