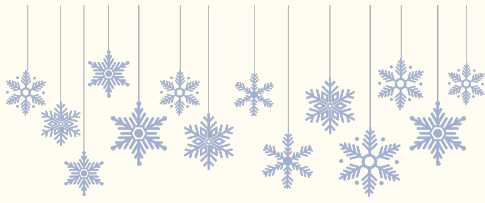


Health and Wellness Section



Winter 2023 Newsletter



Interim and Critical Incident
Support Services:
(212) 343-3701

Employee Assistance
Unit:(24/7 peer support)
(646) 610-6730

Chaplains Unit (24/7 support):
(212) 473-2363

Medical Division
Sick Desk (24/7):
(718)760-7600

Counseling Unit (24/7):
(718) 760-7557

POPPA (independent from the
NYPD, UMOS only):
(888) 267-7267

Finest Care (mental health
care for UMOS):
(646) 697-2020

Happy Holiday Season! While this time of year may be a time where you gather with family, friends, and loved ones, for many it can also be a stressful time of year. We here at the Health & Wellness Section know the winter season may bring challenges. Our newsletter offers proactive supportive strategies focused on coping with loss, the holiday blues, mindfulness, creating healthy habits, gratitude, and financial tips for the New Year. We are here for all members to assist with resources to promote your well-being.

Please check out our wellness resources by scanning the below QR code.

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Page 3.....Coping with Grief During the Holiday Season

Page 4.....Financial Tips for the New Year

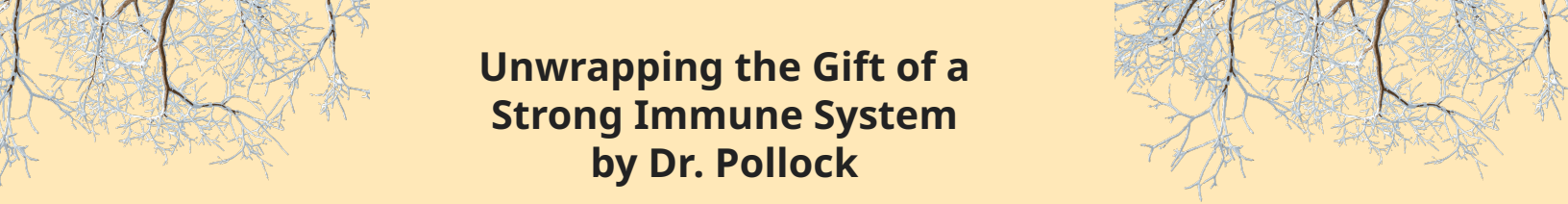
Page 5.....Mindfulness in the New Year

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Unwrapping the Gift of a Strong Immune System

by Dr. Pollock

As the holiday season wraps us in a festive embrace, let us unwrap the incredible connection between our psychological well-being and the strength of our immune system. Research continues to affirm the profound bidirectional connection between our mental state and the immune system. Poor mental health can compromise the immune response, and, conversely, a weakened immune system can contribute to mental health challenges. It is a delicate balance that requires attention and care. By fostering positive emotions, managing stress, and cultivating connections, you are unwrapping the gift of a strong and resilient immune system.

1. The Power of Positive Emotions:

Embracing the holiday spirit goes beyond decorations and gifts; it can have a tangible impact on your immune system. Positive emotions, like joy, gratitude, and love, have been linked to enhanced immune function. Take a moment each day to reflect on the things you are thankful for and share the love with those around you.

2. Stress-Free Celebrations:

While the holidays can be joyous, they can also bring stress. Chronic stress weakens the immune system. Prioritize self-care by incorporating relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing or meditation, into your daily routine. Give yourself the gift of a stress-free celebration.

3. Connection and Community:

The holidays are a time for connection. Social support has a significant impact on mental health, and research suggests that it can positively influence the immune system. Prioritize time with loved ones to strengthen both your emotional well-being and immune resilience.

4. Laughter is the Best Medicine:

Laughter truly is a potent elixir for the mind and body. It reduces stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies. So, enjoy those holiday comedies, share a joke with friends, and savor the healing power of laughter.

5. Mindful Eating for Well-being:

The holiday season often comes with indulgent feasts. Approach your meals mindfully, savoring each bite. Mindful eating not only fosters a healthy relationship with food but can also positively impact the immune system through its influence on stress and inflammation.

