

HEALTHY HABITS

MAINTAINING MENTAL HEALTH



Not so merry?

The holidays are usually portrayed as a time full of joyous celebrations, jolly laughter, and connecting with loved ones. We often forget that some do not have these moments during the festive season. The holiday blues have been defined as temporary feelings of anxiety, depression, loneliness, and other sad emotions. People who have mental illnesses or disorders may experience worsened symptoms during this time of year. It is also important to note that individuals who have not faced mental health challenges can experience the holiday blues. Those of us with past loss and trauma are more likely to struggle during the holidays. We must remember that the 'blues' are temporary feelings.



Take time for yourself

The first step to managing negative emotions is to recognize the feelings for what they are. What are you being triggered by? Are you stressed about work, a strained relationship, or not achieving the previous new year's resolutions? If you are feeling easily overwhelmed or burned out when you're around groups of people, consider setting limits and creating boundaries related to time spent with others. The greatest gift we can give ourselves is honoring our needs and taking care of ourselves.

Setting realistic expectations for yourself and others can prevent one from overextending themselves. Don't overcommit. Another way to avoid feelings of dissatisfaction during this time of year is to be levelheaded about how much money you're going to spend on gifts. Allow yourself to indulge in eating the holiday foods and treats. If you are an adult, enjoy a cocktail or beer...but remember to drink responsibly. Do not forget to drink water too. Think about the holidays as an opportunity to create new, positive memories.

HEALTHY HABITS

THE MOST DIFFICULT TIME OF THE YEAR



Coping with grief

Grief is a complex and unpredictable process. No matter the circumstance of how one lost a loved one it is especially difficult to deal with during the holiday season. The best advice available is to move through it - to feel all of it.

There is no time limit, grieve and grieve some more. Most importantly, if celebrating this time of year is too painful then don't. This does not mean isolate yourself, it means to take care of yourself. The holidays can magnify a loss and during a time that is meant to be shared with those we cherish - it may feel unbearable. Recognize your need for support may be the greatest during the holidays. Allow others to help you.

A cold and dark season

Losing someone special (including pets), a divorce/break up experiencing illness or injury, financial loss, and infertility can lead to grief. The sadness and loneliness may exacerbate feelings of isolation. Rather than avoiding the feeling, externalize the loss with a sentimental act. Ask for prayers of healings, share stories about them on your social media, or light a candle for your loved one.

It is natural to believe this time of year will never be enjoyable again. Reframe that thought - the holidays will certainly look different than what they used to be. The holiday season is part of the grieving journey, and we cannot escape those feelings. The journey has some of the roughest terrains we may have to navigate, but there is no right nor wrong way to handle the holidays in grief. Skip this year if you need to, the holidays will surely come again and always be there.



HEALTHY HABITS

EMBRACING EMOTIONS



Self-care

The holidays are an excellent time to be extra giving to yourself. In the season of outward appreciation of family and friends do not forget to celebrate yourself. When holiday shopping consider buying a present for future you. It does not have to be extravagant (unless you want it to be) - it could be something that encourages a new hobby. Decline invitations to social gatherings if it will be a mentally draining experience. Some people are not good for our emotional wellbeing, and it is okay to set boundaries around how much time you spend with them. Knowing when to say “no” and “enough” is incredibly important during this time of year. The most wonderful time of year can be that if you are caring for yourself too.



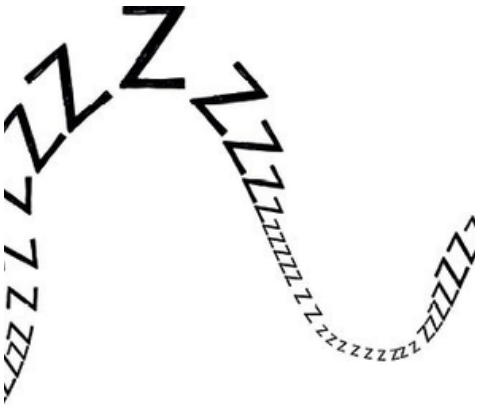
Presence not presents

During the holidays we are often reminded of the people and things we treasure. As individuals we all have ‘things’ that matter to use during the festive season, but do they always have to be tangible items? At Christmas many feel the pressure of getting everyone in their lives a present...one they’ll love and use. It is perfectly okay to buy or make someone a gift, but does it have to cost you?

