

# Word for YO Wellness

A Newsletter by the Pandemic Wellness Coalition

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## The Word

### Cheer

There's a bit of the obligatory in the statement "Happy Holidays." Not only are we saying that the holidays, by definition, are happy, but there's the subtle insinuation that *you* must also be happy *because* it's the holidays. "It's the most wonderful time of the year!" "'Tis the season to be jolly!" "From now on our troubles will be out of sight!"

Hate to break it to you, Holiday Spirit, but some of us can see our troubles quite clearly this time of year.

Let's be honest: for many of us, the season is anything but cheerful. Perhaps you lost a loved one and this holiday season will be your first without them. Maybe work has reached peak levels of insanity, all to provide the perfect experience for those travelers lucky enough to actually take time off.

Perhaps the pressure of providing the perfect presents, and/or meals, and/or activities for your family is enough to make you combust faster than a dried up Christmas tree.

Maybe your only wish this year was an end to the pandemic and the return of simple holiday gatherings that you so took for granted only a couple of years ago - and that wish was not fulfilled

That is why we speak of wellness here today, and not cheerfulness or happiness. To be well this holiday season does not necessarily equate to being happy, to singing carols, to fa-la-la-la-la. Rather, to be well—to truly embrace the spirit of the season—is a practice of patience, of empathy, and of love - for both yourself and others. If you are not filled with joy this December, that's ok. You are not alone, and there is nothing wrong with you.

If you give yourself one gift this solstice, let it be the gift of self-care. And even if traditional comforts seem unreachable, take some solace in the knowledge that you are human, and it's no coincidence that thousands of generations of humans before you clustered their most important holidays during the darkest and coldest days of the year. We have these celebrations of light *because* it's dark and cold and hard right now, not in spite of it. So whatever the source of your "longest night" this season, give yourself the space to accept it, the time to ride it out, and the awareness that many of us are right there with you. The light will come again, in its time.

# Upcoming Events

## Thursday Evening HIIT

Led by *Nina Listro*

Get your blood pumping with pre-recorded workout sessions led by Yosemite resident & NPS employee Nina Listro. There are a variety of classes for all skill levels ranging from cardio to strength training. Some can be completed without any equipment, while others incorporate dumbbells.

Classes can be streamed on YouTube at the following link:

[Nina Listro - YouTube](#)

## Community Holiday Dinner

Hosted by *Yosemite Hospitality*

Come join us for our annual community holiday feast! Gluten-free and vegan options available. Dinner is free for YH employees and \$10 for other Yosemite community members.

Curry Village Pavilion  
Saturday, December 25th  
4:00pm - 8:00pm

## New Year's Eve Karaoke

Hosted by *Yosemite Hospitality*

Sing your heart out at our New Year's Eve Karaoke Night! Or challenge your friends to some classic arcade games! Dinner specials will be available until 10:30pm, snacks and drinks until 12:30am. Masks and social distancing required.

The Carabiner  
Friday, December 31st  
6:00pm - 1:00am

## The Language of Mental Health & Wellness

Led by *Raynelle Rino*

Discerning the types of impacts that affect our mental health can be profound in revealing what next steps need to be taken to cultivate wellness. "The Language of Mental Health & Wellness" will walk participants through the most common impacts on mental health in the workplace. Concepts about mental and somatic awareness will be introduced along with some take home activities that can be practiced individually or with others.

Learning Objectives:

- Discover and define the most common workplace impacts on mental wellness;
- Burnout, compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma
- Body language of mental wellness;
- Somatics, somatic centering and grounding practices

25 participant limit. Due to limited space, registered attendance is required. RSVP to [raynelle@rinoconsultingsolutions.com](mailto:raynelle@rinoconsultingsolutions.com)

Wednesday, January 19th  
2:00 - 3:30pm

## Yoga with Kyra

Led by *Kyra Taylor*

Yoga classes are back! Bring a mat, blanket, or towel (limited mats are available to borrow at the Wellness Center), any props you might want to use (not required), and your beautiful self! Namaste, my friends!

