

WFHTN Wellness Council Webinar Notes November 3, 2022

Welcome

- Hello everyone! Thank you for joining our November Wellness Council Webinar.
 - Please go ahead and type your agency in the chat to let us know who you're representing!
- Today's webinar agenda includes:
 - Mental Health During the Holidays
 - Guest Speaker: Here4TN
 - Quarterly Activity List
 - What's New?
 - Wellness Council Spotlight
 - Upcoming Schedule
 - Sharing

Mental Health During the Holidays

- The holidays can be a joy-filled season, but they can also be stressful and especially challenging for those impacted by mental illness.
- A National Alliance on Mental Illness study showed that 64% of people with mental illness report holidays make their conditions worse. For individuals and families coping with mental health challenges, the holiday season can be a lonely or stressful time, filled with anxiety and/or depression. If you're living with a mental health condition, stress can also contribute to worsening symptoms. Examples: in schizophrenia, it can encourage hallucinations and delusions; in bipolar disorder, it can trigger episodes of both mania and depression.
- Here are some suggestions for how you can reduce stress and maintain good mental health during the holiday season:
 - **Accept your needs.** Be kind to yourself! Put your own mental and physical well-being first. Recognize what your triggers are to help you prepare for stressful situations. Is shopping for holiday gifts too stressful for you? What is making you feel physically and mentally agitated? Once you know this, you can take steps to prevent or cope with stress.
 - **Write a gratitude list and offer thanks.** As we near the end of the year, it's a good time to reflect on what you are grateful for, then thank those who have supported you. Gratitude has been shown to improve mental health.
 - **Manage your time and don't try to do too much.** Prioritizing your time and activities can help you use your time well. Making a day-to-day schedule helps ensure you don't feel overwhelmed by everyday tasks and deadlines. It's okay to say no to plans that don't fit into your schedule or make you feel good. Check out the [WFHTN Time Management handout](#) for more tips.
 - **Be realistic.** The happy lives of the people shown in those holiday commercials are fictional. We all have struggled one time or another, and it's not realistic to expect otherwise. Sometimes, it's simply not possible to find the perfect gift or have a peaceful time with family.
 - **Set boundaries.** Family dynamics can be complex. Acknowledge them and accept that you can only control your role. If you need to, find ways to limit your exposure.
 - **Practice relaxation.** Deep breathing, meditation and progressive muscle relaxation are good ways to calm yourself. Taking a break to refocus can have benefits beyond the

immediate moment. We have a list of [yoga video resources](#) that could be a way for you to relax.

- **Exercise daily.** Schedule time to walk outside, bike or join a dance class. Whatever you do, make sure it's fun. Daily exercise naturally produces stress-relieving hormones in your body and improves your overall physical health. The WFHTN website has a [physical activity resource section](#) filled with tips for getting more active.
 - **Prioritize self-care.** Schedule time for activities that make you feel good. It might be reading a book, going to the movies, getting a massage, listening to music you love or taking your dog for a walk. It's okay to prioritize time to recharge. You can try out the [WFHTN Self-Care BINGO](#) over the holidays.
 - **Eat well.** With dinners, parties and cookie trays at every turn, our eating habits are challenged during the holiday season. Try to maintain a healthy diet through it all. Eating unprocessed foods, like whole grains, vegetables and fresh fruit is the foundation for a healthy body and mind. Eating well can also help stabilize your mood. The WFHTN website also has a [healthy eating resource section](#) filled with tips. You can also check out the numerous [recipes](#) while you're at it!
 - **Get enough sleep.** Symptoms of some mental health conditions, like mania in bipolar disorder, can be triggered by getting too little sleep. We have created a [two-week Sound Sleep Challenge](#) to help aid in better sleep.
 - **Avoid alcohol and drugs.** They don't reduce stress. In fact, they often worsen it. If you're struggling with substance use disorder, [there is help](#).
 - **Spend time in nature.** Studies show that time in nature reduces stress. Need to break away from family during a holiday gathering? Go for a walk. There are many events going on across Tennessee at the [state parks](#) that you can get involved with.
 - **Volunteer.** The act of volunteering can provide a great source of comfort. By helping others, you can feel less lonely or isolated and more connected to your community. [Tennessee Serves](#) and [Volunteer Tennessee](#) are two resources for finding volunteer opportunities near you.
 - **Find support.** Now I am going to toss it over to Matt Cramer from Here4TN to talk about the resources available to state employees.
- *Source:* <https://namica.org/blog/handling-stress-during-the-holiday-season/>

