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Wellness Challenge

Setting and Achieving Personal Mental Health Goals

The new month has arrived, bringing with it the promise of new beginnings and opportunities. As we step into this month, it's the perfect time to pause, reflect, and set intentions for our mental well-being. The "Wellness Challenge: Setting and Achieving Personal Mental Health Goals" invites you to embark on a journey of self-discovery and positive transformation. Let's explore how you can use the power of goal-setting to nurture your mental health.

Why Set Mental Health Goals?

Setting goals for your mental health is a proactive and empowering way to prioritise self-care and personal growth. Just like setting career or fitness goals, mental health goals provide direction and motivation. They help you focus on what truly matters and encourage you to take actionable steps towards a healthier, more balanced life.

Choosing Your Mental Health Goals

When selecting your mental health goals, it's essential to make them specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Here are a few goal ideas to get you started:



Start a Gratitude Journal

Dedicate a few minutes each day to jot down things you're grateful for. Practising gratitude can shift your focus from what's lacking to what you already have, promoting a positive outlook.

Establish a Regular Exercise Routine

Physical activity isn't just great for your body; it's also a powerful mood booster. Commit to a regular exercise routine that suits your fitness level and preferences.

Practise Daily Meditation

Mindfulness meditation can help you manage stress, reduce anxiety, and improve your overall emotional well-being. Start with just a few minutes each day and gradually increase your meditation time.

Limit Screen Time

Excessive screen time, especially on social media, can negatively impact your mental health. Set a goal to limit your daily screen time and replace it with face-to-face interactions or other meaningful activities.

Prioritise Sleep

Quality sleep is essential for mental and emotional health. Aim for a consistent sleep schedule and create a calming bedtime routine to improve your sleep quality.

Connect with Nature

Spend time outdoors, whether it's a hike in the woods, a day at the beach, or a simple walk in the park. Nature has a calming and rejuvenating effect on the mind.

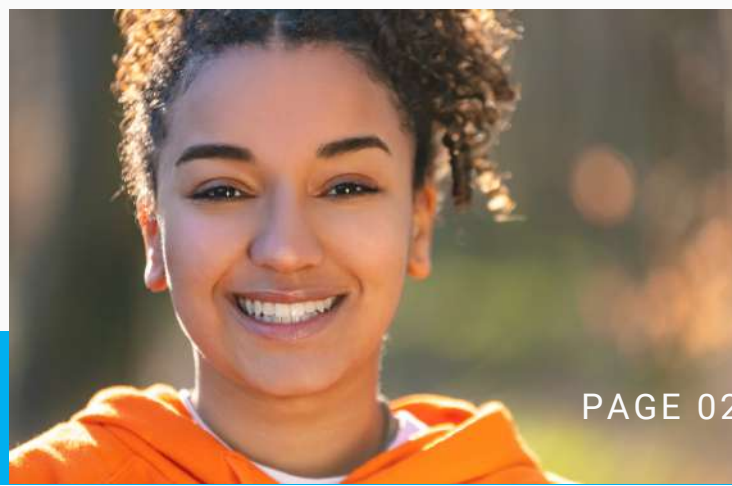
Accountability and Support

One of the most effective ways to achieve your mental health goals is by sharing them with others. Consider joining a community or support group where you can exchange experiences, challenges, and successes with like-minded individuals. The encouragement and motivation you receive from a support network can be invaluable on your journey.

In addition, tracking your progress can be motivating and rewarding. Keep a journal to record your daily or weekly accomplishments, setbacks, and reflections. Celebrate your achievements, no matter how small they may seem. Every step forward is a victory on your path to better mental health.

Remember that setting and achieving mental health goals is a dynamic process. You may encounter obstacles along the way, and that's perfectly normal. The key is to stay committed, adapt when needed, and be kind to yourself throughout the process.

As the new month unfolds, take this opportunity to invest in your mental well-being. Set meaningful goals, nurture positive habits, and share your journey with others. Together, we can create a community of support and encouragement, fostering mental health and well-being for all.





