

Word for YO Wellness

A Newsletter by the Yosemite Wellness Coalition

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Happy Holidays Everyone!

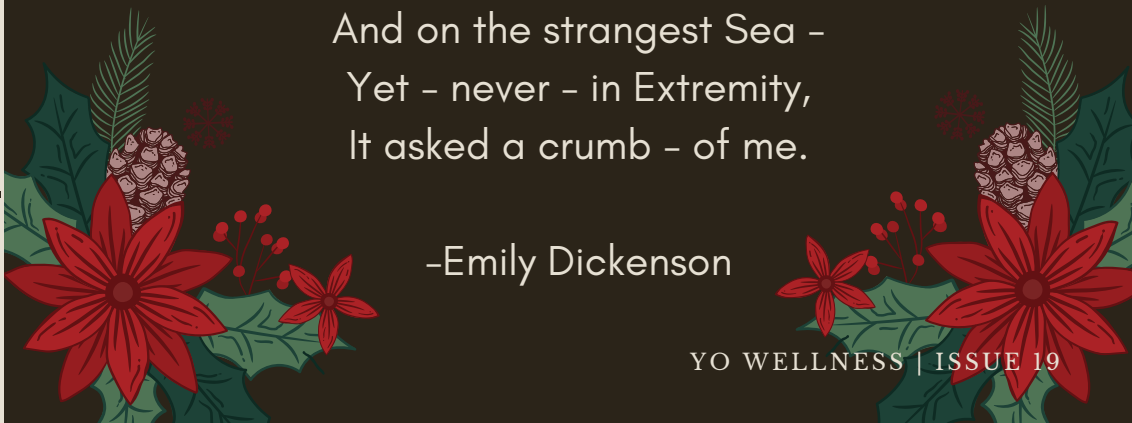
Hope is the thing with feathers

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I’ve heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

-Emily Dickenson



Upcoming Events

Due to uncertainty of Covid, fires, weather conditions and other factors all programs are tentative and subject to cancellation. If it's too stormy assume the program will be cancelled or move to a virtual platform. Visit yoscommunity.com/events for up-to-date information.

Winter Photography Walks

This series will run until February. This will be an opportunity to learn a skill, meet new friends, and get outside to [combat SAAD \(Seasonal Affective Disorder\)](#)!

- Bring your camera
- Participants will be walking
- Bring layers and comfortable shoes

Session 1: Friday 12/16
Getting to know your camera!
Led by Carson Lillard

Practice using manual mode on our cameras. Once you understand the basics, you'll be a pro in no time!

Meet at Valley Chapel

Session 2: Friday 12/23
Composition Framing
Led by Blake Johnston

Perspective/Scale, Leading Lines

Meet at Cook's Meadow Parking lot
(near Sentinel Bridge)

Scan QR to RSVP. Questions?
jamie_gonzales@nps.gov

Holiday Dinner

Brought by Yosemite Hospitality

Yosemite Hospitality brings their annual Holiday Dinner. Free for Yosemite Hospitality and \$10 Fee for Yosemite Community Members.

Curry Pavilion
Sunday December 25th
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Holiday Craft Bazaar

Brought by YNP Child Care Center

Local Artists and craft vendors-Lunch- raffle-silent auction-bake sale-card making station-bar-and holiday cheer A fundraiser for the Yosemite Childcare Centers

Located at: Curry Pavilion
Friday December 2nd
11:00 am - 6:00 pm

S'mores with Shelton

Join the BIPOC Employee Resource Group for a lunchtime campfire with S'mores, great conversation, and a chance to chat with Ranger Shelton Johnson! Make sure to dress warm and drive safe! All park partners are welcome.

To RSVP email yose_dei@nps.gov

Lower River Campground Amphitheatre
(next to Housekeeping camp)
Sunday December 11th
12:00pm -1pm

Dimensions Of Wellness

Led by Jenni B. and Jamie G.

Take a dive into the Dimensions of Wellness. Create your own Wheel of Life and get creative on engaging in your own Wellbeing.

Jenni B. and Jamie G.

Carabiner at the Loft
Monday December, 12
6p-7:30p

New Year Party

Come and celebrate the New Year!

Location TBD
Saturday December 31st
8:00 pm until Midnight

Other Community Programs

The following programs are being offered by outside organizations not associated with the Pandemic Wellness Coalition. Please note that some programs require a fee to participate.

Balanced Rock Community Yoga

Join local instructors for our outdoor yoga class! All levels are encouraged to attend, classes are donation-based. These classes are about YOU and your practice, students are always encouraged to modify as needed for their comfort level.

El Portal Community Hall
Every Monday
6:00pm - 7:15pm

Power Hours Vinyasa Flow with Bethany

Led by Bethany Matsumoto

Class is upbeat and rejuvenating
Get ready to get sweaty!