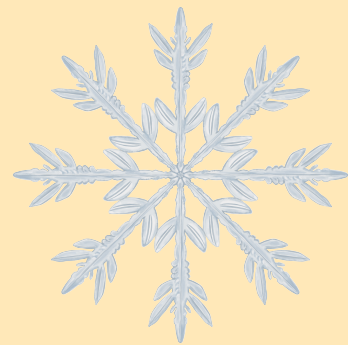
6. Quality Sleep, Magical Healing:

Allow yourself the gift of a good night's sleep. Quality sleep is a cornerstone of psychological and immune well-being. Establish a calming bedtime routine and create a sleep-conducive environment for a restorative holiday season.

7. Practicing Resilience:

Cultivate resilience by embracing challenges as opportunities for growth. Resilient individuals often exhibit stronger immune responses. Seek meaning and purpose in your experiences, fostering a resilient mindset.

As you celebrate this magical time, remember that the true gift you can give yourself is the investment in your psychological well-being. By fostering positive emotions, managing stress, and cultivating connections, you are unwrapping the gift of a strong and resilient immune system.



Coping with Grief During the Holiday Season

by PO Campbell

While the holidays are usually a happy time, for many they can be a time of sadness, loss or emptiness. Despite being encouraged to join in the holiday spirit, sometimes the sights, sounds and smells trigger memories of loved ones who have died. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, below are some tips to help cope with grief this time of year:

Talk about your grief: Don't be afraid to express feelings of grief. Ignoring your feelings won't make them go away, and talking about grief with someone who will listen without judgement can help you feel better.

Lean into your emotions: Allow yourself time to sit with your feelings without judgement. Observe and feel all your emotions (even the uncomfortable ones), acknowledge them and let them pass.

Know your limits: Feelings of loss and sadness may understandably leave you feeling fatigued. Take it easy on yourself, listen to and respect your body and its limits.

Eliminate unnecessary stress: Keeping busy doesn't distract from grief. It can actually add to stress and postpone the need to talk out feelings related to the grief.

Surround yourself with support: Reach out to friends and relatives who encourage you to be yourself and accept your feelings, both happy and sad.

Mention the name of the person who died: Talking candidly about the person who died and mentioning them by name reminds others how important the person was in your life.

Be gentle with others: Their emotional reserves may be just as depleted as yours. Be as patient and kind with others as you would want them to be with you. Give yourself a break from people if you feel too stressed to be around them. Allow others to help you, we all need help at certain times of our lives.

Plan ahead for family gatherings: Structuring holiday time eliminates the anxiety of being caught off-guard, especially during a time of year when feelings of grief and anxiety can already be heightened. Leave room to change or cancel plans if you feel the need.

Embrace treasured memories: Instead of ignoring memories, share them with family and friends. Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after the death of a loved one. Be mindful that memories can be both happy and sad, and it's okay to feel both. Memories that were made in love can never be taken away.

Express your faith: During the holidays, you may find a renewed sense of faith or discover a new set of beliefs. Associate with people who understand and respect your need to talk about these beliefs. If your faith is important, attend a holiday service or religious ceremony. Pray or light a candle in honor of your loved one.

Remember, grief is both a necessity and a privilege: It comes as a result of giving and receiving love. Don't let anyone take your grief away. Love and be patient with yourself, and allow yourself to be surrounded by loving, caring people.





Financial Tips for the New Year by Det. Kandinov

Determine your financial goals

Everyone has different goals. Whether it's restoring credit, saving for retirement, buying a home or college tuition, knowing what you want to do in the new year is the first step.

Determining your short and long-term financial goals is the first step towards reaching them and will also keep you from setting your goals too high.

Budget

The second step in any financial plan is budgeting. It doesn't matter what your goals are, saving, restoring your credit or wealth building, you can't get on the road to financial freedom without a map and your budget is that map.

If you can't stick to your budget, plan your spending

If you've set budget after budget and continuously blow through them, then it may be easier to create a spending plan instead.

The concept of living on a spending plan instead of a budget can give you freedom and peace of mind.

Additionally, a spending plan allows you to choose what to spend your money on instead of being focused on what you can't buy. Start with necessary expenses, rent, food utilities and savings. Money Management apps can also help you keep track of things and make automated payments or transfers.

Track your accounts and your purchases regularly

People can be frugal in some months while in others, they might overspend a bit if issues or events arise. Tracking your accounts regularly will not show you where your money is going, but will also show you know when your spending is getting out of hand. Additionally, it can also help let you know when it's time to pull back on spending and save more.

