

Curating Holiday Wellness With



HEALING PARTNERS



Wellness for the Holidays

Self Care | Boundaries | Grief | Finances

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***Don't get your tinsel
in a tangle this year!***

The Art of Giving

The art of gifting has to do with matching your gift to the person. This does not have to be monetary in nature. For instance, if you value time with a friend, the greatest gift they can give you is their time. Sometimes the greatest gifts and the things you cherish most don't come with a price tag, like kindness and friendship. This year try doing something different with your gift giving, give the gift of you! This could be as simple as making a heartfelt card, writing a letter or drawing a small picture. Consider giving handmade coupons for walks along the river, game night, or volunteering. These things don't cost money but will bring you closer to the people you want to be with and offers an opportunity for joy and relationship building.

The heart of the giver makes the gift dear and precious- M.Luther

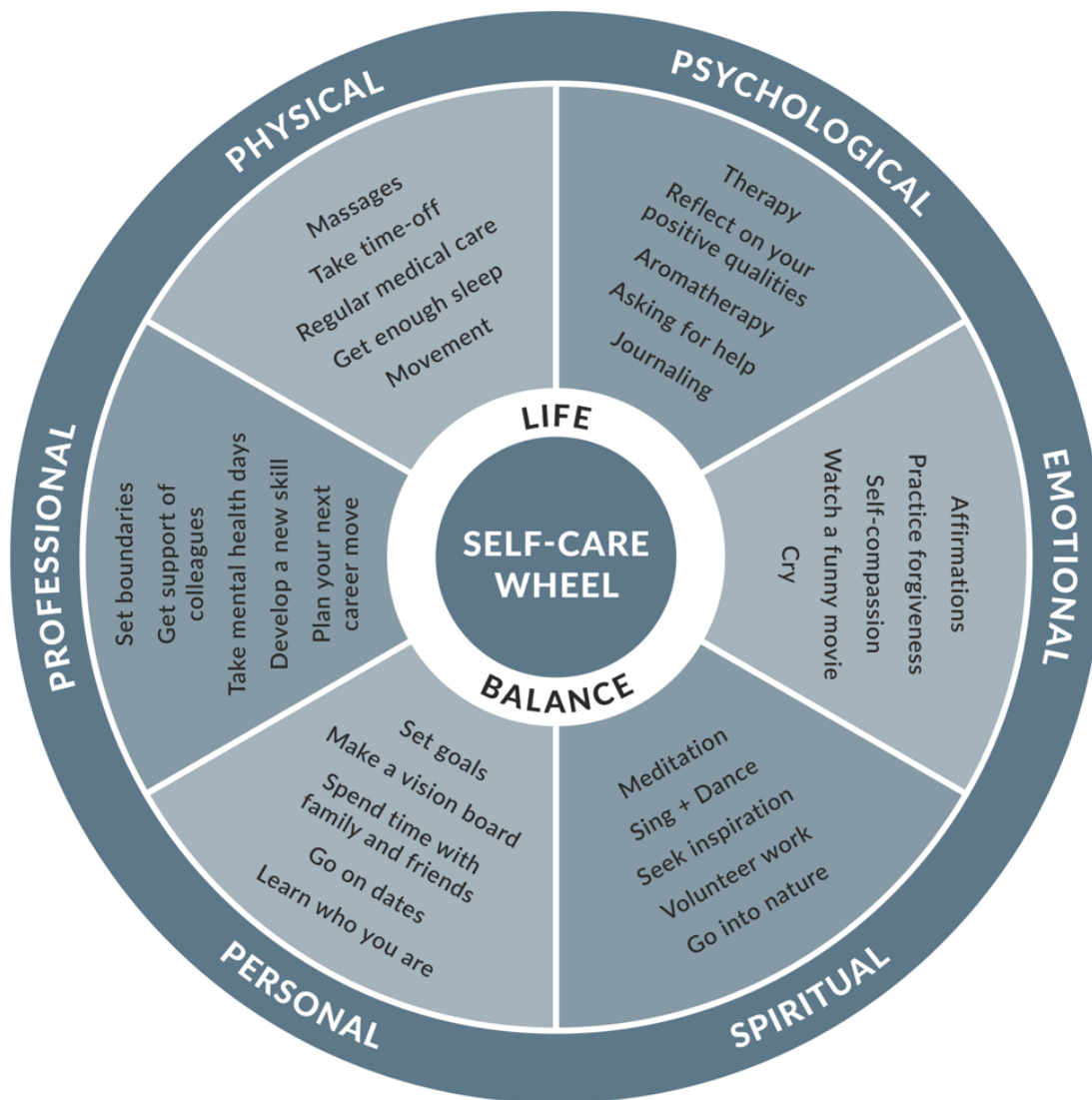
Working With A Tight Budget

1. Develop a philosophy for your gift giving. Who are you buying for and why? Are you trying to outspend someone? Or make someone think you really like them by buying them an expensive gift? Do you feel obligated to buy them a present? What do you want the message to be when you are gifting someone?
