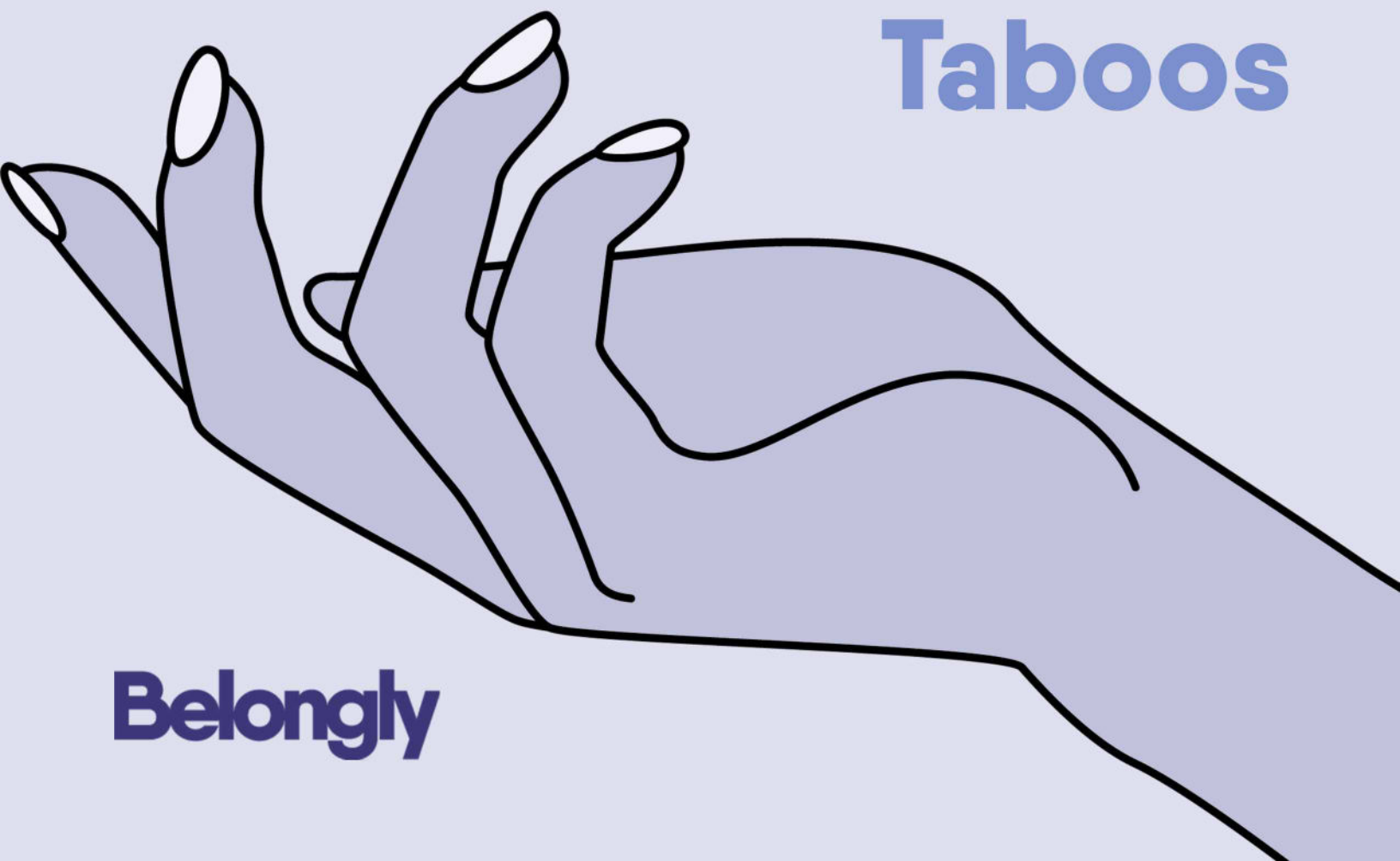


Holistic Healing Handbook

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The Therapist's Toolbox for Tackling Taboos

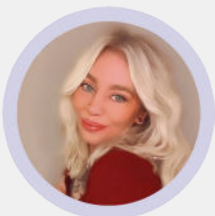


Belongly



In the world of therapy, there's a sneaky little gremlin we like to call the "Holistic Hesitation." It's that moment when you're considering prescribing a sun salutation instead of a serotonin reuptake inhibitor, but you're worried about the raised eyebrows, the skeptical looks, and the "you want me to do what now?" reactions. Holistic interventions, like exercise, meditation, and diet changes, are powerful tools in our mental health arsenal, but they often get sidelined due to stigma and misunderstanding.

