

Mental WELLNESS

Standing up to the stigma



Take charge of your health and put yourself on the path to wellness. Health and wellness means living life fully with vitality and meaning. Wellness looks different for each individual and evolves as our lifestyles change.

May is recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month. This newsletter will focus on mental health and what that looks as many adapt to new normal. We hope this content will provide you with tips on how to practice self-care for your mental health!

www.WellnessAtoZ.org

LiveWELL Self-Care in Preparation for the "New Normal"



So, the real question to ask yourself is...

How am I?

So often, the default response is "I'm fine." Perhaps you are fine. But maybe you aren't. Have you ever heard that "fine" stands for Feelings Inside Not Expressed? Give yourself permission to voice that you aren't well. It might be hard, but it's okay, and it could. open the door to feeling better.

In the past, society has stigmatized mental health and wellness. People focus on your physical health. As more people find themselves in isolation or experiencing loss, it's important to remember that you have the opportunity to refocus.

With the onset of COVID-19 and the chance to stay home and stay healthy, many people have received an invitation to ATTUNE their mind, body, and spirit.

The best part of attuning within is knowing that you can actually control your inner environment. There will always be something beyond your control that can create a sense of imbalance—a pandemic, a boss, a spouse, a neighbor, etc.—but you have the power to control how you feel and respond to the outside world.

Here are a few tips to get attuned with yourself.



As everyone does their best to co-exist with COVID-19, many are adapting to significant lifestyle changes while attempting to maintain a sense of normalcy. New and unexpected challenges present themselves almost daily. Virtual everything is everywhere. But when the screens shut down, this slowed-down life is offering you something deeper—the opportunity to reconnect with who you are inside.

A.T.T.U.N.E.

A – Acknowledge your feelings. Ask yourself, "How am I?" Listen. Give yourself permission to "feel the feels." By slowing down and acknowledging how you feel, you can thoughtfully choose your next action in honor of self-healing.

T – Truth. Ask yourself, "What is true for me right now?" It can be easy to get wrapped up in the drama or trauma of the world at large. However, when you examine your personal reality, maybe things aren't as bad as they seem. Is there a lesson that can be learned or gratitude that can be given?

T – Take care of yourself. Ask yourself, "What does self-care look like for me?". Your mental and emotional health are intertwined with your physical health. Therefore, it is important to take care of yourself at every level. Get plenty of high-quality sleep. Eat healthy, unprocessed foods. Move your body every day.

U – Unwind and unplug. Ask yourself, "What rejuvenates me?" In addition to physical, emotional, and mental health, spiritual health is equally important. Whether you practice prayer, meditation, or a silent walk in nature, take some time each day to connect to a nurturing source. Even 60-seconds of meditation or focused, silent breathing can completely change how you feel.

N – Now. Ask yourself, "How can I be in the present moment?" What's done is done. You can't predict the future, so stop trying to. Give yourself permission to let go of past situations or future worries that pull from your energy. Being present allows for more awareness, and awareness creates space for choice.

E – Enjoy! Ask yourself "What do I enjoy doing?" Then incorporate more of it into your daily or weekly routine. A wise man once said, "If you want to be happy, do happy things."

Finally, while you A.T.T.U.N.E. inside, if you find you need additional support, please ask. If a friend or family member is not enough, Arizona offers a wealth of support resources 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. Learn more by visiting <https://www.azahcccs.gov/BehavioralHealth/crisis.html>.

Angie Nicolucci, MBA, MSS is a Phoenix-based Professional Life, Home, and Health Coach and is the founder of Upliftingspaces.com. Should you have any feedback or questions, contact Angie at angie@upliftingspaces.com.



PlayWELL

Best types of exercises for mental health

LiveWELL
May 2020

Exercise is a wholesome activity—it is beneficial for the body, mind, and soul. According to genesight.com, it can help with some of the following, in addition to other mental benefits:

- Manage depression symptoms
- Boost overall mood
- Alleviate anxiety and stress
- Reduce cognitive issues

What is your perception of exercise? For every individual, exercise may mean something completely different. Some people might interpret exercise as just running. But, exercise takes many forms, and it is important for everyone to find the exercise that works the best for them.

There are four types of exercises: cardiovascular, strength training, balance, and flexibility, and within these for main categories, there are several options that fall under each one. Each one of these will get your heart pumping in some way, and that is the most important concept of exercise!

It's important to understand that certain exercises support mental health better than others. A research study published in Lancet Psychology found that team-based (basketball, volleyball, and soccer) were the most beneficial exercise type for mental health. This is because, with a team-based sport, you are exercising your physical health, but you are also activating and investing in your social health by building friendships.

If you are someone who prefers individual exercise, the study highlighted that the following options for exercise are beneficial for your mental health:

Yoga: The American Psychology Association shares that yoga is a good exercise to help with relaxation and relieve stress. Yoga can be very beneficial for individuals who experience anxiety, depression, and PTSD as these mental illnesses tend to cause high stress levels.