2. Budget. Decide how much money you have to spend and who you want to buy for, then decide how much you are going to spend on each person with what you have in your budget. Track your spending along the way and rein it in so you don't go overboard being extravagant. Remember to keep a list of what you want to buy for people so you don't go over the amount allotted buying something random.
3. A few easy ways to manage spending is to buy gift cards, go in on a group gift, make presents or drawing names for gift giving. Remember, you can always opt to buy fewer gifts, or no gifts at all.
4. Feeling the pressure to attend random gift exchanges? Go thrifty, regift, make a gift, or decline the invitation all together.
5. Not sure where to shop? Buy online to avoid mall shopping. Combine your online orders to reduce shipping costs, shop early, and shop around for the best prices. If you want to shop local, bring cash and leave your debit/credit cards at home. This will ensure that you don't spend more than you have.
6. Need more money at the holidays? Sell your stuff, pick up more shifts at work, give the gift of donating plasma, or give up your spending allowance on extras and eating out.
7. Hosting a party? Make it a potluck to reduce costs, make your own decorations, have a white elephant gift exchange, have guests bring their drink of choice.

Gratitude can change your attitude! Gratitude journaling is a fast and easy way to reduce stress. That's right, writing down and thinking about the things you are grateful for improves your neurochemical balance, and can reduce anxiety and improve your overall mood. Try writing a few sentences every day about something you are grateful for, see how you feel!