Enter the "Holistic Healing Handbook," your trusty toolbox for tackling these taboos. This guide is designed to help you navigate the choppy waters of holistic interventions, providing you with a checklist of options, a practical guide to prescribing them, and a resource for handling those tricky patient conversations. It's time to embrace the holistic, bust through the barriers, and get your clients on Easy Street to wellness.



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Dani Allen is the Clinical Outreach and Development Manager for [Belongly](#). At [Belongly](#) she is responsible for engaging in outreach and marketing efforts to establish collaborative alliances with mental health practitioners who can gain value from the Belongly community while supporting clinical referrals for therapists and facilitating networking connections. She offers specialized knowledge on mental health subjects and the requirements of therapists and creates valuable downloadable content and resources for existing and prospective members of the [Belongly Community](#).







The Holistic Hitlist: Your Checklist of Potential Interventions

Welcome to the “Holistic Hitlist,” your one-stop-shop for all things holistic. This is where you’ll find a buffet of brain-boosting, mood-mellowing, stress-squashing interventions that go beyond the traditional talk therapy.

We’re talking about the kind of stuff that gets your clients moving, breathing, eating, and sleeping in ways that nourish their minds as much as their bodies.

So, buckle up, therapists, because we’re about to take a scenic detour off the beaten path of mental health treatment.

- ☐ **Exercise:** The ultimate mood booster, exercise releases endorphins, those feel-good neurotransmitters that can help combat depression and anxiety. Plus, it’s a great way to help clients feel more connected to their bodies.
- ☐ **Mindfulness:** This practice of being fully present and engaged in the moment can help clients reduce stress, improve focus, and gain insight into their emotional responses.
- ☐ **Yoga:** A blend of physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation, yoga can help clients improve flexibility, reduce stress, and increase body awareness.
- ☐ **Meditation:** This practice of quieting the mind can help clients reduce stress, improve concentration, and cultivate a more peaceful state of mind.
- ☐ **Sleep Hygiene Practices:** Good sleep is essential for mental health. Encouraging regular sleep schedules, bedtime routines, and healthy sleep environments can help clients improve their mood and energy levels.
- ☐ **Diet Changes:** What we eat can affect how we feel. Encouraging a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains can help clients improve their mood and energy levels.
- ☐ **Grounding Techniques:** These strategies can help clients manage overwhelming emotions or dissociation by reconnecting with the physical world around them.
- ☐ **Breathing Exercises:** Simple yet powerful, breathing exercises can help clients manage anxiety and stress in the moment.

-  **Art Therapy:** Encouraging clients to express themselves through art can provide a new outlet for expressing emotions and exploring personal experiences.
-  **Music Therapy:** Whether it's listening to, creating, or moving to music, this therapeutic approach can help clients reduce stress, improve mood, and express emotions.
-  **Nature Therapy:** Spending time in nature, whether it's a walk in the park or gardening, can help clients reduce stress, improve mood, and feel more connected to the world around them.
-  **Animal-Assisted Therapy:** Interacting with animals can provide comfort, reduce feelings of isolation, and create a sense of calm.
-  **Journaling:** Writing about thoughts and feelings can provide a therapeutic outlet for clients, helping them to understand and manage their emotions better.
-  **Aromatherapy:** The use of essential oils can help create a calming environment and promote relaxation.

Prescription Pad: Your Guide to Incorporating Holistic Interventions

Exercise:

- Set a goal for physical activity, such as 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week.
- Incorporate movement into therapy sessions, like walking meetings or stretching breaks.
- Encourage clients to try different forms of exercise (like swimming, dancing, or cycling)

Mindfulness:

- Set a daily mindfulness practice goal, starting with 5 minutes a day and gradually increasing.
- Encourage the use of mindfulness apps and provide a list of recommended ones.
- Bring mindfulness exercises into the beginning or end of therapy sessions to model the practice.

