

THE

# EXCHANGE

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THE QUARTERLY TRAUMA-  
INFORMED NEWSLETTER FOR  
THE GUIDANCE CENTER

**M**ay is a busy month for Mental Health! The whole month is recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month and here at The Guidance Center, we have designated May 23rd as **Trauma-Informed Care Day**. We know that everyone works diligently all year long to provide high-quality, compassionate, and trauma-informed care to our consumers and we couldn't provide that care without a dedicated and caring staff. On Trauma-Informed Care Day, each employee will be gifted a small token of appreciation and each location will have complimentary baked goods for the staff to enjoy. Plus, all day long we will be drawing names for cash-prize raffles! The Guidance Center is proud to provide top quality, trauma-informed care and without a first-rate staff, this would never be possible. Thank you for all you do!



you are   
**APPRECIATED**



## THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE ON MENTAL HEALTH

@BELIEVEPHQ

- REDUCED STRESS LEVELS
- INCREASED WELLBEING
- INCREASED ENERGY LEVELS
- BOOSTS BRAIN POWER
- REDUCED DEPRESSION
- INCREASED CONFIDENCE
- INCREASED MOOD
- REDUCED ANXIETY
- INCREASED SELF ESTEEM
- IMPROVED SLEEP

They say you can't run away from your problems. That's certainly true when it comes to trauma-related stress. Although pushing the memories, thoughts, and feelings aside can provide some quick relief, doing so can also lead to persistent, and even worsening, symptoms. Even so, *literally* running (or walking, dancing, swimming, etc.) can actually be quite beneficial in the journey toward healing. Experiencing one or many traumatic events can lead to anxiety, depression, short temper, intrusive thoughts, sleep disturbance, and other symptoms. Research has shown that regular exercise can decrease these symptoms of trauma-related stress while improving quality of life. Many types of movement help people with PTSD gain coping skills, participate more fully in life, achieve better quality of life, and find deeper determination to continue healing and living. Trauma-focused therapy plus as few as three half-hour exercise sessions per week has been found to lead to greater symptom reduction than trauma-focused therapy alone. Many types of exercise, including sports, aerobic movement, resistance training, yoga, and dance, have been found to be effective for enhancing, maintaining and/or extending the benefits of the primary treatment. So while you may not be able to run away from your problems, running – or walking, dancing, biking, swimming, etc. – can help you to face and overcome your problems.

(adapted from <http://www.childtrauma.com/blog/exercise>)

# Emotional Self-Care Checklist

Taking care of yourself so you can take care of others

## 1 GET GOOD SLEEP

Adults need an average of 7-9 hours of sleep for peak performance. Give yourself a relaxing sleep routine, shut off any screens 30 minutes before bedtime, and stay on a regular sleep schedule to get the most restful sleep (try setting a *bedtime* alarm). Check out [www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org) for more tips on a healthy sleep routine.



## 2 NOURISH AND MOVE YOUR BODY

Our mental health is inseparable from our physical health, so treat your body well to feel your best. Avoid processed foods, eat a colorful diet to capture a diversity of nutrients, and drink plenty of water. Exercise, especially cardio, has an amazing impact on our mood. They don't call it a "runners high" for nothing. Give yourself permission to start slow if you are just getting back into exercise, but make sure to move your body every day. Treat your body the way you would like to feel.



## 3 CONNECT WITH OTHERS

We as people are pack animals and feel our best when we are in trusting and healthy relationships. Consider volunteering your time, calling an old friend, or meeting up with someone IRL (in real life) to feel connected to others. Look for friendships that allow you to talk honestly and authentically about how you are feeling.



## 4 BREATHE DEEPLY

Slow, deep breaths will calm the nervous system in a moment of stress. If it is hard to catch your breath, focus your attention on calmly exhaling your breath all the way and trying again. Let all of your worries float away for a moment and redirect your attention back to your breath, over and over again.



## 5 DO SOMETHING FUN

(EVEN IF YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE IT!) With stress and overwhelm it can be easy to forget to save time for fun, but this is an essential part of emotional wellness. Give yourself the chance to stimulate new positive feelings by making time to do at least one fun activity everyday. Be creative, try new things, and experiment.



## 6 GIVE YOURSELF CREDIT

We tend to focus on the negative when we are stressed, which leads to more and more anxiety and depression. Take a moment to pause and reflect on at least 3 things that you have done well today. Give yourself credit for even the little things. To start, you're reading about self-care right now, so that's great!



## 7 PRACTICE BALANCE AND MODERATION

Are you obsessing about work? Stuck on the couch? Eating too much or too little? Drinking a little too much? Notice if you're relying too heavily or not enough on any one habit to manage stress. Look for diverse coping strategies so that you don't get stuck in a rut. Ask others how they manage their stress and try something new.



## 8 FIND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Take a step back and look at the bigger picture of your life. What motivates you to keep going on a difficult day? What do you hope to accomplish in your life? Who is important to you? What is pushing you forward? When this moment feels tough, look ahead to hopes for the future.

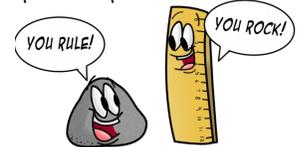


Taking care of yourself doesn't mean "me first", it means "me too"

L.R. KNOST

DON'T FORGET YOUR BACKSIDE!

The tags on your appreciation bag are meant to be re-used as a way to send a message of positivity to a coworker. You can sign your name or pass the message anonymously.



IT'S SUPPOSED TO RELIEVE STRESS...



## Got Ideas?

We'd love your contributions! You can speak to your supervisor, your TIC Committee Dept. Rep or email [cchahal@guidancecenter.net](mailto:cchahal@guidancecenter.net)

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