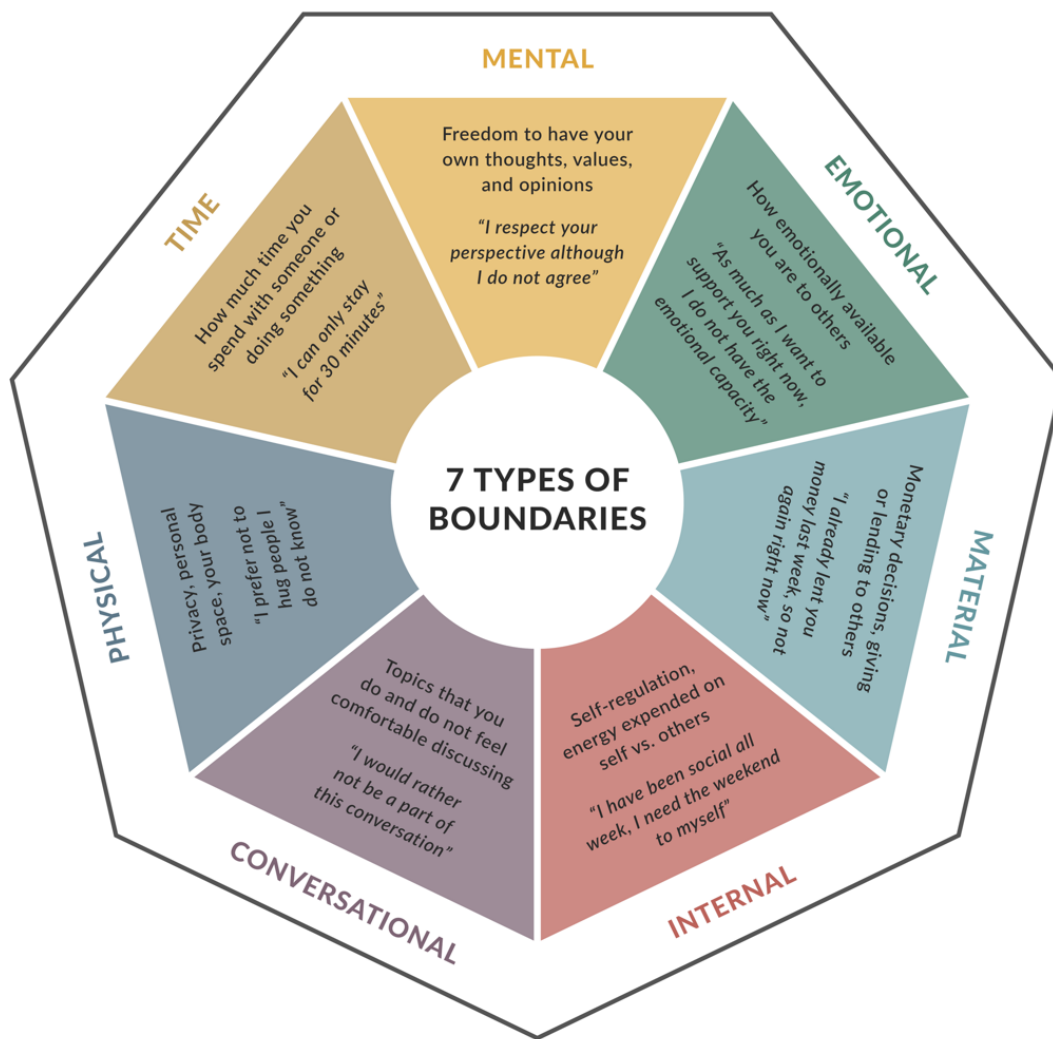


Being in nature has so many benefits for our mental and physical health, so try to fit in some time outdoors weather permitting. When you engage in activities in nature you lower your blood pressure, reduce your stress hormones, and release endorphins that help regulate emotions and energy.



Ways to stress less this holiday:

- ***Take care of yourself-** Healthy habits, limiting excess, and keeping to your routine.
- ***Set boundaries-** Don't over schedule yourself, and set boundaries to protect your peace & mental energy.
- ***Practice gratitude-** keep a gratitude journal and focus on one reason to be grateful each day.
- ***Talk to others-** Reach out to others for support if you are struggling or need help. Consider talking to a mental health provider or having weekly meet ups with people who are supportive.
- ***Prepare in advance-** Shop or buy tickets early in advance. This will reduce last minute running around.
- ***Practice mindfulness-** Deep breathing, grounding and mindfulness exercises can help keep stress lower.
- ***Spend time in nature-** Get fresh air, go for a walk or a drive. Drink cocoa by the fire!
- ***Limit screen time-** Enjoy a good book or the company of others instead.
- ***Name your emotions-** If you are having big feelings, sit with it, explore it, name it, then let it go.
- ***Get help or delegate-** If you are always the planner or fixer, this year share your duties with others.



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Boundaries with others:

1. Define your boundaries. What is it you want and don't want during this time? Who or what is it that you need a boundary with? Maybe there is a family member you have strife with or a traumatic event that you are dealing with, what is it you need in order to attend events peacefully and joyfully?
2. Maintaining boundaries can be hard. Write them down, practice affirming them and consider consequences of people violating them. What is non-negotiable and what are you willing to accept or let go of in order to have a peaceful gathering?
3. Asking guests ahead of time to not talk about controversial topics like politics during the gathering is ok! There is plenty of time outside of the gathering to have controversial conversations.

