

Word for YO Wellness

A Newsletter by the Yosemite Wellness Coalition

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I, Too

I, TOO, SING AMERICA.

**I AM THE DARKER BROTHER.
THEY SEND ME TO EAT IN THE KITCHEN
WHEN COMPANY COMES,
BUT I LAUGH,
AND EAT WELL,
AND GROW STRONG.**

**TOMORROW,
I'LL BE AT THE TABLE
WHEN COMPANY COMES.
NOBODY'LL DARE
SAY TO ME,
"EAT IN THE KITCHEN,"
THEN.**

**BESIDES,
THEY'LL SEE HOW BEAUTIFUL I AM
AND BE ASHAMED—**

I, TOO, AM AMERICA.

**BY
LANGSTON HUGHES**



**Frederick Douglass
American Abolitionist**

Upcoming Events

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

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

Restorative Yoga & Guided Meditation

Led by Ally Marter

Join us for a restorative yoga session
followed by guided meditation.

Wellness Center
Thursdays
10:00 am - 11:00 am

Sound Bath With Erin

Led by Erin Markham

Reset and Recharge. Deep relaxation,
healing and enhanced mood through
guided sound bath and meditation.

Wellness Center
Saturdays
6m - 7pm

Mental Health First Aid

Led by Yosemite Safety & Wellness Office

This is an 8 hr. training, provided free of
charge by Mariposa Behavioral Health.
This training is open to all Park Partners
and community members 18+.

Individuals trained in the program:

- Grow their knowledge of signs,
symptoms and risk factors of mental
illnesses and addictions
- Can identify multiple types of
professional and self-help resources
for individuals with a mental health,
or substance use challenge
- Increase their confidence in and
likelihood to help an individual in
distress, show increased mental
wellness themselves

Registration Required:
Contact yose_safety@nps.gov

Valley ESC Training Room
Wednesday February 8
8am - 5pm

Winter Photography Walk Rainbow Photography

Led by Britain Andrew

Learn more about capturing the
iconic Yosemite Falls rainbow.

Enjoy an opportunity to learn a skill,
meet new friends, and get outside to
combat Seasonal Affective Disorder
(SAD)

- Participants will be walking
- Bring your camera
- Bring layers and comfortable shoes
- A tripod and long lens are
recommended, if possible

Meet at Housekeeping Camp Shuttle
Stop / Sierra Club Heritage Museum
Tuesday 2/28
8:00 am - 9:00 am

Angela Davis
American Political Activist

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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

Balanced Rock Community Yoga NEW CLASSES IN 2023!

BR is excited to launch a Wawona
Community Yoga at the Redwoods every
Monday from 6pm-7:15pm with Breezy
Jackson! These classes are donation-based,
volunteer-led, and welcome to all levels.

Check the schedule & learn more at
balancedrock.org/community



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

Featured Artist

Winter Wonderland

By
Katie Friend



James Mead
Photography
www.jamesmeadphotography.com

Midnight Dreams

By
James Mead

Shirley Chisholm
Former United States
Representative



Wellness News

Recipe For Yo Wellness



Absolutely Ultimate Potato Soup

Ingredients

- 1 pound bacon, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, diced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 8 potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 4 cups chicken stock, or enough to cover potatoes
- 3 tablespoons butter
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon dried tarragon
- 3 teaspoons chopped fresh cilantro
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Place bacon in a Dutch oven and cook over medium-high heat, turning occasionally, until evenly browned, 5 to 10 minutes. Drain bacon pieces on paper towels. Drain off all but 1/4 cup of the bacon grease.
2. Cook celery and onion in the reserved bacon drippings until onion is soft and translucent, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic, and continue cooking for 1 to 2 minutes. Add cubed potatoes, and toss to coat. Saute for 3 to 4 minutes. Return bacon to the pan, and add enough chicken stock to just cover the potatoes. Cover, and simmer until potatoes are tender, 15 to 20 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, melt butter in a separate skillet over medium heat. Whisk in flour. Cook, stirring constantly, 1 to 2 minutes. Whisk in heavy cream, tarragon, and cilantro. Bring cream mixture to a boil, and cook, stirring constantly, until thickened, about 5 minutes. Add cream mixture to the potato mixture; stir to combine.
4. Transfer about 1/2 of the soup to a blender and puree. Return to the Dutch oven. Adjust seasonings to taste.