Yoga:

- Recommend a weekly yoga class or home practice using online resources.
- Incorporate simple yoga stretches or poses into therapy sessions.
- Set a goal for regular yoga practice, such as 2-3 times per week.
-

Meditation:

- Set a daily meditation goal, starting with short sessions and gradually increasing.
- Recommend meditation apps or online resources for guided meditations.
- Incorporate short guided meditations into therapy sessions to model the practice.
-

Sleep Hygiene Practices:

- Set a goal for a regular sleep schedule. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.
- Encourage the creation of a calming bedtime routine, like reading or listening to soothing music.
- Recommend tracking sleep patterns with a sleep diary or app to identify areas for improvement.

Diet Changes:

- Encourage a goal of incorporating more fruits and vegetables into meals.
- Recommend reducing processed foods and sugary drinks.
- Suggest keeping a food diary to identify patterns between diet and mood.

Grounding Techniques:

- Teach grounding techniques during sessions and set a goal for regular practice, such as during times of stress or overwhelm.
- Encourage the use of grounding techniques before bed to promote better sleep.
- Suggest carrying a grounding object, like a small stone or piece of jewelry, to use when needed.

Breathing Exercises:

- Set a goal for regular practice of breathing exercises, such as during moments of stress or anxiety.
- Recommend apps or online resources for guided breathing exercises.
- Incorporate breathing exercises into therapy sessions to model the practice.

Art Therapy:

- Encourage a weekly art-making goal, such as drawing, painting, or collage.
- Suggest using art as a form of journaling, expressing thoughts and feelings visually.
- Incorporate art-making into therapy sessions as a form of expression and discussion.

Music Therapy:

- Set a goal for regular music engagement, such as listening to uplifting music, creating music, or moving to music.
- Encourage the creation of a personalized playlist for mood regulation.
- Incorporate music into therapy sessions as a form of expression and discussion.

Nature Therapy:

- Encourage a weekly goal of spending time in nature, such as a walk in the park or gardening.
- Suggest nature-based mindfulness exercises, like listening to natural sounds or observing wildlife.
- Set a goal for regular nature engagement, such as daily outdoor breaks.

Animal-Assisted Therapy:

- If possible, incorporate therapy animals into your practice.
- Encourage clients to spend time with pets or visit animal shelters.
- Suggest animal-based activities, like dog walking or bird watching.

Journaling:

- Set a goal for regular journaling, such as 10 minutes each day.
- Encourage the use of prompts to explore thoughts and feelings.
- Suggest different forms of journaling, like gratitude journaling or stream-of-consciousness writing.

Aromatherapy:

- Discuss the benefits of aromatherapy and suggest essential oils that promote relaxation.
- Encourage clients to use aromatherapy as part of their self-care routine, such as during a bath or before bed.
- Suggest the use of a diffuser or essential oil roller for easy application.

The Conversation Compass: Navigating Difficult Dialogues about Holistic Approaches

Initiating Conversations:

- "I've been thinking about different ways we can approach your treatment, and I'd like to discuss some holistic interventions that could complement our work together. How do you feel about exploring options like exercise, mindfulness, or diet changes?"
- "I believe that mental health treatment can benefit from a holistic approach. This means looking at how all areas of your life impact your wellbeing. Are you open to exploring some holistic interventions as part of your treatment plan?"
- "In addition to our regular sessions, I'd like to discuss some other strategies that could support your mental health. These are holistic interventions, which means they consider the whole person - body, mind, and spirit. How do you feel about this?"

Addressing Stigma:

- "I understand that there can be some stigma around holistic interventions. However, research has shown that these methods can be very effective in supporting mental health. I believe it's worth exploring these options and seeing if they might be a good fit for you."
- "It's common to have some reservations about holistic interventions. They might seem unconventional compared to traditional therapy, but they can offer unique benefits. I think it's important to keep an open mind and consider all our options."
- "I know that holistic interventions might not be what you expected when you started therapy. But these methods can provide additional tools for managing your mental health. They're not meant to replace our sessions, but to enhance them."

Answering Questions:

- "That's a great question. Holistic interventions are strategies that consider the whole person - body, mind, and spirit. They can include things like exercise, mindfulness, diet changes, and more. The goal is to support your overall wellbeing, not just address specific symptoms."
- "I'm glad you're asking questions. It's important to understand what's involved in your treatment. Holistic interventions are about integrating physical, mental, and emotional health. They offer a comprehensive approach to wellbeing."
- "I appreciate your curiosity. Holistic interventions are all about balance. They aim to support all aspects of your health - physical, mental, and emotional. They can be a valuable addition to traditional therapy."