Personal Boundaries:

1. Feel comfortable skipping, going late, or taking yourself to the holiday gathering.
2. Say yes because it is your decision, not because you are trying to please someone else or feel obligated to.
3. Limits with yourself. Limit your alcohol and food consumption. This time of year is often about excess, so don't give up your routines and be sure to prioritize a healthy lifestyle.
4. Do not attend to work related duties on your time off. Take this time for yourself and spend it however you want.
5. It's ok to say no. You will never please everyone, so be sure to prioritize yourself!

If you are offended by my boundaries, then you are probably one of the reasons I need them.

Ideas for Making New Traditions

1. Baking & canning. Whether it be holiday cookies, fudge, jam or breads, everyone loves the homemade gift of food.
2. Donate your time or money. Maybe each year you want to donate your time to a charity or make an annual donation to an organization.
3. Decorate a gingerbread house. This is a fun and creative thing to do with the family or friends each year. Snap a photo and start a photo library over the years to come!
4. Pick a favorite movie for the holiday, and rewatch it each year on a special night.
5. Learn a new hobby such as candle making or crochet, and make personalized gifts for people. This is a great way to be creative, and learn new hobbies along the way!
6. Hang an annual ornament on the tree. This could be one that was gifted, or one that remembers a special person or event.
7. Go see the Nutcracker or other performance with a holiday theme.
8. Make your own advent calendar. You can get creative here, and pick a different theme each year. For example a kindness advent calendar that encourages small acts of kindness each day, or an origami calendar that has a different origami character to fold each day.
9. Donate and take cards or toys to the local children's hospital. It can mean so much to a kid who is in the hospital around the holiday season, and you will feel good too!

Tradition contributes to a sense of wellbeing & comfort. It gives us an opportunity to enrich our relationships and build a sense of belonging.



How holiday traditions improve our wellbeing:

A way to build togetherness with loved ones. When we share in festivities with each other we make fond memories and create generational stories.

Sharing important values with others. When we share values such as gratitude and compassion with others, we can improve our sense of belonging and wellness.

Something to look forward to. When we have plans to do something each year we build excitement and anticipation. This boost endorphins in our brain and improves our mood.

Structure and predictability. Life can feel hectic as we try to balance our day to day lives with the holidays. Having a sense of familiarity can bring comfort and reduce our stress.

Enhancing our connection with nature. Whether it be in our decorations, our vacation destinations or the newly fallen snow, we are bound to nature and the peace it brings around the holidays.

Mindfulness practice can be a great way to de-stress, and no better time to try than around the holidays. Mindfulness has been shown to reduce heart rate, blood pressure and the stress response. Research also shows that mindfulness practice helps reduce negative thoughts and improves the balance of neurochemicals that regulate emotions. So give it a try, could be one more thing in the coping toolbox! A few completely free and evidence-based mobile apps include UCLA Mindful, Mindfulness Coach (VA), and Healthy Minds Program (UW).



Ways to reduce feelings of loneliness

***Make a plan ahead of time.** If staying in, have activities to do that bring you joy. This could be a good book, a puzzle or trying a new or favorite recipe! Make a list of things to do so you have plenty of options. On your list you can have activities for getting out or staying in, for high energy or low energy. This could be your holiday bucket list, so get creative!

***Connecting with others.** Reach out by calling, video chat or attending events. Connect with a neighbor, store clerk or your postal worker. Small interactions with others, for instance holding the door for a stranger or smiling when you pass others, is known as a micro-interaction. These types of interactions are associated with higher levels of happiness and a greater sense of belonging.

***Express gratitude towards others.** Spend time writing letters to those who have made an impact on your life, whether living or not. This type of reflection and expression of gratitude helps to foster a sense of connection and meaning.