Check your account balances daily and see where your money is really going. This can also help you see when your funds are getting too low and you need to curb your spending. I also recommend that people track purchases for 30 days and write down how they felt after the purchase. Often we spend mindlessly and not necessarily within our values.

Plan monthly no-spend weekends

One of the best ways to save money is by not staying in. No-spend weekends are a great way to give your accounts and cards a break. Start by planning for your weekends ahead of time. Pick up whatever food and entertainment you need before the weekend. If you live in a large metro area, figure out what free events there are that weekend that'll pique your interest. Another option is to stay at home with some comfort food, stay out of the winter weather and stream your favorite movies and shows

Boost your retirement savings

For those of you who are already well into your financial plan and are waiting for that beautiful day called retirement, boosting your retirement savings is paramount as inflation is driving many who called it quits back into the workforce.

Today, you need to make sure your retirement money will last and unpredictable circumstances don't empty your savings faster than you planned. Use 2024 to boost or maximize contributions to 457/401(k), plot out holistic retirement goals (e.g., Where will I live? Will I work? How much to budget for travel?) and, no matter your age or life stage, take meaningful steps to boost your financial wellness.

Remember, money management is a marathon, not a sprint

Any form of money management no matter how big or small takes time. Rome wasn't built in a day and your financial goals won't be achieved in a day either. It will take months and maybe even years of you saving, spending frugally, and sacrificing.

If you feel like budgeting and limiting your spending is too hard, remember what the goal is and how far you've made it. Also, make it a point to celebrate small milestones on the way to your goal, it'll keep you motivated to get to the finish line.

Remember this is for your financial future and freedom, so stay positive and keep your goal in mind, because when you finally hit that goal, you'll realize it wasn't as hard as it seemed on that first day.





Mindfulness in the New Year by Dr. Fiasca and Dr. Rondeau



Spend time in the winter air: Even though the air gets cooler, there are mindful moments to be found outside during the winter season. Colder air brings about a sense of peacefulness and calm that is unmatched. Living and/or working in a city as busy as New York can become overwhelming at times. Take some time each day to notice and appreciate the beauty and stillness of the winter season. This can be done by taking deep breaths in the crisp air, slowing down to notice the leaves falling from the trees, or even by feeling the chilly breeze against your skin – observing the sensations on our skin that come from the cold.

Take a winter walk: Walking has been shown to have maximized mental and physical health benefits. When walking, be mindful of your environment – whether the concrete jungle of Manhattan, the shorelines of Long Island, or anything in between – and your body. Pay attention to the steps you take during each inhale and exhale. Feel free to count as you go, and count each breath in and out. For example, inhaling for 1, 2, 3 steps, and then exhaling for 1, 2, 3 steps. Notice how your body responds to being outdoors, the feelings in your lungs, and the cold air against your skin.

Eat mindfully: It can become second nature to shove food into our mouths when strapped for time. Slowing down and appreciating our food is not only beneficial for your mental health, but also your digestive system. Take a moment to acknowledge and observe the food you're eating. Look at its curves, grooves, and edges. Take in the color of the item, any imperfections of the item. Next, pick it up and feel the texture – is it smooth? Rough? What processes had to happen to put this food item exactly in your hand where it is now? Bring it to your nose and smell the item. Does it bring back any memories? Put it to your mouth without chewing it. Appreciate the flavor. Swirl it around, noticing the taste. When you're ready, slowly chew and swallow.

Listen to music in a mindful manner: Take time to slow down and close your eyes when listening to music. If you're driving, engage in mindful listening by active listening. Acknowledge any observations in the music – instruments, chords, lyrics, feelings associated with the song, etc.

Engage in mindful listening: Really make an effort to listen to family, friends, and coworkers. Focus on their words, their demeanor, and their body language. Instead of focusing on your own thoughts, listen to the content of what they're saying and the process of how they're saying it. Keep yourself free from any distractions, including your cell phone.

Have a mindful morning to start to the day routine: Whether your tour is days, evenings, or midnights, it is possible to get into a mindful start to the day routine in the wintertime. Take a moment to savor the possibility of the day ahead of you.

Take a still moment: Many prefer to stay indoors during winter. However, the outdoors can provide a tranquil sanctuary. Sit outside for a few moments. Be still and allow yourself to enjoy your surroundings. Focus on your breath. Notice the noises around you. Inhale and exhale while engaging with the sounds of your environment.

