

**Jennifer Jackson:** Hello, this is Jennifer Jackson, and this is the mind and body podcast series for Caring Approach featuring Dr. Carlos Durana. Dr. Durana is a clinical psychologist and a professional counselor and the founder of Caring Approach. He has over 30 years of experience in an area of counseling and psychotherapy.

He brings a vast array of experience in therapeutic approaches that he describes as integrative counseling and therapy. Today's topic is mind and body connection. Please welcome Dr. Carlos Durana.

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** Well, thank you so much. I'm so glad to be here.

**Jennifer Jackson:** Well, we're glad to have you Dr. Durana. Well, let's dig right in.

Let's get started with What is the mind and body connection?

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** Sure. Well, is this idea that the, the mind can influence the body, the body can influence the mind. Now, this idea has been around for a long time and, uh, you see over 2000 years ago, you saw it in, in Greece, ancient Greece. You saw it in, uh, in India and China.

Through different sort of practices, health practices and so on. So this has been around for a long time. Then we have it in the last 60, 70 years or so, this idea of holism that gradually, you know, has been, has developed.

**Jennifer Jackson:** Okay.

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** Holistic practices and all of that, that are talking about this. The way I think about it, not so much as causality, Like, you know, say if I'm thinking something, maybe that's gonna cause my illness or cancer, whatever it is.

Mm-hmm . Let's say, but it's more like a, a mu uh, sort of an influencing how my mind, my, my thinking, my feelings can affect my physical health. Okay. How can my physical health, um, influence my feelings and my thoughts and so on. A way of, um, um, viewing things and so on. So it's this kind of mutual, reciprocal influence.

Now, I would like to expand this whole idea, what I mean by mind body, because when I'm thinking about mind body, uh, you know, the term mind doesn't encompass enough of what we're talking about. Certainly by mind we're

thinking of our thoughts, right? Okay. We're thinking of our beliefs. Our points of view about life, our interpretations and so on, all of that sort of functioning.

Then we have our feelings, our emotions, so it involves the heart as well, right? That's another aspect of our beings. Then we have our behaviors, you see. That also affects our body, our emotions, our minds, and so on. So we have the mind. Emotions, the body, behaviors, but also there's a social aspect to this, our relationships.

Our relationships will influence our health. Our relationships will influence our thinking as well. And our thinking will influence, and so on, our, our relationships and so on. So that's another important aspect when we're thinking of the mind body connection. Okay. Another aspect. Which, um, it's hard sometimes to put a word to that.

Some people get defensive when you mention the word spiritual or religious or anything like that. But what I'm talking about is, and one doesn't have to be religious or spiritual, what I'm talking about is having a sense of something that's important that is larger than us.

**Jennifer Jackson:** A deeper meaning. Yeah. A deeper meaning.

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** And one doesn't have to be religious or spiritual for that. One can hold certain things that are larger than ourselves. Our sense of care for humanity, for other human beings, helping others, and so on. And that is another aspect of this mind body connection, if you will, that is very important for our healing, for our wellness, our health, and so on.

**Jennifer Jackson:** So you told us a little bit about it, but can you also, uh, describe or Give us an example of how you use this in your sessions.

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** Sure, sure. In my sessions, I make use of all of these aspects of a person. Uh, when someone comes to me for whatever reason it is, you know, I tend to look at all of these aspects of a person and then try to see where are their strengths and where are their areas of maybe some deficiencies that need to be enhanced.

Of course, I'm not just paying attention to what I see, I also want to know what they think and what they feel and what's important for them. Because ultimately it's the person's agenda. I'm not setting the agenda. But I have that as a backdrop. And I may question about certain things. If I see something and they come to me for something, an individual problem of some kind, but if there's

something relationally that they're having challenges with, even though they didn't come for that, I may say, ask about that.

And see if that is influencing the problem that they came with or not. So it is a framework that I'm using, but of course I don't, well, bring all of that necessarily into the therapy unless there's a need for something that needs to be addressed that maybe is being ignored that could be very important for the reason why they came to begin with.

