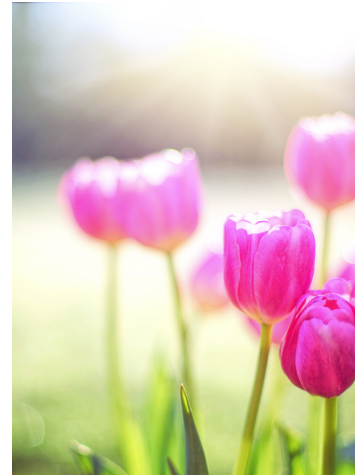




# MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

A monthly newsletter by **BRIDGES'** Workplace Wellness Coordinator & Trainer Justin Frisbie



## April: Stress Awareness Month!

April is associated with springtime, new beginnings, and a time to bloom which actually isn't a coincidence! April comes from the Latin verb "Aperire" which means "to open." Much like the flowers and trees, it's a time to bloom, start fresh, and shed those cool weather layers. The month of April is designated as "Stress Awareness Month" and has been recognized every April since 1992, but this year it seems particularly important.

**How well are you coping with stress right now?**



### What is Stress?

stress is a reaction to a situation where a person feels anxious or threatened. Learning to cope with our stress and finding healthy ways to deal with these situations can go a long way in living a healthy and positive life. We all experience stress – yet we may experience it in very different ways - The most common signs are physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension. Learning healthy ways to cope and getting the proper care and support can help reduce stressful feelings and symptoms. Join us in this newsletter as we explore healthy ways to deal with our stress!

30  
DAY

# STRESS AWARENESS MONTH CHALLENGE

2022

## Physical



### Leave your phone at home

Now that the weather is turning nicer, go for a long walk - without your phone!

### Eat well, Feel well

Find a recipe online for a tasty, healthy meal. Eating well is a great way of reducing stress and making yourself feel fresh!



### Put the 'NO' into notifications

Turn off all of your phone's notifications for the day. No alerts, no FOMO, no distractions.

### App-ly Yourself

Download a fitness app that can help reduce stress. From boxing round timers to weight loss apps and even just counting your daily steps!

### Go tech-free

Do a digital detox! Plan a tech free family day. No phones, no consoles or tablets for 24 hours!

### Send your stress down "stream"

Find a new workout or yoga routine on Youtube or through a class or gym live stream! Exercise is stress' kryptonite!



### Make time for tea (or coffee!)

Working from home? Take regular screen breaks - Even a few minutes can refresh you and do the trick!



### Laugh your cares away

Laughter is the best medicine! Make time to watch some TV, a movie or some online clips that always make you laugh.

### Take a breath or two

Try a breathing exercise - Known as "bubble breathing" or "box breathing". Youtube has breathing exercise videos, but Fitbits and Apple Watches also have built-in breathing exercises to lessen stress & tension.



### Get the blood pumping!

Try to do a few rounds of exercise throughout the day - You can do mountain climbers, burpees, jumping jacks or other body weight exercises anywhere without any equipment! Aim for 1-3 minute rounds to break up your day, as many times throughout the day as you'd like - Try to start with one round upon waking up, one round around lunch and one round at the end of the day, right before or after the work day ends!

## Mental

### Sounds Relaxing

Play some relaxing audio - Ocean waves, rain falling, bird sounds, blowing wind or ambient music to wind down before bed - All of which can be found on Spotify, Youtube and within the "Calm" app and other similar apps.

### Fancy That!

Go online to learn something new - Any random fact that you didn't know this morning! You'll learn something new without needing the news, which often focuses on the most negative outlets and stories

### Eliminate Some Emails

Overflowing inboxes can cause a lot of "mental clutter". Clear out those emails you've answered that are now just taking up space.

### Just 'Beat' It

Create an upbeat playlist on your phone or Youtube that never fail to give you a boost!



### Cleanse Your Social Media

Tidy up your Facebook, Twitter or Snapchat. Unfollow accounts, leave groups, reduce notifications and hide updates - All the stuff you never look at anyway.

