# About Emotional Wellness

Emotional Wellness involves coping effectively with life and creating satisfying relationships.

* Be aware of and listen to your feelings.
* Express your feelings to people you trust.

Consider focusing on your emotional wellness if you identify with one or more of the following:

* I want to feel better about myself
* I want to more effectively cope with stress
* I want to make more time for hobbies
* I want to be able to forgive more often
* I want to be better at expressing my feelings
* I want to feel like I have more control over my life

# Motivational Messages

1. Negative emotions can affect your physical health, causing headaches or nausea. Observe these emotions so you can work to release them.
2. Every emotion is valid. Be aware of your feelings and try to express them to others.
3. Even happy life events like getting married or having a baby can cause stress. It’s okay to reach out for help if you’re overwhelmed!
4. What is stressful to you may not bother your friend. This does not make one person stronger or weaker, just different.
5. Strength lies in the ability to recognize when you’re stressed and take positive steps to relieve it.
6. Remember to take care of yourself! Build self-care into everyday life, take a warm bath or talk with a loved one.
7. Pause and take a breath! How are you feeling today?
8. Take time for yourself today! It’s important to relax and feel good.
9. Expressing gratitude helps your mental health. What are you grateful for today?
10. Laughter lifts your mood. Watch a funny movie, TV show, YouTube video, or Vine.
11. Dancing can relieve stress. Put on your favorite song and dance!
12. Need to release pent up energy? Sing along as loud as you can to the radio.
13. If you’re feeling overwhelmed, make a list, try to take one thing at a time. Solve little problems first.
14. Are you having negative thoughts? Share your feelings with friends or family, and ask for help if you need it.
15. Take time for self-reflection! Understand your feelings and where they’re coming from.
16. Everyone has bad days. Try to look for the positive in any situation!
17. Feeling angry or frustrated? Try to express it in a healthy way.
18. The 8 dimensions are all connected! Stress at work can affect your overall emotional state! That’s Occupational + Emotional.
19. Create a supportive and nurturing home environment that will uplift your mood. That’s Environmental + Emotional.
20. Feeling stressed or anxious? Physical activity like running can help you release those emotions. That’s Physical + Emotional.
21. Emotions are contagious! Be kind to others.
22. Try a new coping strategy like journaling to express your emotions in a healthy way.
23. Express yourself! Try writing poetry, journaling, or painting.
24. Remember to focus on your senses and relax your breathing if you’re ever feeling stressed.
25. Emotional Wellness mean you’re more aware of your emotions and getting better at managing them, whatever those feelings may be.
26. Support from others helps emotional wellness on your recovery journey. Who can you connect with today?
27. Find ways to reduce stress in your life, no matter how big or small.
28. Setting priorities can help reduce anxiety. Focus on your immediate needs and goals.
29. Mindfulness is about being present. Be here, in the now, rather than living in yesterday or tomorrow.
30. Did you know walking can improve your mood? Find time for 10 minutes each day.
31. If you feel worried, tense, or anxious, that’s okay. Trying to meditate for even a few minutes each day can restore calmness.
32. Allow yourself to feel and be just as you are.
33. Life can be difficult. Focus on the positives today!
34. Remember to schedule some “me” time in your day! Reinvigorate--go for a walk or take a hot shower!
35. Spending time in nature can boost your mood. Can’t get outdoors? Imagine yourself in nature to increase energy and positive feelings.
36. Look for beauty today! Being awe-inspired helps provide a sense of hope and may boost health and well-being.
37. Finding balance is key! Sometimes you’ll feel happy, others a little down. That’s okay!
38. Share your emotions! They are not a weakness.
39. You are not your feelings. Feelings are fleeting and will pass.
40. Remember to always be open to and acknowledge your feelings without judgment.
41. Look at any challenges you face as opportunities for growth.
42. Keep your spirits up! Discover what you like to do best and do it often.

# Positive Reinforcement

1. Everyone faces stress in their lives, you’re getting better at managing stress in a healthy way!
2. Even superheroes take a break, and so can you!
3. You’re taking time for yourself – and that’s helping you take care of others, too! Keep it up!
4. Keep using positive coping strategies! Try listening to music, getting physical exercise, or hanging out with a friend.
5. Be proud of yourself! You are taking steps to improve your wellness.
6. Treat yourself kindly. You deserve it!
7. You are a strong individual. It’s okay to allow yourself to cry.
8. Remember to take care of yourself first. It’s okay to just say “no” sometimes.
9. Look in the mirror and complement yourself. You deserve it!
10. It’s okay to trust in others.
11. You can choose to not let the small things upset you.
12. You have the power over your own happiness! Stay positive.
13. Feelings and emotions are a universal language. They are natural and human.
14. You are strong! Remember to have the strength to ask someone for help if you need it.
15. Start fresh every day. Commit to making tomorrow better than today!
16. You can find emotional balance!
17. You are taking care of yourself by releasing stress!
18. You have the power to redirect negative emotions.
19. You’re beginning to accept imperfection. Keep it up!
20. Being aware of your emotions feels good, doesn’t it?! Keep it up!
21. Being aware of your emotions helps you feel more in control and less stressed! Nice work!
22. You’re identifying new coping strategies and getting better at managing harmful emotions. Way to go!
23. You’re improving your relationships with others. Feel good about your transformation!
24. Reducing anxiety is helping you stay focused on taking one day at a time.
25. Taking care of yourself is helping you feel less stressed. You’re becoming a better version of yourself.
26. Scheduling “me” time during the week is improving your outlook on life. Way to go!