All right. Got it. So that's one of the ways that it influences my, my way of dealing with people. The other way is that I pay a lot of attention to the body. Now, in therapy, nowadays, there are, there's a, well in the past maybe 50 years or so, uh, a resurgence, if you will, of the body as a way of dealing with issues, even psychological issues.

The body really is a resource. Just like our feelings, our resources, our thoughts, our emotions, our behaviors, we can use them as resources for changing for the better. The body is also a resource because the body holds our feelings and emotions through tensions. Absolutely. Our defenses are in the body.

Mm hmm. You know? Defenses, uh, say that we refer in a relationship and, and we have, say, challenges in terms of being close to the other person is very common that there may be tensions in my chest, in my musculature and the chest. Okay, or in my stomach pit, there may be tensions there. And so if I am working with someone with something of that nature, I may also bring body explorations, guided techniques of mindfulness, breathing techniques, and focusing techniques on certain parts of the body.

Wow. And tapping into that and trying to release the tensions there through guided exploration is a way of not only making the issue much more clear, but it can allow for the resolution of the issue, can allow for deeper exploration of the issue as well. So it's, it's in a way, it's a way of establishing a dialogue.

Not only with ourselves and our thinking,

**Jennifer Jackson:** and

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** our feelings, but also establishing a dialogue with our bodies. With our body,

**Jennifer Jackson:** right.

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** Okay, so that is another way that I use that. So I'm paying attention to,

**Jennifer Jackson:** hmm,

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** what's going on with my body? Absolutely. See, because if those tensions could be holding me back in different ways, you know?

**Jennifer Jackson:** It's amazing how the mind and body Are they work together when they work together? They are awesome, but when they don't, not so good.

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** Yeah.

**Jennifer Jackson:** And it's, uh, amazing how one can affect the other. Can you give us a little bit more, um, insight on, um, how you would treat different stages of, of say depression. using this?

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** Well, with depression or, or with anxiety or, um, or just about any, any other problem, uh, there's often in particular in terms of the body focus, there are potential patterns that are there. There are different aspects. different parts of the body that will hold kind of certain types of themes. For example, if, um, issues around our, our, how do we give and receive love?

How do we, uh, and our worthiness and so on often related to that, there can be tensions in the chest or in the stomach. If for example, sometimes there are issues that we're having around making a decision, am I doing the right thing? Am I doing the wrong thing? Am I saying the right thing? Am I saying the wrong thing?

It's not uncommon for the sides of the neck to be very tight.

**Jennifer Jackson:** Got it.

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** All right. Now, we know this, for example, if we feel burdened by a lot of responsibilities, often the shoulders will be very tight and we may start, you know, it's like we drop the shoulders forward, right? We feel burdened. It's like we're carrying a weight and the shoulders will respond.

Likewise, there are aspects of the head or other parts of the body that will hold. Specific types of emotional tensions, and then we can tune into that through guided ways like I was mentioning before, in order to help resolve the issue. Got it. That's one way. In a mindful way. Of course we're dealing also with

other approaches, you know, okay, like the cognitive behavioral approach where we are, uh, looking at our beliefs and so on.

Or if we're dealing with something with relationship issues, then we have to work specifically also with issues of the heart and relating and lovability and worthiness and so on. So. So,

**Jennifer Jackson:** I have a, a question for you. How can I relate the mind and body connection to a problem?

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** Sure, sure. How we relate to a problem is really, really important.

No matter what the problem is. If I have an illness, a physical problem of some kind, or if I have anxiety. Or depression and so on, or a relationship issue. What is our relationship to the problem? It's a big deal. Let's say, let's take something physical. And you know yourself because you're in the fitness, you're general manager for a big health club in the area and you're very fit and so on.

And you probably, you know, you see this, uh, people with, all of a sudden they have back pains, you know, from, you know, Working out or maybe they come in that way and sometimes, um, people will push themselves too much and they aggravate the problem or they may cost the problem. Absolutely. Right. Or maybe they're not doing enough.

Let's say if they have a physical problem and they need to do more about it in terms of exercises, they're not doing enough. See, so if I'm relating to that problem, we're talking about something physical right now. If I'm relating to myself, I have a back problem, let's say, which I've had sports injury and all of that.