James Baldwin
American Writer

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How to Maintain Your Mental Health in Winter

Get outside and exercise

Regular exercise is good for your body and mind. Even getting just 15 minutes of moderate exercise a day can boost your energy, help you sleep better and improve your mood. The cold weather doesn't mean you are stuck inside. Get creative with ways to stay fit during the winter. Exercise will reduce stress and help you relax, and spending time in daylight, even in winter, will benefit your mood. If you aren't able to get outside, there are still many options for at-home workouts. Find online videos to follow along or virtual classes to join.

Keep up healthy eating and sleep habits

Eating a healthy, nutritious diet is a core component of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Diets high in processed foods and refined sugar have been connected to worsening mood disorders, including depression. It may be challenging with all those leftover holiday foods and desserts, but focus on maintaining balance - fill up on healthy fruits, vegetables, and proteins, but allow yourself the occasional indulgence.

Getting a good night's sleep is just as vital. Lack of sleep has been associated with an increased risk of depression and other mental health effects. And a healthy amount of sleep can improve your mental and emotional resilience. Try going to bed and waking up on a consistent schedule. Avoid electronics in the bedroom or watching television right before bed.

Have a support system and stay connected

Studies have shown that having a strong support system and maintaining social interaction can be greatly beneficial in reducing negative mental health symptoms. While it was easier to socialize safely during the warm weather by being outdoors, you can still find ways to connect. Schedule regular video chats with friends and family, reach out by phone or email, or even send a letter in the mail. You might even want to make some new virtual connections.

It's important to reach out to your support system and talk with those you trust when you feel like you're struggling. Be open and discuss your concerns and how you're managing them. These interactions, even virtual, can help build up your emotional and mental resilience.

Keep up with your other appointments

Taking care of your mental health includes taking care of your overall health. Don't neglect your physical health. Keep up with your regular dental visits, primary care visits, and any other ongoing wellness appointments.

Meditate and be mindful

Meditation and mindfulness has been shown to improve symptoms of depression and anxiety. Try practicing meditation for even just ten minutes a day. Meditating in the morning or before bed can help you start the day on a calm note or clear your mind of the stresses of the day. If you are new to meditation or find it difficult to quiet your mind, try some guided meditation videos, apps, or podcasts.

Adopt some CBT practices

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is a type of treatment that helps people learn to identify thought patterns that have a negative influence on their behavior and emotions and how to change those patterns. These automatic negative thoughts are replaced with more objective, realistic thoughts. If you are not able to see your therapist as often, are still waiting to connect with a therapist, or are unable to access therapy, you can still adopt some of these CBT practices into your daily life.

- **Journaling:** Writing is an effective way to gather information about your thoughts and feelings. Document the time of the mood or thought, the source of it, how intense it was, and how you reacted. You can also list the negative thoughts that occur and the positive thoughts you can choose instead, and keep track of the new thoughts and behaviors you put into practice. This helps you better identify, describe, and evaluate your moods and thought patterns, and in turn, better change, adapt, or cope with them.
- **Cognitive restructuring or reframing:** This involves identifying and challenging the negative thought patterns and cognitive distortions you frequently experience. Once identified, you can explore why they took root and learn how to reframe those thoughts so they're more positive and productive. You can find several worksheets online that can help you identify and reframe your cognitive distortions.
- **Relaxation and stress reduction techniques:** Techniques such as deep breathing exercises, muscle relaxation, meditation, and imagery can help lower your stress and increase your feeling of control. Practicing these techniques during a distressing or stressful situation can break the cycle of those negative thought patterns and clear your mind so you can think more rationally and logically.
- **Behavioral experiments:** These are designed to identify the thought patterns that influence your behavior. Before starting a task that typically makes you anxious, you predict what will happen, and afterward see if the prediction came true. Over time, you will see that the worst-case scenario you were worried about isn't likely to happen. This helps reduce that initial anxiety and "what if" type of thinking that may keep you from starting or completing those tasks.
- **Activity scheduling and behavior activation:** When we're stressed, pleasurable activities are often the first to go. This can be especially true during the winter months when it feels harder to get out of the house and be motivated. Intentionally taking part in activities that you enjoy reduces negative thinking and promotes positive emotions and well-being. Try scheduling the activities you're likely to put off - going for a walk, working on a hobby, or learning a new skill. By scheduling these activities, you'll be more likely to follow through with them and, in turn, benefit from the positive feelings that come from doing the enjoyable activity.