Addressing Noncompliance:

- "I've noticed that you've been hesitant to try some of the holistic interventions we've discussed. Can we talk about any concerns or obstacles you're facing?"
- "It seems like the holistic interventions haven't been a big part of your routine lately. Let's discuss what's been getting in the way and how we can address it."
- "I understand that incorporating new strategies into your life can be challenging. Let's explore what might be making it difficult for you to engage with the holistic interventions and find some solutions together."

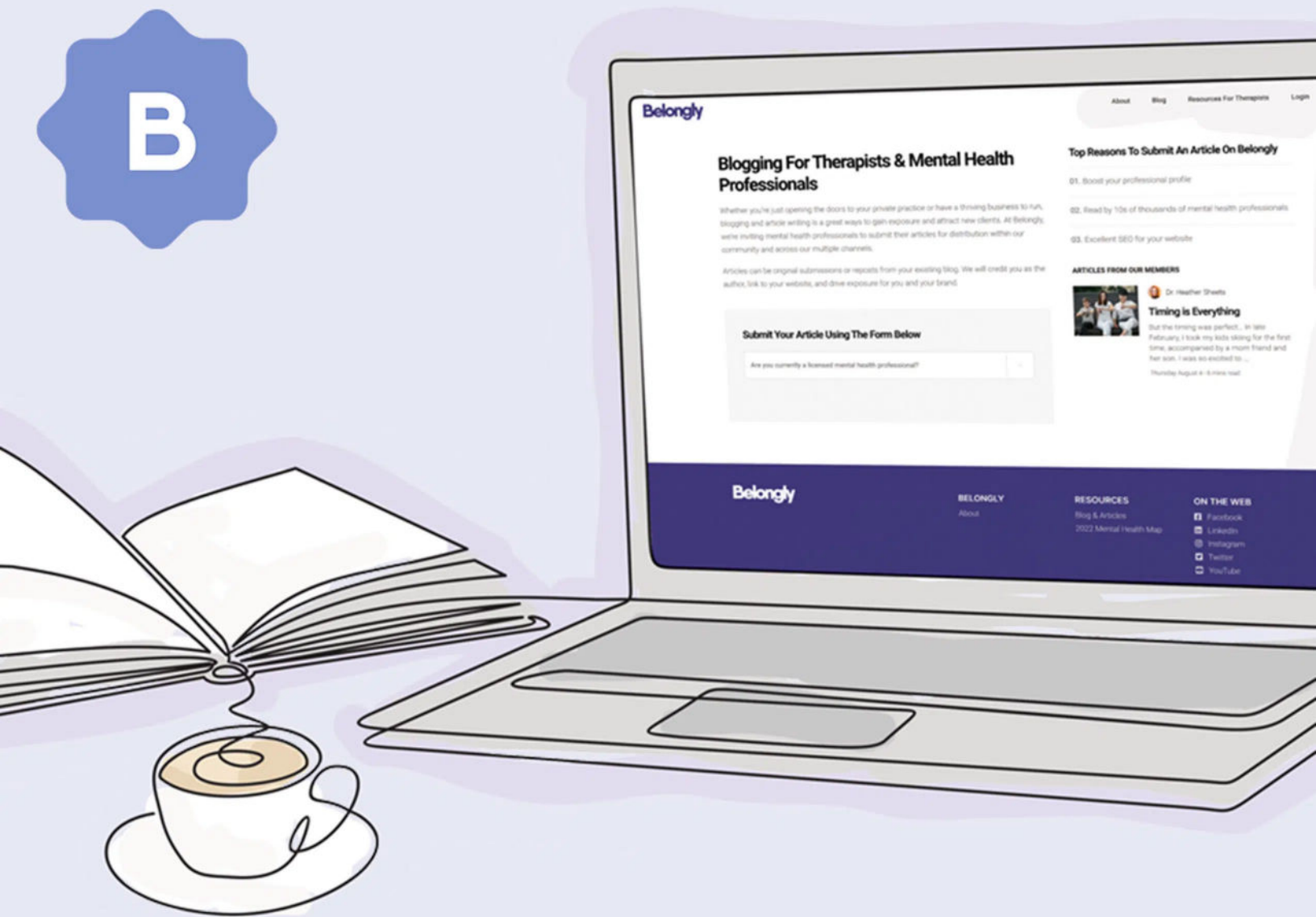
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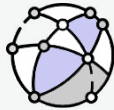
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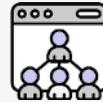
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