The Wellness Center  
Every Saturday  
7:00pm - 8:00pm

## 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

## Using Upcycled Art for Healing

Hosted by: *Center for Creative Arts Therapy*

Use everyday items to craft skills and creativity based in resourcefulness, being a good steward, and promoting Reduce, Reuse, Recycle principals.

This program is geared towards healing ourselves and the earth through art-making.

Tuesday December 21, 2021  
9:00am - 10:00am

[Zoom.us/join](#)  
Meeting ID: 2066269920 / Passcode: wellness1

RSVP preferred but not required:  
[jamie\\_gonzales@partner.nps.gov](mailto:jamie_gonzales@partner.nps.gov)

## WELLNESS CENTER HOURS EXTENDING!

6:00am-10:00pm

Tuesday - Saturday

Closed daily for lunch from 10-11am & 6-7pm

Closed Sunday/Monday



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



On YouTube, search for the [Yosemite Community Builder](#) channel to find the following programs:

- Yoga For Anxiety
- Stress Management Workshop
- Lifestyle Series
- Wednesday Night Yoga

# Community Submissions



Photo by Maureen McCormick

## Walking to Leidig Meadow, Autumn

Just now,  
the way the golden afternoon  
shone tenderly sideways through the tracery of leaves –  
I felt flooded suddenly with loss, dreading the draining of color,  
of dark nights to come. But here, in this ethereal cathedral  
with its leaning buttresses of black oaks just now wearing  
liquid sunshine in their crowns, it seems foolish to mourn yet,  
while acorns spill lushly from leafy vaults,  
brazen bucks rut, and ravens raucously call out their mysteries.  
So I'll sing for now into the yellow glory of leaves, with the light  
and hope of a hundred candles guttering against the chill.  
I know the gates are opening to welcome back death,  
and I am desperate with despair and devotion,  
both piercing my heart here,  
inside the brilliant blue skull of this heaven, where just now  
all distinctions dissolve and I am still a part of everything.  
This is the secret offering of November:  
a last throb and pulse, a holiness made visible,  
as the sun swims into the deep-end of the sky,  
and the valley kneels, sweetly rinsed by a light it cannot hold.

**By Maureen McCormick**



For a chance to feature your personal artwork, poetry, articles, or short stories in our newsletter, please send your submission to [yos.communitybuilder@gmail.com](mailto:yos.communitybuilder@gmail.com)

# Wellness News

## Recipe

For Yo Wellness

### Creamy Hot Cocoa

'Tis the season for sweet, comforting drinks. Enjoy the start of the holidays with a delicious, simple, and creamy hot cocoa!

**1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder**  
**1/2 cup white sugar**  
**1 pinch salt**  
**1/3 cup boiling water**  
**3 1/2 cups milk (or milk alternative)**  
**3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract**  
**1/2 cup half-and-half or non-dairy cream alternative**  
**Marshmallows**

1. Combine the cocoa, sugar, and pinch of salt in a saucepan.
2. Blend in the boiling water.
3. Bring this mixture to an easy boil while you stir.
4. Simmer and stir for about 2 minutes. Watch that it doesn't scorch.
5. Stir in 3 1/2 cups of milk and heat until very hot, but do not boil!
6. Remove from heat and add vanilla.
7. Divide between 4 mugs. Add the cream to the mugs of cocoa to cool it to drinking temperature. Add marshmallows to taste!

Borrowed with modifications from:  
<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/20211/creamy-hot-cocoa/>

## The Present of Presence: Mindfulness in the Holidays

The holidays can be a time of joy, family, spiritual renewal and gratitude. Too often, these things get lost in the hustle and bustle of the season.

We have increased demands for our time and attention: kids are home from school, shopping for gifts, spending time with family and social gatherings. While these things can be wonderful, they also can add to our stress. This year, it may be helpful to consider doing the things that nurture you and maybe choose to not do things just because you are supposed to do them.