Cycling: Cycling is a motor skill that helps keep the white matter in the brain healthy, which keeps our thinking process working properly. Increased white matter integrity in the brain helps to relieve symptoms such as impaired motor coordination and disorganized mental imagery.

Running: A study in Frontiers Psychology Journal shares that running can help individuals who experience manic symptoms from bipolar disorder. Running helps establish a calming effect which contributes to mood regulation.

Aerobic or gym exercise: Examples of aerobic exercises include stair master and elliptical machines. High-intensity workouts help promote good mental health.

**It is important to note that while physical activity has many benefits, it may not be a substitute for medication and consulting with a doctor on an individual level will help identify the best path in treating mental illness.*

Information adapted from genesight.com



EatWELL

Homemade "nice" Cream to make your heart happy

LiveWELL
May 2020

While we spend time social distancing, it can be challenging to find a balance with healthy eating, especially when we get a sweet craving. This recipe helps to fulfill your sweet craving with a healthy version of ice cream, known as "nice cream." This nice cream recipe has less sugar than typical ice cream would! We hope you enjoy this sweet, refreshing, and healthy treat.



Photo from lungesburpeesandsquash.com

PISTACHIO NICE CREAM

Recipe courtesy of Nuvaria Health and Wellness

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 bananas (the riper, the sweeter your "nice" cream will be)
- 1 cup shelled pistachios
- 3 tablespoons almond milk
- 1 tsp almond extract
- ¼ cup maple syrup for sweetness (optional)

Directions:

1. Peel bananas
2. Combine bananas, ½ cup pistachios (leave the other half for toppings), almond milk, almond extract, and maple syrup together in a blender.
3. Blend ingredients together until smooth and creamy. The mixture should have a thick smoothie-like texture to it.
4. Pour the mixture into a baking dish. Spread evenly and top with remaining pistachios.
5. Place in the freezer for 2-4 hours or until frozen.
6. Remove from the freezer and scoop into bowls or cones.



Visit phoenixchamberfoundation.com/wellness-atoz-ambassador to learn more and become an ambassador.

AMBASSADOR HIGHLIGHT

What does wellness mean to you?

I experience wellness as multi-dimensional. Not only do I care for my physical health through diet, exercise, and sleep, I value strong heartfelt connections with friends and family, and I have a deep spiritual practice.

Do you have a wellness goal?

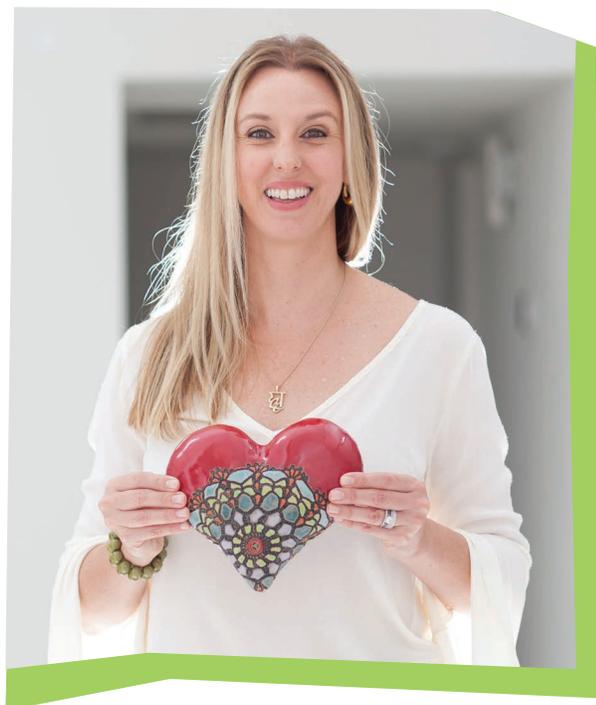
My wellness goals are focused on self-care. While I am very happy with my current state, I'd like to maintain my health and well-being as I age. I'd say my goal is to live a low-stress, joy-filled life.

Which challenges do you face in achieving your goal?

I love saying yes to people and get wrapped up in the joy of creation. And sometimes, this can create the very stress I strive to reduce.

How long have you been with your business, Uplifting Spaces, and how has your workplace helped you in achieving your goal?

I started UpliftingSpaces.com in 2019. Before the creation of my business, I had a 22-year career working in a variety of roles within the health care industry. This was fast-paced, and often my self-care practices fell by the wayside. It has been my dream to open my own business in an effort to be of service to both myself and the people around me. Since starting UpliftingSpaces.com, I find that I have more time to exercise, meditate, cook, rest, and spend time with the people I love. And I enjoy supporting my clients in finding ways to incorporate all of these qualities into their own lives.



**Angie Nicolucci,
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WellnessAtoZ.org/WorkWell

The Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation partnered with Data Doctors, Cox Communications, Arizona Students Recycling Used Technology (AZ StRUT), School Connect AZ, and Lyft to provide critical laptop access to K-12 students. The Foundation is asking community members and businesses to donate used laptops, Chromebooks, netbooks, and iPads to be refurbished and provided to students who do not have devices at home. This will empower students to participate in virtual learning.

Donate & learn more > www.phoenixchamber.com/laptopdrive