***Manage your expectations.** The higher the expectation, the greater the stress. Lowering expectations can set you up for more mental flexibility and decrease your overall stress. Try to take things as they come, and extend compassion to yourself and others.

***Volunteering .** Helping others can be a great way to meet new people and give back to the community. Not in the mood to be around others? Try volunteering at an animal shelter or pet sitting.



**It's ok to be *around* people and not be *with* people,
it can actually reduce feelings of loneliness and**

You matter!

Take care of yourself!

Afterall, today is the first day of the rest of your life, make it count! Here are a few lifestyle tips that can improve your overall mental and physical health:

Move it or lose it! Yes, getting your body moving with moderate activity for 30 minutes a day reduces incidence of chronic health problems and improves your mental health!

Get to bed already! Make a bedtime routine to ensure 7-9 hours of solid sleep. Good sleep hygiene helps you live longer and be healthier along the way!

You are what you eat! Feed your brain and your body plenty of micronutrients. This means eating more fruits and veggies everyday for optimal health!

Don't worry, be happy! The quality of your thoughts does matter and directly correlates with your level of happiness. Practicing mindfulness, gratitude, and compassion to yourself and others can go a long way to improving your overall quality of life.

Take time to smell the roses! Make a point to go outside everyday. If you are unable to, find a way to connect with nature indoors with plants or flowers, open a window, use essential oils or light a candle.

Your vibe attracts your tribe! Spend time with people who are supportive and want to see you be the best version of yourself. Connecting with others everyday improves your mood and your longevity! Just do it!

Teaching Kids About the Holidays

VALUES:

Explain what it means to be thankful during the holidays and year round. Help them learn the connection between happiness and gratitude for toys, food and connections with others. Remind them the value of being thankful and showing appreciation for others.

Lead by example. Examine your own actions around the holiday, how are you managing yourself? Slow down and spend time sharing moments of thankfulness, gratitude and generosity you experience in your day to day.

MONEY:

Don't buy everything on the list. Instead help them find ways to make the purchases themselves. This teaches patience and perseverance, and can help in building autonomous decision making skills.

Teach the value of money. Have them earn the money they plan to spend around the holidays. This demonstrates the effort and persistence required to make money and can lead to better financial decisions later on.

Teach them the value of non traditional gift giving. This could be making something special, regifting items or writing letters.

DOING FOR OTHERS:

Involve them in the preparation and the clean up process for the holiday celebration. This helps them be part of the process and give back to efforts others made to make the day special. When everybody does something, nobody is doing everything.

Sit together and look for places they can donate their time and connect to the community. This could be a community clean up project, a church, food bank, or other volunteer service.

Gather up old clothes and toys that are in good condition and donate to a local family shelter or charity.

Teach them to be gracious and respectful. Sending 'Thank You' cards is a good way for them to share their appreciation for others, and gives them and the receiver something special to share together.



Homemade Gift Ideas for Kids

Plaster of Paris hand prints- Decorate inside of clear Christmas ball ornaments- Make necklaces and bracelets- Write a poem- Make salt dough ornaments and paint them- Draw pictures- Make cards- Make candles- Tie blankets with fleece fabric- Paint a picture- Write a story and illustrate it- Create spice blends- Bake cookies, breads, muffins cakes- Bedazzle picture frames- Make pot holders- Create popsicle ornaments and crafts- Write a song- Paint rocks- Give gift certificates for chores or special dates- Make soaps- Create a new tea blend- Make a suncatcher- give free hugs to your family!

Turn FOMO into JOMO

The fear of missing out (FOMO) is a feeling of unease and apprehension that arises from the missing out on potentially important opportunities, experiences, events or social interactions. While it can be tempting to seize every opportunity, filling your schedule with activities just to avoid missing out can lead to stress and overcommitment, and impacts your ability to enjoy the present moment.

Fortunately, you can learn to let go of this fear and instead of worrying about what you might be missing, you can embrace the benefits of opting out. This is known as JOMO- the joy of missing out.