### 1. Be Selective

Think about which activities you and your family really want to do this year. What family events do you want to attend? What don't you want to attend? Are there people that you can see at a different time of year that might create less stress and make the visit more enjoyable?

Consider all your demands. Put them on a whole-month calendar. Write in what you will be expected to do for each event, for example, cooking, shopping, or gift-wrapping. Consider all the demands that each event entails and make decisions about what you are and are not able to do.

### 2. Consider Cutting Back

Consider what you can do to make you and your family's life easier. Can you decide as a group to not buy gifts for all the extended family members? Think about having a name drawing for the adults, just buying gifts for kids or having the kids do a gift exchange. What about in your own household? As a family, you could decide to cut back with gift giving.

It may be helpful to redirect that energy to giving back to the community by:

- Buying gifts for a needy family
- Serving a meal at a shelter
- Giving of your time to assist with donations at a local charity

### 3. Plan Ahead

It is easy to get caught up in the everyday race of the holidays. Plan time for yourself and your family to have down time: find a good book, watch a holiday movie together, or have a game night. It is important to find the time that allows you to be together in ways that are nurturing. With everyone's busy schedules, it is essential to plan

### 4. Be Mindful

Find ways for you and your family to contemplate what the season means to you on a daily basis. For many people, it is a time of spiritual renewal. Whether you are faith-based or not, looking for meaning in the season can be helpful. Be aware of consciously being kind or patient with others. Live with an intention of finding peace, joy and gratitude in your daily life.

### The Bottom Line: Enjoy the Present Moment

The holidays can be very busy and full. They also offer us an opportunity to make choices about what we want to get out of the season. Remember these sayings when you need a reminder:

"The present moment is filled with joy and happiness. If you are attentive, you will see it."  
"Peace is every step: The path of mindfulness is everyday life."

Give a gift to yourself and choose to be thoughtful about how you want to spend your holidays.



For more information visit:  
<https://www.trihealth.com/dailyhealthwire/wellness-and-fitness/the-present-of-presence--mindfulness-in-the-holidays>

# Activities



## Holiday Mindfulness Coloring



### What is Mindfulness Coloring?

The fundamental concept of mindfulness coloring is that the very act of coloring pre-drawn illustrations provides an opportunity to suspend our inner dialogue and engage in an activity that disregards the flow of negative thoughts that can dominate our lives.

Taking part in enjoyable activities to de-stress is not a new concept. We live in a stress-inducing world in which we are constantly exploring new ways to improve mindfulness and restore feelings of wellbeing. Coloring is just one of the increasingly varied ways in which we can pursue mindfulness.