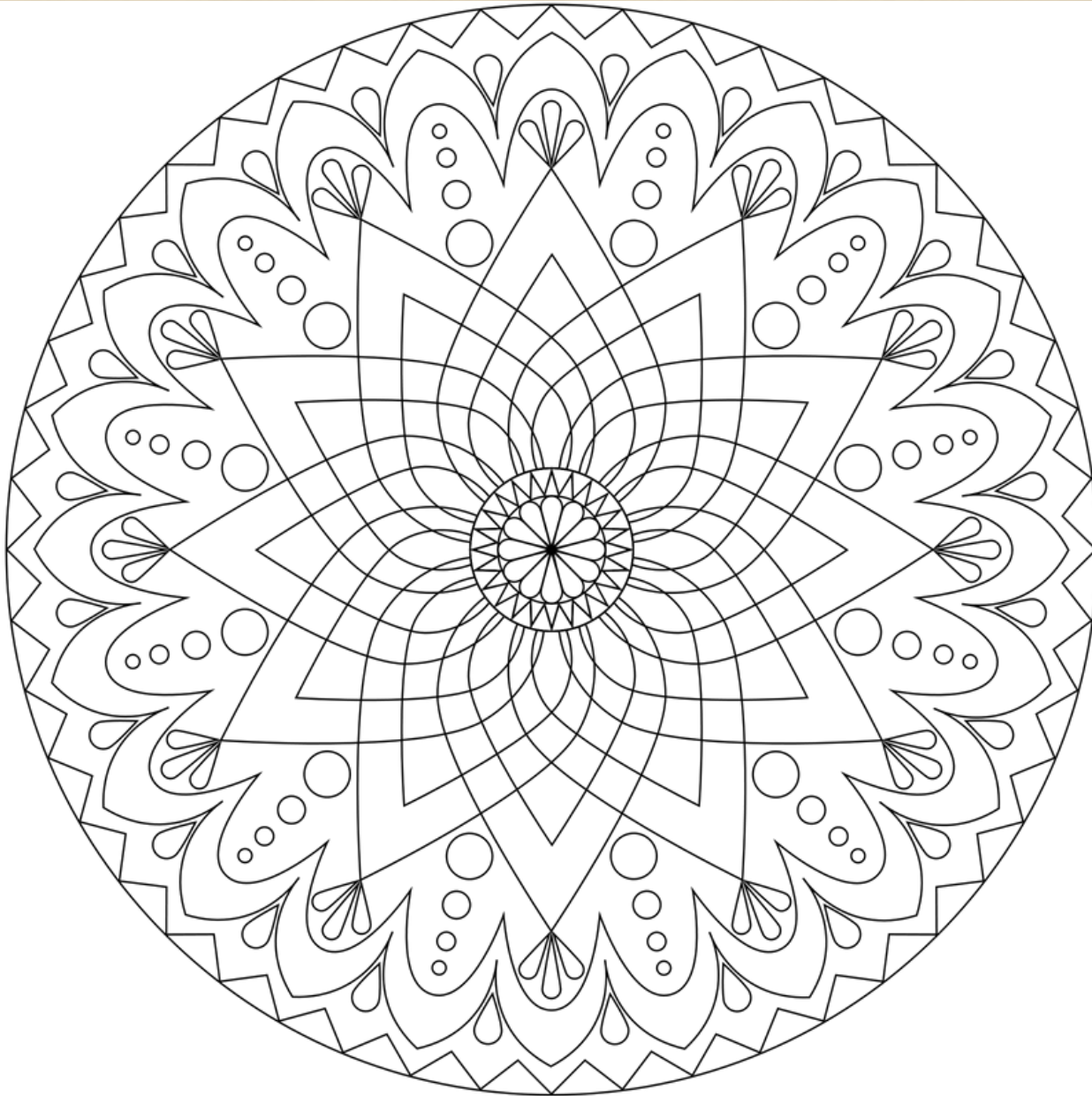
When to seek medical attention

The winter months may have you feeling more isolated, unmotivated, or stressed. While these tips can help you manage your mental health through these months, it's possible your feelings may be indicative of a more serious disorder. It's important to call your doctor if you experience signs such as:

- Feeling depressed most of the day
- Decreased interest or pleasure in activities that you used to enjoy
- Feeling worthless, hopeless, or excessively guilty
- Difficulty concentrating more than usual
- Experiencing strong mood swings
- Thoughts of death, suicide, or harming others

Taking care of your mental health is a year-round practice. The winter doesn't mean you're stuck indoors and it certainly doesn't mean you can't do the things you enjoyed in the warmer months. While you may need to be a little more creative, you can certainly still connect with others, enjoy outside activities, and get that social interaction we all need to stay mentally healthy and happy. With these practices and healthy habits, it's possible to see the sunnier side of winter.