Guest Speaker – Matt Cramer from Here4TN

WFHTN Quarterly Activity List

- We are in the middle of Quarter 2!
- We have some suggestions to help you earn gold achievement level status this fiscal year.
- - As a reminder, our team strives to ensure we're hosting and providing challenges, activities and resources, so all you need to do is promote them.
 - Your Wellness Council activities are, of course, up to you to complete.
 - Here are some suggestions for November.
 - Share information related to:
 - [Take a Hike Day](#) (Nov. 17) & [TN State Parks After-Thanksgiving Hikes](#).
 - Great American Smokeout (Nov. 17)
 - [How to Help Someone Quit Smoking](#)
 - [How Much Do You Know About E-cigarettes?](#) quiz. ([Answer Key](#))
 - [E-cigarette webinar](#)

- Activities and webinars that you can promote:
 - **Let's Learn about Diabetes on Tuesday, Nov. 8 from 1-1:15 p.m. CT.** November is National Diabetes Month. Join Wellness Coordinator [Morgan McFarlane](#) for an interactive session to learn about diabetes prevention. Two attendees chosen at random will win a prize! [Download calendar invite.](#)
 - The next **4mind4body** is **Using Mindfulness to Make the Holidays Happier and presented by Here4TN and ActiveHealth** on Wednesday, Nov. 16 from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. CT ([Register.](#))
 - **Mindfulness Break** on Friday, Nov. 18 from 10-10:15 a.m. CT. There's so much to be grateful for this holiday season. Join this session to remind yourself of all the things there are to be grateful for with Thanksgiving just around the corner. [Download calendar invite.](#)
- Challenge you can participate in:
 - Our [Planksgiving Challenge](#) runs November 1-30. Do planks and give thanks! Gradually build your core strength and stability by completing planks for an amount of time provided on the [challenge tracker](#). Can't hold a plank the full time? Do what you can! There's a plank for all fitness levels – even if you have an injury or limitation. See [How to do a Plank](#) for tips and modifications. Five participants chosen at random will win a prize! Visit https://stateofennessee.formstack.com/forms/wfhtn_planksgiving2022 to sign up to join a Teams chat with fellow plankers by Friday, Nov. 4!

2023 Annual Awards Celebration

- **Nominate Now!**
 - We wanted to remind you that you can nominate your Wellness Council (or another agency's) for one or more of our Wellness Awards this fiscal year. The awards have been updated for this year and include:
 - Communicator of the Year, Innovator Award, Engagement Award, Breakthrough Wellness Council, Thinking Outside the Desktop Award and the WFHTN All-Star
 - [Submit your nominations.](#)
 - [List of awards.](#)

What's New?

- **Wellness Events**
 - Grab our November daily wellness calendar, events flyer and see our virtual events on our Wellness Events page under the Activities & Challenges drop-down menu: <https://www.tn.gov/wfhtn/challenges/wellness-events.html>
- **Focus Groups**
 - Our team has been brainstorming ways to reach more employees. Something we are considering is creating focus groups of employees from different agencies and regions of the state. We hope to gain input on programming, topics of interest, engagement and more. During our December Wellness Council webinar, we will have a poll to get your insight on best ways we might be able to do this.
- **WFHTN YouTube Videos**
 - Our team continues to create new, informative and fun YouTube videos you can share and enjoy!

- Be sure to check them out and share them with your employees. Make sure you subscribe to our YouTube Channel at our **NEW** YouTube handle: <https://www.youtube.com/@wfhtn> so you never miss a new video!