Carrot & Ginger Soup

Low-fat and warming, this carrot and bean soup makes a healthy lunch or dinner

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 tbsp coarsely grated ginger
- 2 garlic cloves, sliced
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- 850ml vegetable stock
- 500g carrot (preferably organic), sliced
- 400g can cannellini beans (no need to drain)

Instructions

- Heat the oil in a large pan, add the onion, ginger and garlic, and fry for 5 mins until starting to soften. Stir in the nutmeg and cook for 1 min more.
- Pour in the stock, add the carrots, beans and their liquid, then cover and simmer for 20-25 mins until the carrots are tender.
- Scoop a third of the mixture into a bowl and blitz the remainder with a hand blender or in a food processor until smooth. Return everything to the pan and heat until bubbling. Serve topped with almonds and nutmeg.



Source: <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/carrot-ginger-soup>

Back to School, Back to Balance

Managing Stress for Students and Parents

As the summer days dwindle and the leaves begin to change, it's time for students to head back to school, and parents to adapt to new routines. While this time of year is filled with excitement and anticipation, it can also bring about stress and anxiety. In this article, we'll explore strategies for managing stress related to academic and family responsibilities, ensuring a smoother and more balanced transition into the school year.

The Back-to-School Transition

For students, the return to school often means facing new teachers, classmates, and academic challenges. Parents, on the other hand, are tasked with juggling their own work responsibilities while ensuring their children are well-prepared and supported. Here are some effective strategies for both students and parents to navigate this transitional period with grace:

For Students

Effective Time Management: Create a daily or weekly schedule that outlines study time, extracurricular activities, and relaxation. Allocate specific time blocks for homework and assignments, allowing for breaks in between.

Set Realistic Goals: Establish achievable academic goals for the year, and break them down into smaller, manageable tasks. Celebrate y

your accomplishments along the way to maintain motivation.

Healthy Study Habits: Prioritise effective study techniques such as active learning, summarising notes, and seeking help when needed. A well-organized study environment can also reduce stress and enhance focus.

Self-Care: Remember to take care of your physical and emotional well-being. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, and sufficient sleep are essential components of a successful school year.

For Parents

Open Communication: Foster an open and supportive environment at home where your child feels comfortable discussing their concerns and challenges. Encourage them to share their experiences.



Poem of the Month

Golden Sun

BY LENORE HETRICK

Great, glorious, golden sun,
 Shine down on me today,
 You are the life of all this earth,
 You and your magic ray.
 You are the life of bird and plant,
 All must depend on you.
 Shine down, great sun, the whole day long!
 Shine from the heaven's blue.
 And I will welcome your golden rays,
 For you mean life to me,
 And you mean happiness and health,
 Strength and energy.
 Shine down, great sun, on flower and field,
 And never say goodbye.
 Forever and ever give us your light,
 From out the wide blue sky.

Set Realistic Expectations: Understand that each child is unique, and that academic success can look different for everyone. Encourage effort and improvement rather than focusing solely on grades.

Shared Responsibilities: Delegate household responsibilities among family members to ease the burden on both parents and students. This can include tasks like meal preparation, cleaning, and organising school supplies.

Support Network: Connect with other parents to share experiences, tips, and resources. Building a support network can provide valuable insights and emotional support during the back-to-school transition.

Balancing Academics and Life

Remember that achieving balance is key to managing stress effectively. Encourage students to engage in extracurricular activities that they enjoy, as they provide a welcome break from academic pressures. For parents, taking time for self-care and maintaining their own interests and hobbies can help reduce stress and model healthy coping mechanisms for their children.

What's more, don't be afraid to seek help when needed. If stress becomes overwhelming for students or parents, consider reaching out to teachers, counsellors, or mental health professionals for guidance and support.

As the back-to-school transition takes full swing, it's important to remember that managing stress is a shared journey for both students and parents. By implementing these strategies, fostering open communication, and nurturing a healthy work-life-school balance, you can create a supportive and harmonious environment that promotes well-being and success for the entire family.