Be mindful of your sleep routine: Engage in a sleep routine that slows down your system before bed. Winter can be hard on our bodies, as the lack of sunlight can lead to a reduction in vitamin D and an increase in melatonin, making us feeling tired and fatigued. Allow yourself time to get into a space for quality sleep. Turn off all blue lights at least an hour before bed. Turn off your TV and all devices. Do something to slow down the mind, like reading, journaling, or meditating.

Mindfulness can help reduce anxiety and depression, improve sleep and cope with pain, and lower blood pressure. It has shown to be effective in helping people reduce cancer-related fatigue and pain, reduce loneliness, improve weight control, and regulate hypertension.

Increased mindfulness was related to increased resilience, which in turn was related to decreased burnout





Gratitude During the Holidays

by Dr. Adams and Dr. Graziano



Gratitude is the process by which we give thanks, but it is more than just saying “thank you.” It is a way for us to reflect on and appreciate what we have instead of seeking something else with the expectation it will make us happier. Gratitude may be felt and expressed through a variety of means. We may apply it to fond memories from the past, finding thanks in the present, or also look toward the future with hope and optimism.

Gratitude benefits our overall well-being. Practicing gratitude can boost our mood as it allows a shift in perspective to focus less on misfortune and more on the positive aspects of our lives. This improvement in mindset may also result in better sleep, stronger focus, patience, and increased self-esteem along with resilience. Socially, gratitude also enhances our relationships and solidifies our bonds with the important people in our life.

The benefits of gratitude are powerful and scientifically supported! When gratitude is directed inward, it has been shown to increase life satisfaction, happiness, gratitude, and resilience. When gratitude is directed towards others, such as friends, family, loved ones, and coworkers, it has been shown to increase positivity and facilitate communication.

However, gratitude is not always reflexive and may not come easy. Dedication to gratitude takes intention and purposeful action. Some days it may feel like there is nothing for which to be grateful. On those days, in particular, be kind and compassionate to yourself. Be patient and find ways to take care of yourself, then when you feel ready, try it again. Gratitude is also a way to cope through times of challenge. Of critical importance, we cannot foster gratitude without also being hopeful and it is nearly impossible to be hopeful without gratitude. Hope and gratitude are essential self-care skills.

“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.”
--William Arthur Ward

Try to find gratitude every day. Making efforts toward capturing gratitude each day does not mean we must ignore difficult days, sadness, or pain. The holiday season, may be joyous for some, while processing the end of the year may be painful for others. Practicing gratitude means we can recognize those feelings and still choose to remember the experiences and people for whom we are grateful. Gratitude is giving yourself permission to remember the wonderful and painful parts of life, but in a balanced way.

During the holidays, we encourage you to slow down, take perspective, and make a habit out of giving thanks every day. The holidays provide an opportunity for grateful reflection. Finding appreciation for valuable aspects of your life and the people in it can benefit your mood, overall health, and relationships. It also fosters resilience and grounds us during difficult times.

How to practice gratitude this holiday season:

- Create a list of people and things for which you are grateful. It is helpful to be reminded of what we have versus what we want. Keeping a daily gratitude journal is holiday practice to benefit our mindset each day. Try to think about a positive experience each day no matter how big or small; an experience that brought laughter, smile, or comfort; a person whom you value.
- Practice mindfulness, meditation, or spirituality. Mindfulness practice can support our holiday spirit by keeping us in the moment, grounded, and less focused on topics of worry or rumination.
- Focus on your health, even when there may be physical or emotional difficulties. Gratitude toward aspects of positive health or well-being remain important.
- Practice kindness toward others. The holiday season is an optimal time for volunteering or assisting someone who is facing challenges.
- Express thanks! You can express this through a written note or effort to connect with someone directly to express thanks.

Beating the Holiday Blues by Dr. Buzz

The holiday season can trigger our emotional outlook, thus affecting our everyday lives. Religious and cultural holidays can create a time for our own self-awareness.

Generally, these holidays are for family, friends, and co-workers to rejoice. For many of us, this brings about happy memories and a great anticipation of fun traditions. However, for others, the holidays can underscore feelings of isolation and loneliness due to death, disease, cognitive decline and rejection. Ultimately, the holiday season has the potential to impede our ability to function well. This is what now has been termed the holiday blues.

This is usually defined as increased depression, anxiety, and internal/externalizing anger, during the holiday season, with a growing awareness during Thanksgiving and lasting throughout the new year.

Overspending, unrealistic expectations, unable to allocate time off from work, and direct pressure from family and friends, along with our own individual experiences, can leave many feeling resentful, emotionally fragile, and physically exhausted. Many may turn to well worn, but negative coping mechanisms such as alcohol, drugs, and compulsive behaviors.