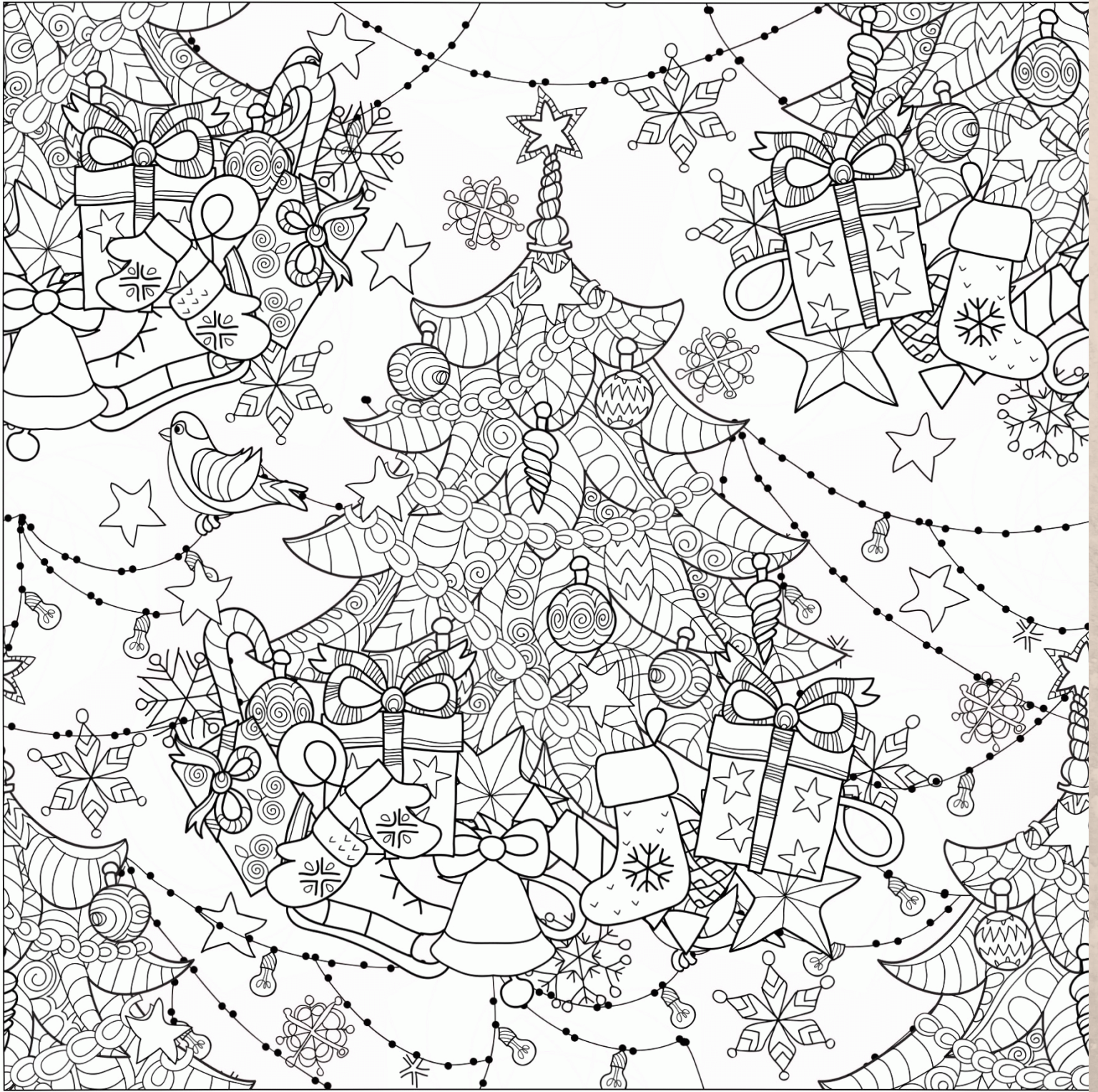
### Why Mindfulness Coloring Works

Traditional mindfulness techniques focus the mind in order to promote the self-regulation of attention. Through meditation, a state of relaxation can be achieved by focusing on the present and blocking out external distractions. Mindfulness coloring is no different.