Digital Detox

Nurturing Your Mental Health in the Digital Age

In today's digital era, we're constantly connected, plugged in, and inundated with screens. While technology has undoubtedly brought numerous conveniences and opportunities, it has also ushered in new challenges for our mental health. Excessive screen time and digital media consumption can take a toll on our well-being, contributing to stress, anxiety, and even feelings of isolation. But fear not; it's not too late to regain balance and nurture your mental health with a digital detox. Let's explore the impact of our digital lives on mental well-being and discover actionable steps to unplug and reconnect with the world around us.

Impact of Excessive Screen Time

Our smartphones, tablets, and computers have become extensions of ourselves, serving as tools for communication, entertainment, and work. While this connectivity offers many benefits, it can also disrupt our mental equilibrium:

Stress and Anxiety: The constant barrage of notifications and information can lead to heightened stress and anxiety levels, as our brains struggle to keep up with the digital demands.

Sleep Disruption: Late-night scrolling or binge-watching can disrupt our sleep patterns, leading to sleep deprivation, which, in turn, affects mood and cognitive function.



Isolation: Paradoxically, excessive screen time can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness as we substitute online interactions for real-world connections.

Reduced Productivity: Overindulgence in digital distractions can hinder productivity and focus, leading to frustration and decreased satisfaction with our accomplishments.

The Digital Detox Solution

It's crucial to strike a balance between our digital lives and our well-being. Here are some actionable steps to help you embark on a digital detox journey:

Set Boundaries: Establish specific timeframes for digital use, both at work and during leisure time. Designate "screen-free" periods in your day, especially before bedtime.

Audit Your Digital Life: Take stock of the apps and services you use. Eliminate or reduce the use of those that don't contribute positively to your life.

Practice Mindful Consumption: Be mindful of what you consume online. Opt for content that educates, inspires, or entertains you positively, rather than fuels stress or negativity.

Reconnect with Nature: Spend time outdoors and connect with the natural world. Nature has a calming effect on the mind and can provide a welcome respite from the digital barrage.

Explore Offline Hobbies: Rediscover or develop offline hobbies and interests. Whether it's painting, gardening, playing a musical instrument, or cooking, engaging in tangible activities can be incredibly fulfilling.

Prioritise Face-to-Face Interactions: Make a conscious effort to nurture real-world relationships. Schedule meetups with friends and family, engage in group activities, and foster meaningful connections.

The Benefits of a Digital Detox

By embarking on a digital detox journey, you'll experience a host of mental health benefits, including:

- Reduced stress and anxiety
- Improved sleep quality
- Enhanced focus and productivity
- Greater self-awareness and mindfulness
- Stronger real-world relationships

Remember, a digital detox doesn't mean complete abandonment of technology; it's about finding a healthier balance that allows you to enjoy the benefits of the digital age while preserving your mental well-being.

Unplugging and embracing offline activities can rejuvenate your spirit, rekindle your passions, and remind you of the beauty in the world beyond the screen.

Start your digital detox today and watch your mental health flourish in the process.





Thank you to our sponsors!

The CORE Ireland monthly newsletter is an important resource for anyone interested in mental health and well-being. It provides valuable information and practical advice to help people maintain good mental health and improve overall well-being. Thanks to the support of our incredible sponsors, we are able to continue producing this valuable resource for the benefit of our readers.

Ready for some footgolf?

Get ready for a day filled with kicks, laughter, and unforgettable moments at the CORE Ireland Footgolf Fundraiser!

Join us for an exciting footgolf outing where we'll aim for perfect shots into giant golf holes. Whether you're a seasoned pro or new to the game, it's all about the thrill of kicking and aiming for victory. Grab your friends and mark the date – it's going to be a ball-tastic day!

This day of laughter and fun will be held at the Navan Adventure Centre in support of mental health recovery education.

On the day, you can expect to find a small coffee shop located inside the centre, along with food trucks. There will also be a raffle for a chance to win one of our several spot prizes.

Head on over to coreireland.ie to secure your spot today!



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