Beyond internal issues of depression and anxiety, negative coping strategies, which may offer a momentary respite; can—and often do—fuel long-term damage to the mind and body. The Holiday Blues can be traumatic for individuals.

Here are some tips to help you and your loved ones:


- Break up the holidays and give them different meanings. Make any holiday your holiday devoted to your own personal self-care.
- Consider adapting the holiday traditions to whatever works best for you. This year, set an end time for any gatherings, limit the number of people, and request others to assist by assigning tasks and jobs

- Learning to say 'no' is important during the holidays. Avoid over-committing by setting boundaries and doing what you want to do.
- Set realistic expectations for family, friends, and for yourself. Holiday parties and family obligations can often turn into nightmares. Your time may be better spent doing what you enjoy and what brings you meaning.
- Feelings of loneliness, isolation, and loss can create an internal need to fill that void. Be mindful of your negative coping strategies. Structure a corrective action plan that includes, getting enough sleep, exercising, cultivating a hobby, and/or developing a new social outlet.
- Focus on spending time with supportive and caring people and allowing relationships to move at a reasonable pace.
- Set a budget and stick to it. Consider de-cluttering your home to gain more control over your own personal possessions. This can result in donating unwanted items to programs and agencies.
- Adopt a pet or foster one. Consider volunteering with any number of animal agencies.
- This is a time to catch up on reading. Not only would this expand your educational growth, but provide endless hours of escape, helping your mind and body decompress.


Remember the holidays and how you spend them and who with, are your CHOICE

Ultimately, whatever you choose to do and with whom this holiday season, your participation should be a day devoted to enjoyment & for giving THANKS! Enjoy the holidays, EAT, REST & RELAX.





Building Healthy Habits by Sgt. Rowan



No matter the goal, the road to success is often paved with healthy habits. These daily rituals, both big and small, shape our lives and contribute to our overall well-being. Whether your goal is to improve your physical health, boost your mental resilience, or enhance your productivity, building and maintaining healthy habits is the cornerstone of success. In this blog post, we'll explore the science and strategies behind habit formation and how you can integrate them into your daily routine.

Understanding Habit Formation:

Before diving into building healthy habits, it's essential to understand the psychology behind them. Habits are automatic behaviors that our brains develop over time through repetition. They serve as shortcuts, allowing our minds to conserve energy by executing routine actions without conscious thought. In essence, our habits define who we are and influence our daily lives more than we realize.

The Habit Loop:

To build and sustain healthy habits, it's crucial to grasp the habit loop, a concept popularized by Charles Duhigg in his book, "The Power of Habit." The habit loop consists of three key elements:

- 1. Cue:** This is the trigger that initiates the habit. It can be a time of day, a specific location, an emotional state, or an action by someone else.
- 2. Routine:** The routine is the behavior or action itself, such as going for a run, meditating, or eating a healthy meal.
- 3. Reward:** After completing the routine, our brain releases feel-good chemicals, reinforcing the habit. This positive reinforcement strengthens the loop.

Strategies for Building Healthy Habits:

- 1. Start Small:** When adopting a new habit, begin with a small, manageable step. For example, if you want to exercise regularly, start with a 10-minute workout each day. Over time, you can gradually increase the intensity and duration.
- 2. Set Specific Goals:** Make your goals clear and specific. Rather than saying, "I want to eat healthier," specify what that means for you, like, "I will eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily."
- 3. Create a Visual Reminder:** Visual cues can be powerful triggers. Use post-it notes, a whiteboard, or an app to remind yourself of your habit and track your progress.
- 4. Accountability:** Share your goals with a friend or family member who can help hold you accountable. Having someone to share your journey with can be motivating and make the process more enjoyable.
- 5. Be Patient and Persistent:** Habits take time to form. Research suggests it can take anywhere from 18 to 254 days for a habit to become automatic. Stay patient and don't be discouraged by setbacks.
- 6. Modify Your Environment:** Make your environment conducive to your habits. For example, keep healthy snacks readily available and remove temptations that could derail your progress.
- 7. Track Your Progress:** Use a journal or habit-tracking app to monitor your consistency and celebrate your achievements along the way.

Building healthy habits is a transformative journey that requires commitment, dedication, and an understanding of the habit loop. Every step you take towards a healthier lifestyle brings you closer to your goals. Whether you aim to improve your physical fitness, mental well-being, or overall productivity, healthy habits are the foundation upon which you can build a fulfilling and successful life.