Wellness Council Spotlight

- **World Heart Day (DGS)**
 - In honor of World Heart Day, Department of General Services' employees wore red.
- **Salad-A-Day (DIDD)**
 - Throughout the month of October, employees in the middle Tennessee regional office at the Department of Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities were challenged to enjoy a salad a day. Pictured are some of the delicious salads enjoyed throughout the month!
- **Bike Challenge**
 - The Department of Labor and Workforce Development hosted their second annual October Bike Ride Challenge. They invited all agencies to join. This year, there were 76 participants from 14 agencies!
 - More than half of the participants opted into a Microsoft Teams group chat where they talked about their favorite rides, equipment, shared pictures and offered words of encouragement.
 - Pictured are employees (and some of their furry friends) from the departments of Labor & Workforce Development, Transportation, Environment & Conservation, Correction and Health!
- **Pink Photos**
 - Thank you for honoring Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October and showing off your pink! Pictured:
 - [TOP LEFT] Department of Health South Central Regional Office switchboard team
 - [BOTTOM LEFT] Department of Health West Tennessee Regional Office participating in the Wear a Little Purple with Your Pink Campaign for Breast Cancer Awareness and Domestic Violence Awareness
 - [TOP RIGHT] Communications team from Benefits Administration at the Department of Finance & Administration
 - [BOTTOM RIGHT] Human Resources employees walking in the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer event at Nissan Stadium on Oct. 15.
 - [SLIDE 31] Employees at the Department of Revenue held their annual PINK PATROL fundraiser and collected donations for National Breast Cancer Foundation and the fight against breast cancer. Their Communications team even created a video so employees could learn more about the cause! To date, 2022 has been the largest year of collections since they started in 2019 – donating over \$3,200 this year!
- **Fall Photo Contest**
 - The Department of Correction hosted a Fall Photo Contest. Thirteen participants submitted 29 amazing photos of landscapes from across the state. Voting is underway. As you can see, it won't be easy to pick the winner.
- **Shred Your Stress**
 - We were delighted 180 employees participated in our Shred Your Stress Challenge in October! Our five prize winners are being tabulated now. Pictured are some of the messages shared in our Microsoft Teams chat:

- [LEFT] Lola M. Justice commented that, “I find my children's pets relaxing and funny. This is my Grand Kitty Shadow.”
- [MIDDLE] Lori Galbreath shared a joke that made her laugh.
- [RIGHT] Jennifer Terranera sent out some positivity!
- **Planksgiving Challenge**
 - Several agencies have thrown their hats in the ring to participate in this month's Planksgiving Challenge. Participants have the option to complete wall, modified or full planks. They can choose to join the photo contest and submit photos for a chance to win most creative, funniest and most challenging plank. The agency with the most participation (based on number of submissions of photos and challenge trackers) will win. Good luck to everyone competing!
- **Department of General Services**
 - The STREAM division within the Department of General Services held a super fun Putt Putt and Potluck event. They used to do this annually prior to the start of the pandemic and were excited to hold this tradition again. The courses were set up around the office. They had prize categories, some of which included “Most Unique Design”, “Most Challenging Hole”, and they even gave a prize to the participant with the LOWEST golf score. So many fun and creative designs and so much delicious food!

Upcoming Schedule

- **December Wellness Council Webinar**
 - Thursday, Dec. 1 from 9-9:45 a.m. CT
- **Quarter 2 Activity List (October-December)**
 - We invite you to use us to help you meet your desired achievement level this quarter. Your Wellness Coordinator can track your Wellness Council’s efforts, as well as provide suggested strategies through the end of this calendar year. Please don’t hesitate to reach out anytime.
- *For our full event list, please visit <https://www.tn.gov/wfhtn/challenges/wellness-events.html>*

Your Updates

- If you haven’t already, please let us know in the chat which agency you’re representing.
- Let’s take some time to share what’s going on in your agency. What wellness activities, challenges or programs would you like to share?

Questions

If you have any questions, we’d be happy to answer those now.

Thank you for joining our Wellness Council webinar! As always, please reach out to your Wellness Coordinator if you have any follow-up questions or suggested discussion items. Have a great rest of your day!