# Activities

1. Discovery Questions (Think)

**Title:** Healthy Coping Mechanisms.

**Description & Instructions:** A strong support network is key to an individual’s recovery, but sometimes our emotions can put stress on our relationships with family and friends. Finding emotional balance will help maintain these relationships. Think about how your emotions impact your relationships. What positive changes can you make? Brainstorm constructive coping mechanisms that will help you deal with those emotions. Examples that work for some people include journaling, physical activity, and meditation. Think about healthy coping practices that will work in your life and meet your needs.

**Estimated Duration:** 10-15 minutes

**Title:**  Identifying Stressors.

**Description & Instructions:** Stress is a major obstacle for many people. While it may feel like the causes are out of your control, you can take action to minimize and deal with those stressors.

Reflect on the stress in your life. For each source of stress identify the following: how it makes you feel, the cause(s) of that stress, possible solutions for managing that stress, and how implementing those solutions could improve your well-being.

**Estimated Duration:** 15-20 minutes

**Title:** Identifying Emotional Triggers.

**Description & Instructions:** It is important to recognize potential emotional triggers. Being able to catch yourself reacting when your emotions are trigged will help you manage your emotions. Think about a certain emotion you experience often. Now reflect on when this emotion occurs. Is there a common thread in the setting or inter-personal interaction that might be acting as a trigger? For example, a trigger might be when you perceive someone is being judgmental or critical of you. Think about how you feel when this emotional reaction begins to appear, such as your rate of breathing, tension in certain muscles, or pressure in your gut or chest. Finally, reflect on the origins of these triggers and brainstorm what you can do to manage them.

**Estimated Duration:** 10-20 minutes

**Title:** Reflect each day on your emotions.

**Description & Instructions:** What can your emotions teach you? Brainstorm ideas of how you can express them.

**Estimated Duration:** 5-15 minutes

**b.** Physical (Do)

**Title:** Time to Relax.

**Description & Instructions:** Progressive muscle relaxation techniques can help you lower your stress levels and relax when you are feeling anxious. It is a two-step process in which you first deliberately tense certain muscle groups and then allow the muscles to relax as the tension flows away. Disclaimer: if you have problems with any medical issues that would impede physical activity, such as pulled muscles or broken bones, consult your doctor before trying this exercise. Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit in which you won’t be disturbed. Remove your shoes and take a few deep breaths. Choose a specific part of the body on which you want to focus during this session. For example, you could select your feet, legs, hands, arms, or shoulders. Then, do the following:

1. Take a deep breath in through your nose, hold for a few seconds, and then breathe out. Repeat.
2. Starting with the right side of the body, squeeze the muscles you’ve selected (e.g. right foot) for 5 seconds, creating deliberate yet gentle tension. For example, curl your toes as tight as you can or clench your first.
3. Now relax and slowly exhale, letting your muscles go limp.
4. Notice the difference between the tension and relaxation. Let the tension flow out of your muscles like water. Now repeat with the left side of the body, tensing and relaxing the muscles you’ve selected (e.g. left foot).
5. Once complete, relax with your eyes closed for a few seconds before getting up slowly.

**Estimated Duration:** 10-20 minutes

**Title:** Relaxing Visuals

**Description & Instructions:** Relieving yourself from stress or letting go of negative emotions will help you find balance in your life. Use visuals to symbolize this process and help you relax. If you can find a bottle of bubbles around the house, that’s great! If not, that’s not a problem – you can buy one at the discount store. (That’s right, the same bubbles you may have had as a kid). The slow, deep breathing you use when blowing bubbles helps to relax you. Blow a stream of bubbles, and with each one assign one of your feelings or stressors to those bubbles. Watch them float away and, ultimately, pop. The meditation of the bubble highlights the non-engagement of our thoughts (Hooker & Fodor, 2008).

**Estimated Duration:** 2-5 minutes

**Title:** Dance Party.

**Description & Instructions:** Music is a great way to express emotions. If you’re feeling anxious, angry, or stressed, dancing can help you release those pent up feelings. Pick your favorite song, crank up the volume (remember not to disturb the neighbors!), and dance for five minutes.

**Estimated Duration:** 5-10 minutes

**Title:** Practicing Affirmations.

**Description & Instructions:** Develop a positive statement to repeat to yourself daily. When you change your thoughts, you can change your mood and attitude.