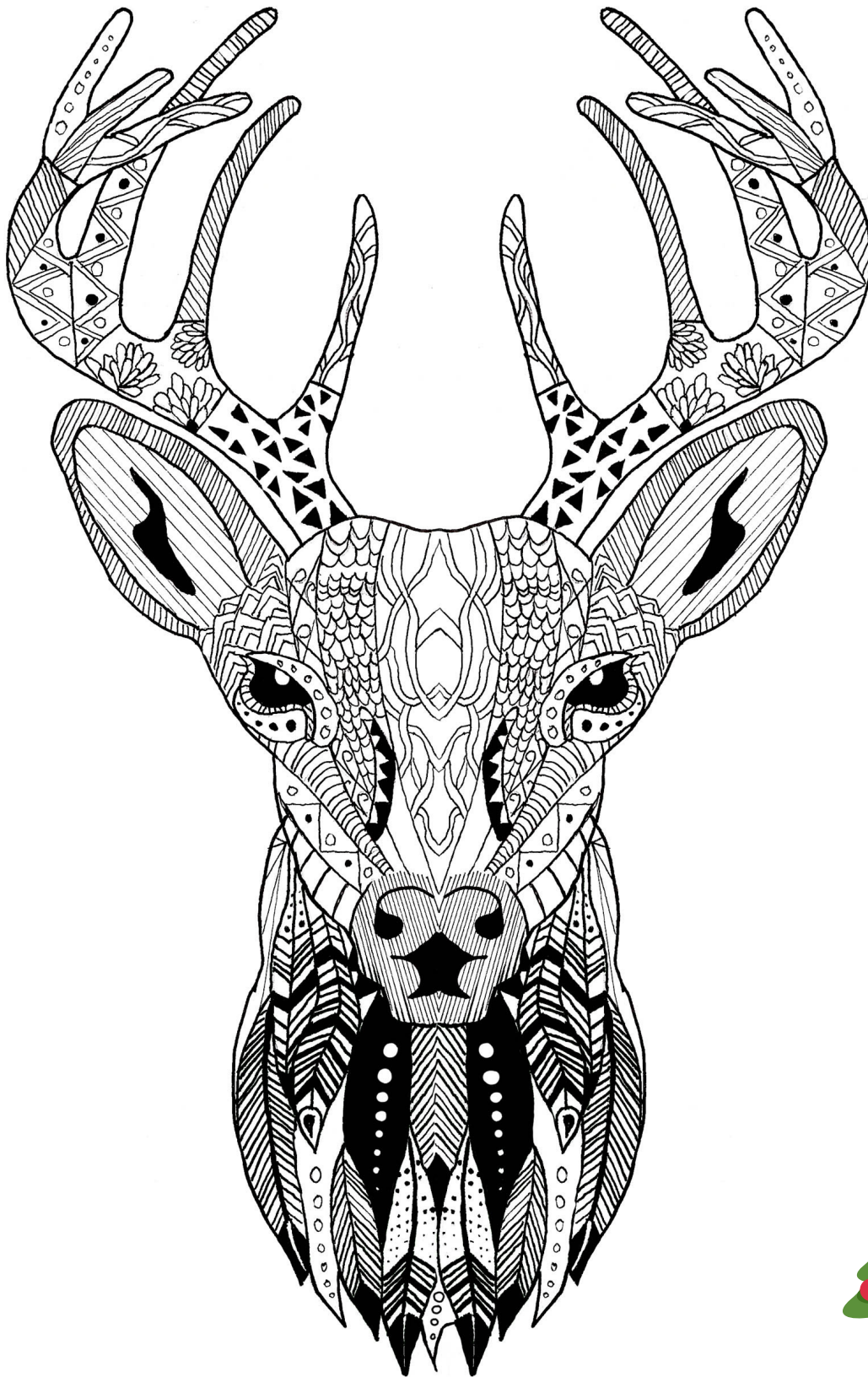
As with meditation, mindfulness coloring allows us to switch off extraneous thoughts and focus on the moment. It has long been recognized within both Jungian and transpersonal psychology that self-expression through artistic, visual means can be potentially therapeutic. *(Mellick, 2001).*