I've gone through this. I know what this is like. And sometimes I go and push myself too hard. Of course. And then I aggravate it. Of course. See, because I'm forcing it. I'm pushing. I'm being too aggressive. Right? Absolutely. And I know there have been times when I have not done enough, and that's also not helpful.

See, what's the balance between doing and not doing so much, or between doing and being? Mm hmm. That's a big deal. Oh, absolutely. Whether it's a physical problem. You see, that's, that's attitude. Mm hmm. That's the way I'm thinking about myself and the issue and emotionally, right? Whether it's that or whether there is, uh, anxiety or something else, how am I relating to that problem?

Absolutely. Because that's really a relationship that I'm having with myself. The problem is just kind of an example of myself. It's kind of like, uh, you know, something that is right now coming up, but it could be anything. Let's see. How do I relate to an issue that I'm dealing with? Am I coming in there forcing things or am I coming in there in a way that's too passive?

And so I brought up, you know, the idea of something physical to highlight it, you know, but it can be anything. It can be anxiety. It could be in a relationship problem. Wow. And so our attitude, how we're facing the problem in itself needs to be looked at. Got it. You see? And so that's a way that then I am looking at a person in, you know, their attitudes, their thoughts, their feelings, you know, the actual symptom that they're coming in with or problem that they're coming with.

Maybe something physical, maybe not, maybe something of an emotional or relational issue and how are they dealing with that. How are they relating to that? And ultimately, and I know we talked about this a little bit in another podcast about depressiveness and all of that is, is, uh, disability to, to know ourself better, but also to be kinder at times.

Of course. Yeah, so there's no need to be kinder. Or supportive loving sometimes we need to be we need to challenge ourselves. That's right. Absolutely. How do we find that balance?

**Jennifer Jackson:** Exactly. Yeah, exactly Yeah, that's good stuff. Dr. Durana if you were going to leave your listeners with anything regarding mind and body connection What would it be?

What would you want them to know and to, would you give them homework? And if so, what type of homework would it be regarding the mind and body connection? Because I think a lot of people don't even realize, um, what's going on, you know, they have headaches, they have body aches, they have the whole nine yards.

What are some of the ways that, that we can recognize? That as it being a mind problem as opposed to another issue.

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** Well, that's a great question. I mean, that's something that that's where we start to pay attention to our whole selves, our whole being. That's one thing. Absolutely. And how do we start? I mean, we can start in, you know, one of the best and simplest ways is, and I teach a lot of breathing techniques to people and mindfulness techniques.

One of the simplest ways. Take some deep breaths, I mean, slow and long and deep breaths so that your exhalation is longer than the inhalation and take little, even if it's a couple of minutes where you do that to break the, you know, the states that we find ourselves in sometimes when we're doing too much or pushing too hard or too stressed.

**Jennifer Jackson:** Absolutely. You know. Just taking a deep breath. Yeah. And exhaling it. Yeah. You'd be surprised what it does to you.

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** Yeah. Just doing that throughout the day at different times, even if it's a minute, two minutes, whatever you can do. Absolutely. And then start to learn more about, you know, the importance of, uh, the mind body connection.

**Jennifer Jackson:** Absolutely. I found that, um, I was having problems sleeping and I found that just taking a few breaths at night helped to calm me down and allowed me to, uh, settle just so I could get better. a good night's sleep.

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** Exactly.

**Jennifer Jackson:** And it's something as simple as breathing.

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** Yep.

**Jennifer Jackson:** Helped me get to sleep.

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** Exactly.

**Jennifer Jackson:** So I totally understand what you mean by the mind and body connection.

**Dr. Carlos Durana:** Mm hmm.

**Jennifer Jackson:** Well, Dr. Durana, thanks again for joining us. And listeners, if you would like more information, On this topic or any other topics, or if you'd like to schedule an appointment with Dr. Durana, please go to [www.caringapproach.com](http://www.caringapproach.com). I'm Jennifer Jackson, and thanks for listening.