The best gift may be time with you; an experience you can do together is what the spirit of Christmas is all about. Buying tickets to a show or making a homemade voucher for a dinner and movie at home encapsulates what really matters this time of year. Togetherness requires paying attention to and connecting with another person. Your time and recognition, your presence, can be your present this year.

HEALTHY HABITS

SLEEPING WELL?



Set a sleep ritual

Most of our daily schedules are unpredictable, however, we can maintain some consistency when it is time to go to bed. Setting the bedroom to a comfortable temperature and excluding screen time with the TV, phone, or laptop is one example of creating a sleep-friendly environment. The gift of quiet and stillness might be the perfect thing to give yourself or loved one this season. Consider herbal teas like chamomile or using a lavender-infused body wash in the shower before bedtime. These natural plant extracts are used often to promote health and wellbeing related to reducing stress. New research suggests gentle stretches of the body and slow breathing relieve muscle tension and induce better shuteye.



What is poor sleep?

The term 'poor sleep' is referring to sleep quality - a measure of how well someone sleeps. How much one sleeps can definitely affect the quality of sleep as well. Think about these aspects: How long does it take to fall asleep after getting into bed? Do you sleep through the night or wake up multiple times? Are you feeling rested and restored in the mornings when you wake up? Are you falling asleep throughout the day.

There can be numerous things contributing to poor sleep quality including stress, chronic health conditions like asthma or acid reflux. Poor mental health is a key factor associated with sleep deprivation and the worsening of poor sleep habits. Having an irregular sleep schedule or drinking too much caffeine or alcohol can interfere with how much and how well you are sleeping. Speak to a medical professional if you are experiencing trouble sleeping.

HEALTHY HABITS

JUST THE WAY YOU ARE



Body positivity

Navigating through the holidays with a body positive mindset can be difficult for some. It is easier said than done, but do not listen to judgmental family members. Do not let someone ruin a time intended for enjoying indulgent foods, desserts, and drinks. Holiday celebrations inevitably come with talk about food and bodies. Avoid these conversations if you do not want to hear nor express thoughts and feelings related to body image. Honor yourself by taking care of your body, that means eating and exercising when it feels right for you. Social media feeds can be filled with people that look like you and companies that align with your core values. Unfollow those that don't or trigger negative feelings.



Stop being unkind to yourself

Being mindful of how self-talk contributes to the compassion and love we hold for ourselves is one of the first steps to being body positive. Listen to your body and set boundaries - rest if it needs it, does it feel nourished, or does it feel safe? No one is perfect so value your individuality and fall in love with yourself and your body. Body image does influence physical and mental health. A season of peace and happiness calls for self-love.

Any feelings that you have before, during, and after the holiday season are VALID. Always remember that you and your body deserve love this holiday season. You are worthy of the celebration that comes with the holidays. It is the best time to reflect on the year and the amazing things your body has done. It is yours, all yours; it works everyday try not to judge it. Surround yourself with body positivity.