By identifying and recognizing the potential benefits associated with abstaining from certain activities, you can learn to recognize the value of opting out and be less concerned with missing opportunities or experiences.

With FOMO your attention is to what you will miss when you don't attend an event or take an opportunity and is a fear driven choice. In contrast, JOMO is a feeling of contentment that comes from focusing on what you will gain by choosing to miss out. A JOMO mindset means you consider the pro/con of taking an opportunity and make a balanced choice.

Before committing to an opportunity ask yourself a few questions to see if your FOMO is robbing you of your JOMO.

1. Why do I want to go? What do I fear I will miss out on?
2. What are the benefits of NOT going? If I don't go, what will I do?

Now that you have weighed your pro/cons of taking this opportunity, you can make an informed and balanced decision on whether or not you want to go for it, or let it pass. Great job!

**Doing nothing is better than being
busy doing nothing**

Loving Compassion for Self & Others

Building and maintaining positive relationships with others are important parts of practicing self-compassion. Positive healthy relationships provide us with emotional support, a sense of connectedness and companionship- all of which makes it easier for us to cultivate a healthier self-relationship. Most of us find it easier to show kindness, forgiveness, and love to others than we do to ourselves. Here are 4 ways you can show more care and appreciation to the important people in your life:

Appreciating others:

Set time aside to do mutually enjoyable activities with people who matter to you.

Value people for their actions, and show gratitude with words and/or actions.

Accept people for who they are, without judging or criticizing them.

Ignore small mistakes, let things go more, approach sensitively if they truly annoy you.

Interacting with others:

Opening yourself up to more kindness and affection.

Use words, not just actions, to demonstrate your love.

Set time aside to provide support to your loved ones, especially during hard times.

Volunteer to be there to listen or help with small tasks.

Showing integrity:

Tell the truth with friends, family and partners.

Keep your word, your promises and respect the commitments you make.

Being honest with yourself, being who you are, and living in line with your values.

Forgiving others:

Practicing self-forgiveness before all. Self-forgiveness is essential before we can forgive other people and recover from pain.

Show your feelings if you are hurt. Find a sensitive way to express your pain at being hurt by someone who matters in your life.

Release your past hurt, regardless of whether or not you receive an apology from others. Forgiving is about the forgiver and helps you to let go of unnecessary suffering.

Don't keep score, let small mistakes and grudges go.

Ways to Honor Your Loved Ones During the Holiday



Set a place for them at the table.



Light a candle for them.



Create a holiday scrapbook from past holidays.



Make a favorite recipe of theirs.



Make a toast during a holiday meal in remembrance.



Visit their gravesite.



Hang a stocking in memory of your loved one.



Say a prayer for them.



Set up a memory table with photos and mementos.

@choosingtherapy

Your absence is loud this holiday season



Ways to Manage Grief During the Holiday Season

- **Accept your feelings**

It's okay to feel sad, angry, or even joyful during the holidays.

- **Set boundaries**

Identify your needs and triggers and create boundaries to protect your peace.

- **Plan ahead**

Plan comforting activities to look forward to, this can reduce the dread of the holiday coming.

- **Take care of yourself**

Practice self-compassion and self-care, such as getting enough rest or taking time to be alone if needed.

- **Create new traditions**

New traditions can help heal your grief without forgetting your loved one or old traditions.

- **Honor your loved one**

You can honor your loved one's memory by sharing stories, looking at photos, or lighting a candle.

- **Set realistic expectations**

Remind yourself that this year is different and decide what you can handle.

- **Draw comfort from others**

You can make plans to spend time with loved ones, or by make plans to donate your time to help others.

- * **Have a plan A and plan B**

You may commit to events and then later change your mind. Having a back up plan can help you know what to do next.



Thank you for attending this educational session. We are honored to have been part of your journey towards wellness, and hope you have learned a few things today that will make your holidays a little less stressful.

See you again soon, and we wish you a healthy and peaceful New Year!

-Your friends at Healing Partners

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