Wellness Center
Every Monday & Tuesday
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm



A graphic featuring a laptop screen with the text "WELLNESS CENTER HOURS" on it. Below the screen, the text "7:00am-9:00pm Everyday" is displayed. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner of the graphic.

Scan QR for RSVP

Visit [www.yoscommunity.com/events](https://yoscommunity.com/events) for direct event links and event updates.

Featured Artist



Winter's Night

By
Britain Andrew

Winter's Light

By
Bruce Sperka



Wellness News

Recipe

For Yo Wellness Mexican Hot Chocolate



Ingredients

- 2 cups milk (I used 2%)
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/8 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cayenne (optional - you can omit this if you don't want it too spicy)
- 1 ounce bittersweet chocolate

Instructions

1. In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, add milk, cocoa powder, sugar, cinnamon, vanilla extract, chili powder, cayenne pepper (if desired).
2. Mix together with a whisk, add the bittersweet chocolate and heat until the chocolate has completely melted and the mixture is hot, but not boiling.
3. Divide hot chocolate into 2 mugs and serve with marshmallows, chocolate shavings and a cinnamon stick.

Tip:

- For a thicker and creamier cup of hot chocolate, use whole milk and 2 to 4 oz of bittersweet chocolate.

Recipe Taken from:
<https://www.isabeleats.com/mexican-hot-chocolate/>

Find Your Holiday Happiness: Manage Anxiety and Depression

How to De-Stress

You can reduce some of your holiday worry and stress. Try these tips:

- **Take the pressure off yourself.** If you set high expectations for yourself and for others at holiday events, you're more likely to feel let down. Know that some things won't go exactly as planned — and that's just fine.
- **Most people aren't paying much attention to you.** You may feel as if people are focusing on you, but in reality, most people are probably wondering what you are thinking of them. Try making a compliment, which can make others feel good, make you feel good, and reduce some stress.
- **Identify your specific concerns.** Are you afraid you will say the wrong thing or embarrass yourself? Remind yourself that although you may feel uncomfortable, maybe even very uncomfortable, that's the worst that can happen.
- **Don't look for relief in alcohol or drugs.** Although it can be tempting to "take the edge off" at holiday events, alcohol and drugs can make anxiety worse and may trigger panic attacks.
- **Smile, make eye contact, and ask questions.** Most people like to talk about themselves and their interests. Ask other people about their holiday plans, what their kids are doing, or what book they're reading. Avoid religion, politics, and other topics that can lead to heated discussions and add to your stress.
- **Choose to say no.** Try not to overschedule yourself during the holiday season. You don't have to feel obligated to accept every invitation, and you may want to eliminate some traditions that cause you more stress than joy.

Overcome Your Travel Fears

Holiday travel can also trigger anxiety. It's important to remember that avoidance will not help overcome an anxiety problem, and it may even stir up other undesirable feelings or consequences, such as being the only family member absent from Christmas dinner.

Instead of dreading travel, consider it a chance to practice facing your fears. Try these tips, too:

- **Plan and confirm all details.** To decrease your stress level, try to book flights that leave early in the day, when airports tend to be less crowded. Always confirm flight, hotel, and car rental reservations, and allow ample time to pack so you can organize your belongings and bring everything you need, including IDs for security checkpoints and your medications.
- **Think ahead.** Make a list of activities you will engage in while traveling. Prepare for potential anxiety-inducing situations by practicing stress-reducing techniques such as slow, deep breathing, meditation, and progressive muscle relaxation.
- **Put anxiety-reducing techniques to work.** If you have a fear of flying, tell the gate agent or flight attendant when you check in and board. Ask if you can meet the pilot and copilot. Ask them a personal question, such as "Do you have a family?" Seeing that the people flying the plane are "real people" can be comforting. If you are claustrophobic, you may want to request an aisle seat so you can get up and move around should you feel the need.

Help Your Anxious Children

Reducing children's holiday anxiety:

- **Plan ahead.** Talk to your child about what makes her anxious during this time of year and come up with ways to minimize that anxiety. Teach her how to initiate a handshake if hugging is unwelcome. Practice ways to say thank you for unwanted gifts or deep-breathing techniques for when you child feels overwhelmed.
- **Eliminate the unexpected.** Tell your child who will be attending an event. If your family will have to travel, explain how you'll get there.
- **Create a secret signal** that you and your child can use to let you know he needs your help without alerting others in the room.
- **Schedule special family time.** Try to find time for your family to play a board game, watch a favorite holiday video, make cookies, or engage in other fun and relaxing activities at home.
- **Take care of yourself.** Your child will pick up on your stress. So try to make sure the entire family eats balanced meals, drinks enough water, exercises, and keeps stressful holiday shopping and other events to a minimum.