# Activities



# Activities



# Resources



**National FRC Mental Health Promotion Project**

## MENTAL HEALTH TIPS TO SURVIVE CHRISTMAS

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p><b>REACH OUT</b></p> <p>Christmas is a time of joy but for many can be the darkest and hardest time of the year. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed, don't be afraid to ask for help. While everyone around you seems to be happy, you may feel persistently stressed or anxious, sad or even hopeless. Find someone to talk to: it could be a friend, partner, family member, colleague, doctor, therapist or a helpline. There is always someone who will listen. Sharing your thoughts and feelings can really help free your mind and unlock options that may help.</p> | <p><b>BUDGET</b></p> <p>Christmas time can be a very expensive time of year. People often feel under pressure to buy presents, attend events and spend more money than they can afford. Make a Christmas budget, factor in the significant things such as family outings and stick to it. Come January you will be glad.</p>                             | <p><b>BE MINDFUL OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION</b></p> <p>Christmas can be a time of overindulgence in food and alcohol. Socialising is often based around alcohol and the pub. Alcohol, although it makes some users feel relaxed, drinking large amounts can lead to low mood and irritability, it can contribute to a loss of inhibitions, conflict and misunderstanding. Try to be mindful of the amount you may consume and to be aware of how you may feel the following day.</p> | <p><b>SLEEP</b></p> <p>The Christmas season can be hectic meaning our sleep pattern can be thrown out of sync. We cannot function effectively without sleep - it helps to repair and restore our brains and bodies, and is vital for maintaining good mental health. Ongoing sleep disturbance can lead to tiredness, irritability and difficulty concentrating. Try to stick to your normal sleeping pattern so that you have the energy for the hustle and bustle of the festive season.</p>   |
| <p><b>NOURISH YOUR BODY</b></p> <p>When it comes to mental health, what you eat can make a difference to how you feel. A diet rich in foods like fruits, vegetables, wholegrain cereals, nuts and seeds can help protect your mental health. Making healthier food choices will ultimately improve your physical and mental wellbeing, keeping the everything in moderation mindset over the festive period will stand to you, removing that sluggish feeling in January.</p>  | <p><b>BE MINDFUL</b></p> <p>Mindfulness is simply paying attention to whatever is happening in the present moment and experiencing it without judgement. We are either in the past or the future, but rarely in the now. Savour the moments and memories made over the festive season. Be present in that moment and stop worrying about the future.</p> | <p><b>EXERCISE</b></p> <p>Being physically active can enhance your mood, reduce stress and anxiety, encourage the release of endorphins and improve self-esteem. Keeping active over the festive period will help protect both your physical health and your mental health. Regular exercise will help you sleep and relax, look and feel better. Get outside, breathe in some fresh air feel it deep within your lungs, you will feel better for it.</p>                        | <p><b>HAVE COMPASSION FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS</b></p> <p>Being considerate, generous and kind can make anyone's day. The true meaning of Christmas is to remove suffering by sharing and giving, having fun and spending time with the most important people in your life. With 1 in 4 people experiencing a mental illness at some point in their life, there is bound to be someone you know who is not feeling festive. Reach out to them, ask them how they are. You could be the one reason they do not feel alone over the festive season.</p> |

Logos: National FRC Mental Health Promotion Project, Family Resource Centre, TUSLA, HSE, Mental Health Ireland

## 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 LIFELINE**  
1-800-273-8255 (TALK)

**National Suicide Prevention**

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

**Veterans Crisis Line**  
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

**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/coronavirusanysanityguide>

### COVID-19 Testing

In addition to vaccinations, frequent testing is a critical tool to help protect the Yosemite Community. Many people carry the COVID virus but show no signs of illness. Surveillance testing helps to quickly identify anyone who is actively shedding the virus, but not showing any signs of illness. For people with frequent contact with large numbers of the general public or who work in the hospitality and public service sectors, our local Public Health officials recommend getting tested once every 7 to 14 days.

**Free COVID-19 testing is available in Yosemite Valley on Mondays and Thursdays for the foreseeable future.**

- On Mondays, testing is available by LHI outside of the Yosemite Medical Clinic Building from 10 am to 6 pm.
- On Thursdays, testing is available by LHI at the Curry Village Wellness Center from 10 am to 6 pm.

Walk-Ins are welcome! If you happen to know your LHI patient ID number, please bring that with you to expedite your check-in process. To schedule an appointment, visit please <https://www.lhi.care/covidtesting>.

Yosemite Medical Clinic does perform COVID testing as needed for symptomatic individuals. The Yosemite Medical Clinic is open 6 days a week (Mon-Sat). Patients will be evaluated by a provider to determine if testing is indicated.

### Managing Grief Over the Holidays

- Make a plan to honor your loved one ahead of time
- Accept whatever feelings arise
- Conserve energy by scaling back holiday tasks
- Fuel your brain and body



*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 the first and fifteenth of every month. Each issue includes recipes, articles, community submissions, special events and more from your fellow park locals. Have a special request or an art submission?*