Activity



Grant yourself this opportunity to relax and enjoy a coloring page

Be mindful and remember to take deep breaths.

Want to work on your mindful meditation breathing?

Follow these steps:

1. **Please find a relaxed, comfortable position.** You could be seated on a chair or on the floor on a cushion. Try to keep your back upright, but not too tight. Hands resting wherever they're comfortable. Tongue on the roof of your mouth or wherever it's comfortable.
2. **Notice and invite your body to relax.** Let yourself relax and become curious about your body seated here—the sensations it experiences, the touch, the connection with the floor or the chair. Do your best to relax any areas of tightness or tension. Breathe.
3. **Tune into the rhythm of your breath.** You can feel the natural flow of breath—in, out. You don't need to do anything to your breath. Not long, not short, but natural. Notice where you feel your breath in your body. It might be in your abdomen. It may be in your chest or throat or in your nostrils. See if you can feel the sensations of breath, one breath at a time. When one breath ends, the next breath begins. If you are not able to notice the breath in all areas of the body, that is OK. We are more connected to certain areas of the body than others, at different times of the day.
4. **Now as you do this, you might notice that your mind may start to wander.** You may start thinking about other things. If this happens, it is not a problem. It's very natural. Try to notice that your mind has wandered. You can say "thinking" or "wandering" in your head softly. And then gently redirect your attention right back to the breathing.
5. **Stay here for five to seven minutes.** Notice your breath, in silence. From time to time, you'll get lost in thought, then return to your breath.
6. **After a few minutes, once again notice your body, your whole body, seated here.** Let yourself relax even more deeply and then, if it is available, please offer yourself some appreciation for doing this practice today.

Madam C.J. Walker
American Entrepreneur



Resources

Native and Indigenous Communities and Mental Health

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR NATIVE AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES



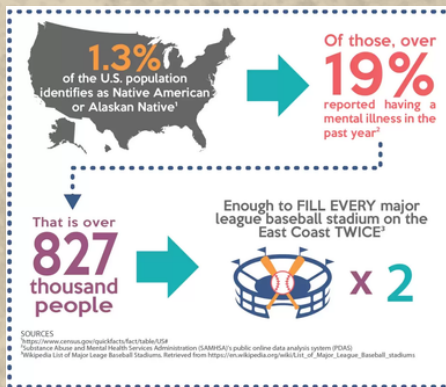
Underlined words are links, more info on the website listed

www.mhanational.org/issues/native-and-indigenouscommunities-and-mental-health

- **Indigenous Story Studio:** creates illustrations, posters, videos, and comic books on health and social issues for youth (Canada-based)
 - [Strength of the Sash](#) and [Tomorrow's Hope](#): suicide prevention
 - [Making it Right](#): community justice, policing
 - [Just a Story](#): mental health stigma
- **One Sky Center:** The American Indian/Alaska Native National Resource Center for Health, Education, and Research; mission is to improve prevention and treatment of mental health and substance use problems and services among Native people
 - [A Guide to Suicide Prevention](#)
 - [Presentations and Publications](#): number of downloadable resources by topic (addiction treatment, adolescents, crisis care & disaster management, disparity of health services, mental health management, and more)
- **WeRNative:** a comprehensive health resource for Native youth by Native youth, promoting holistic health and positive growth in local communities and nation at large
 - My Culture - [Traditions](#), [Identity](#)
 - My Life - My Mind - [Building Mental Resilience](#), [Mental Health Challenges](#), [Getting Help](#), and more (including specific MH issues)
 - My Relationships - [Relationships & Dating](#), [Sexual Health](#)
 - [Ask Auntie](#): similar to advice column - type in your question and it will pull up similar ones; if none answer what you're asking, Auntie Amanda will write up an answer and notify you when it is posted
- **StrongHearts Native Helpline:** The StrongHearts Native Helpline
- **(1-844-762-8483)** is a confidential and anonymous culturally-appropriate domestic violence and dating violence helpline for Native Americans, available every day from 7a.m. to 10p.m. CT.

Partnerships And Resources

- [GLSEN's Website on Native and Indigenous LGBTQ Youth in U.S. Schools](#)
- [Two Spirit and LGBTQ Health](#)
- ["Celebrating Our Magic" Toolkit from NPAIHB](#)
- [Indian Health Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- [National Center for American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research](#)



Word for Yo' 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!

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.aamariposa-fellowship.org>

Coronavirus Sanity Guide

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