Activity

Goal Setting for Self-Esteem

Goal setting is invaluable in all aspects of our lives. It is particularly beneficial when areas of our life feel bad.

This worksheet can help you capture aspects of your life that currently feel bad and assign goals to fix them or reduce their impact.

Begin by considering each of the following areas of your life and whether or not they have negative aspects (modified from McKay & Fanning, 2016):

- **Material** – for example, wanting a holiday.
- **Family and friends** – for example, wanting more (or less) quality time with family and friends.
- **Educational, professional** – for example, finishing my examinations or project on time.
- **Health** – for example, improve my fitness and reduce cholesterol.
- **Leisure** – for example, spend more time outdoors.
- **Spiritual goals** – for example, spend time meditating or engaging with my spiritual side.
- **Creative goals** – for example, plan a garden, remodel my house.
- **Emotional and psychological growth** – for example, wanting to be less stressed and manage my anger. Consider each area of your life.

Capture any negative aspects in the left-hand column. Then, in the righthand column, create a concrete goal describing something you could change.

What feels bad	Corresponding goal
My education is poor	Enroll in an evening class
I don't spend much time with my family	See them once a month

Resources

6 TIPS FOR COMBATING SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD)

1. KNOW THAT YOU'RE NOT ALONE
2. PLAN AHEAD AND AVOID STRESS
3. SOAK UP SUN
4. GOOD THINKING
5. EAT FOR ENERGY

SOME MAY EXPERIENCE A LACK OF APPETITE DURING THE WINTER MONTHS, AND SO CAN SUFFER FROM LOW ENERGY. ENSURING YOU EAT REGULAR AND BALANCED MEALS CAN KEEP YOUR ENERGY TOPPED UP READY FOR YOU TO TAKE ON THE DAY.

6. WORK IT OUT

OUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH ARE CLOSELY LINKED. SO, KEEPING YOUR BODY FIT CAN HELP COMBAT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, INCLUDING SAD. YOU DON'T NEED TO BECOME OBSESSED WITH THE GYM. A SIMPLE ONE HOUR WALK A DAY, CAN BE EFFECTIVE IN LIFTING YOUR MOOD. WRAP UP WARM AND ENJOY A STROLL IN THE FRESH AIR, PERHAPS WITH FRIENDS OR FAMILY.

<https://optimewellbeing.com/2020/10/30/combating-sad/>

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD): More Than the Winter Blues

As the days get shorter and there is less daylight, you may start to feel sad. While many people experience the "winter blues," some people may have a type of depression called seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

The first step is to determine how much your symptoms interfere with your daily life.

Do you have mild symptoms that have lasted less than 2 weeks?



- Feeling down but still able to take care of yourself and others
- Having some trouble sleeping
- Having less energy than usual but still able to do your job, schoolwork, or housework

These activities can make you feel better:



- Doing something you enjoy
- Going outside in the sunlight
- Spending time with family and friends
- Eating healthy and avoiding foods with lots of sugar

If these activities do not help or your symptoms are getting worse, talk to a health care provider.

Do you have more severe symptoms that have lasted more than 2 weeks?



- Social withdrawal
- Oversleeping
- Gaining weight
- Craving foods with lots of sugar like cakes, candies, and cookies

Seek professional help:



- Light therapy
- Psychotherapy (talk therapy)
- Medications
- Vitamin D supplements

For help finding treatment, visit nimh.nih.gov/findhelp.

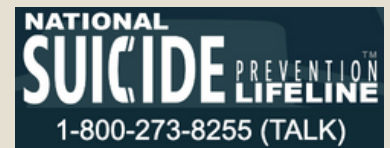
If you or someone you know is in immediate distress or is thinking about hurting themselves, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or text the Crisis Text Line (text HELLO to 741741).

Resources

Yosemite Medical Clinic
209-372-4637

Mariposa County Health & Human Services
24-hour Crisis Hotline
209-966-7000

Crisis Text Line
Text 741741



National Suicide Prevention

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>



Veterans Crisis Line

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

Alcoholics Anonymous

Mariposa & Sierra Foothill Chapter
24 Hour Hotline

209-966-3110

<http://www.aamariposafellowship.org>

Coronavirus Sanity Guide

<https://www.tenpercent.com/coronavirusanxietyguide>

Word for Wellness is brought to you by the Pandemic Wellness Coalition, an employee resource group (ERG) with members from many of Yosemite's park partners and hosted by the National Park Service.

Look for our newsletter once each month.

Each issue includes recipes, articles, community submissions, special events and more from your fellow parkies.

Have a special request or an art submission? Contact yos.communitybuilder@gmail.com for more information!