**Estimated Duration:** 2-5 minutes

**c.** Document (Write)

**Title:** Making a Weekly Stress Journal.

**Description & Instructions:** Everyone experiences stressors in their life. Stress can be associated with aspects of your life you are unhappy about, like money or a job. But, happy and exciting life events can also cause stress too, like a new baby or a wedding. It’s important to recognize the sources of your stress. Write down ways in which your life is affected by stress. Fill out a weekly stress journal in the Wellness Log to measure your level of stress. Each day, gauge how you are feeling and write down the sources of your stress.

**Estimated Duration:** 10-20 minutes per day

**Title:** Understanding Emotions.

**Description & Instructions:** When you understand the signs of an emotion, you will be able to manage any negative or harmful emotions more quickly. Pick an emotion to focus on and now write about how you experience that feeling. First, describe your thought processes. For example, what memories or words come to mind? Next, note any sensory experiences you might have, such as any sounds you might hear. Finally, reflect on any physical sensations that you might experience along with that emotion. Do you feel any muscle tension or changes in heart rate?

**Estimated Duration:** 10-20 minutes

**Title:** Memory Mapping.

**Description & Instructions:** It’s important to recognize that your feelings won’t last forever. Reflect on a happy memory so you are more likely to remember it in the future when you might be feeling down. Think about a good memory and write down what you remember. If you need a little help getting started, answer the following questions:

* + - When did this event/moment take place?
    - Where did this event/moment take place?
    - How did you feel?
    - What sensory memories do you remember noticing during this event/moment (i.e. smell, taste, touch, sound)?
    - What were you doing at this time in your life?
    - What will you always remember about this moment (e.g. people, weather, environment, etc.)

End your passage with the following sentence and be sure to read it out loud. “I’ll never be right there again but I know I CAN feel that way again.”

**Estimated Duration:** 20-30 minutes

**d.** Person-to-Person (Interact)

**Title:** Connecting with Loved Ones.

**Description & Instructions:** Communication is key to healthy relationships. Check in with loved ones and let them know how much you care. Think of a family member or friend who you haven’t felt connected to lately. Reach out to them via phone, email, or in person. Share how you’ve been feeling and be sure to listen in return.

**Estimated Duration:** 30-60 minutes

**Title:** Planning for Wellness.

**Description & Instructions:** Our support networks can provide us a sense of belonging and security, which is critical to our overall wellness and mental health. Spend quality time with others doing things that will make you happy. Make a plan with family or friends to do something fun or relaxing. Play a game, go for a walk, watch a movie, or share a meal!

**Estimated Duration:** 1-2 hours

**Title:** Safe Space to Talk.

**Description & Instructions:** If you’ve been having a difficult time, it might help to talk to someone. And, sometimes, we can even be uncomfortable talking with our closest friends and family. If you feel the need to talk, but don’t feel you have the right person to confide in, use the internet or the yellow pages and find free services in your area that will give you support and a safe environment to express yourself. You might find that support groups or even therapy work for you. Support groups exist for overeating, substance use, anxiety, pregnancy, domestic violence, grieving, trauma, sleep disorders, and more. If you don’t want to attend in person, explore options for online support groups as well.

**Estimated Duration:** 30 - 60 minutes

# Resources

[Teaching Mindfulness to Children (Hooker & Fodor, 2008)](http://ww.gisc.org/gestaltreview/documents/TeachingMindfulnesstoChildren.pdf)

Mindfulness, which features focused awareness training, is increasing in popularity among mental health professionals. Mindfulness training emphasizes focused attention to internal and external experiences in the present moment of time, without judgment. While mindfulness interventions have been used in treatments for stress, chronic pain, anxiety, depression, borderline personality disorder, eating disorders, and addiction, researchers suggest that this type of training also can be beneficial in everyday life.

[Stress and Health: The New “Apple a Day” Prescription](http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/about-us/esolutions-newsletter/stress-and-health-the-new-apple-a-day-prescription)

In an exclusive interview with the SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions, Drs. Benson and Fricchione of the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind-Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital explain the science of stress and how stress management improves health for people with chronic physical, mental, and addiction disorders.

[Positive Thinking: Stop Negative Self-Talk to Reduce Stress](http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950)

Positive thinking helps with stress management and can even improve your health. Practice overcoming negative self-talk with examples provided.

[American Heart Association’s Resources on Stress Management](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/StressManagement/Stress-Management_UCM_001082_SubHomePage.jsp)

Learn how to deal with stress with healthy habits from the American Heart Association.

[Wellness Worksheets](http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/health-wellness/wellness-strategies/wellness.pdf)

The 126 Wellness Worksheets in this package are designed to help you become more involved

in your own wellness. Access worksheets, assessment tools, inventories and more.

[Coping with Traumatic Events: Resources for Children, Parents, Educators, and other Professionals](http://www.samhsa.gov/capt/tools-learning-resources/coping-traumatic-events-resources)

Access self-help guides and tips on coping with traumatic events from SAMHSA and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.

[Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator](https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/)

The Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator is a confidential and anonymous source of information for persons seeking treatment facilities in the United States or U.S. Territories for substance abuse/addiction and/or mental health problems.

[Disaster Distress Helpline](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline)

SAMHSA’s Disaster Distress Helpline provides crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.