### Let Them Wait

It's OK not to reply to friends' messages immediately. Maintaining a chat when you're already busy can create more stress.

### Get Productive

Download an app or two to boost your productivity, organization and to help reduce stress. It can be a sleep app, memory training app or a task manager or to-do list organizer.

### Peace in a Pod

There are some great stress management podcasts out there. Fire up a podcast app like Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Youtube or PocketCasts and see which ones appeal to you.

### Spring Cleaning!

De-clutter and clean your home, phone, notifications, the camera roll photos and unused apps. Your home and phone will benefit and so will your brain!

### Help Yourself

Phone apps like SAM (Self-Help for Anxiety Management) Can help to understand and manage your stress levels better - When in doubt, reach out! There is nothing wrong with reaching out to your primary care physician or therapists in your area if you are struggling with stress, anxiety, depression, etc.

## Emotional

### Facetime

Video call a friend, family member or someone else just to catch up and let them know they were in your thoughts!

### Spread Some Good Vibes

Choose your favorite quote, poem, song lyric or movie line and post it somewhere or share it on your social media feeds



### Cute, Cuddly and Calming

If you work from home, find time for your pets! Otherwise, you can always try to personalize your office space with what makes you happy, or google adorable kittens or puppies!

### Ready Player One

Gaming and competition is good! The pride and joy you get from achievement and progression can really lift your mood - Try to turn office tasks or jobs into achievement based games or friendly competition between co-workers!



### Brighten Someone's Day

Share some love! Message someone just to tell them that you're thinking of them.

### Buddy Check!

Reach out to a friend, family member or co-worker or even someone online you think may be struggling with stress, too. Just talking about it can help both of you.

### Start Off On the Right Foot

Write a note or set an automated reminder about something you were proud of today - Set the note somewhere you will see it when waking up or set the timer to go off within an hour of getting up the next day.

### Pic and Choose

Scroll through your phone's camera and find a pic that makes you smile, share it with a friend, coworker or with whoever else is in it!

### Plant Some "Compliment Seeds"!

Share something you like about a friend, family member or coworker today - It can be their positive attitude or work ethic, or the hair style they're rocking or new shoes they chose to wear today!

### Take a Note

Try journaling: Write down your thoughts and feeling so you can better understand them, it will encourage you to slow down, pay attention and think about what is going on in your life, and your feelings and reactions to this.



**The Madison County Council on Alcoholism & Substance Abuse, Inc.**  
*Providing Hope. Strengthening Families. Building Healthy Communities.*

This month's newsletter focuses on combatting stress in whatever way you can - by doing the small, everyday things to take care of yourself and to strive to keep your life and your thoughts simple and organized by focusing on what you CAN control and letting go of what you CANNOT.

## This Issue's Health Tips:



### The Starfish Story

An old man had a habit of early morning walks on the beach. One day, after a storm, he saw a human figure in the distance moving like a dancer.

As he came closer he saw that it was a young woman and she was not dancing but was reaching down to the sand, picking up a starfish and very gently throwing them into the ocean.

"Young lady," he asked,

"Why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?"

"The sun is up, and the tide is going out, and if I do not throw them in they will die."

"But young lady, do you not realize that there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it?

**You cannot possibly make a difference."**

The young woman listened politely, paused and then bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves, saying,

**"It made a difference for that one."**

*Remember, sometimes our actions, however insignificant they may seem to us, can have profound benefits and far reaching effects - Never discount your ability to change your own or others' lives.*



*"A calm and modest life brings more happiness than the pursuit of success combined with constant restlessness."  
- Albert Einstein*



*Sometimes the stress in our lives is not something we have the power to change.*

*Try to recognize when you don't have control, and let it go. Avoid getting anxious about situations that you cannot change.*

*Take control of your reactions and focus your mind on something that makes you feel calm and in control. I encourage you to make your own circle of control on your own and post it somewhere you can see everyday to help simplify your life and reduce invasive, negative thoughts!*

### **CONTACT US**

*We can connect you with local resources that will meet your needs.*

*We are available to offer support and hope:*

Call **(315) 697-3947**

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