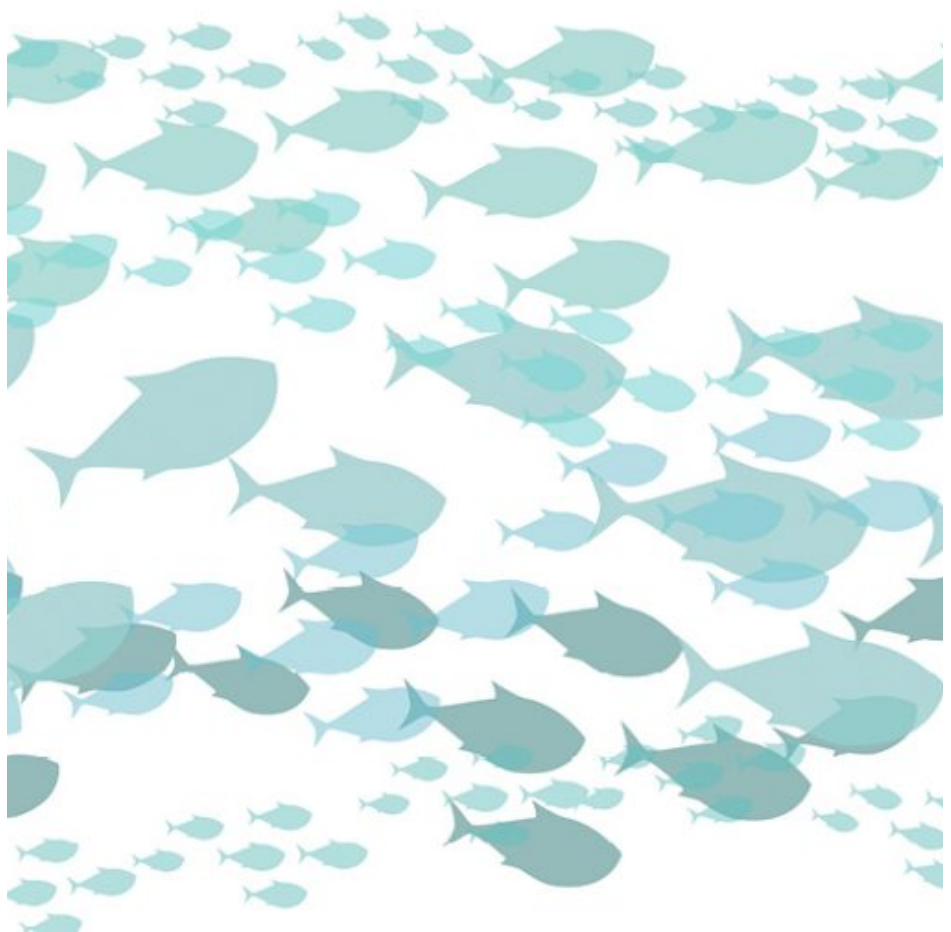
HEALTHY HABITS

A SENSE OF BELONGING



Basic human need

The need to belong is innate; meaningful relationships are necessary for survival. The holiday season should bring out the best of humankind, but we often forget those that are feeling lonely and people who are quite literally alone. A key factor in a person's mental wellbeing is connecting with others whether it is for social activities, physical safety, or fulfilling romantic desires. A community ensures safety and security; we instinctively need to 'belong' to a group. The absence of meaningful relationships can make the holidays a terrible time of year for some. Our minds, psyches, and mental health need the nourishment of others involved in our lives to preserve an overall wellbeing and quality of life.



Connectedness vs disconnectedness

Painful emotions stemming from loneliness can elicit physical pain signals throughout the body. Around the holiday season the desire to connect with others can become more profound and that is normal. People can have relationships with others and feel unhappy, there is a loneliness in that too. The absence of belonging serves as a major predictor of depression and anxiety.

These facts do not indicate personal relationships as the main driver of a person's life being significant or purposeful. This information is intended to **define how acceptance and togetherness can lead to feelings of contentment compared to dissatisfaction. A sense of belonging can increase motivation and performance in aspects of life such as the workplace, family life, and social causes.**



Environmental Health Office

4236 Lowes Dr. Temple, TX 76502

Monday–Thursday 8:00am–5:00pm

Friday 8:00am – 11:30pm

Phone: 254–532–9800

Killeen Clinic

309 North 2nd St Killeen, TX 76541

Monday– Thursday 7:00am – 4:30pm

Friday 7:00am – 11:00am

Phone: 254–532–9800

Immunizations Office

1605 North Main Street Belton TX 76513

Monday– Thursday 7:00am – 4:30pm

Friday 7:00am – 11:00am

Phone: 254–532–9800

Temple Clinic

820 North 31st Street Temple, TX 76504

Monday– Thursday 7:00am – 4:30pm

Friday 7:00am – 11:00am

Phone: 254–532–9800

Temple WIC

201 N 8th St. Temple TX 76501

Monday– Thursday 7:00am – 5:30pm

Phone: 254–532–9800

Killeen WIC

116 E Avenue D, Killeen, TX 76551

Monday– Thursday 7:00am – 5:30pm

Phone: 254–532–9800

Fort Cavazos WIC

**36000 Shoemaker Lane Fort Cavazos,
TX 76544**

Monday– Thursday 7:00am – 4:30pm

Friday 8:00am – 12:00pm

Phone: 254–532–9800

Copperas Cove WIC

**213 W Avenue D, Copperas Cove, TX
76522**

Monday– Thursday 7:00am – 5:30pm

Phone: 254–532–9800

BCPH Admin Office

4236 Lowes Dr. Temple, TX 76502

Monday– Thursday 7:00am – 5:30pm

Phone: 254–532–9800

Community Health Division

4236 Lowes Dr. Temple, TX 76502

Monday– Thursday 7:00am – 5:30pm

Phone: 254–532–9800