



Behavioral Health Department

January, 2024 NEWSLETTER



January is Self-Love Month

Two characteristics commonly associated with self-love are having appreciation and respect for yourself. This includes putting in the effort to take care of both your physical and mental health. Although life can become hectic and busy at times, it's important to prioritize yourself and to treat yourself with a little love and kindness. When you have self-love for yourself, this involves making choices that benefit your own well-being and contentment. While the most common misconception people have about self-love is that it's simply the act of indulging in distractions like taking baths or getting massages, loving yourself goes beyond splurging on pleasures like these.

7 Ways to Practice Self-Love

It's not easy advocating for yourself and putting your own needs ahead of everything else happening in your life. However, it's easier to incorporate self-love into your lifestyle if you make it a daily practice instead of it being something you do every once in a while. You can incorporate self-love into your lifestyle, when you:

Focus on Improving Your Well-Being and Mental Health

Your physical and mental health are directly correlated, meaning they can influence one another. Essentially, what you feel physically can impact you mentally and emotionally as well. When you nourish and take care of your body, this action positively influences your mental health, too. For example, one way you can maintain your well-being and ward off illness is by practicing healthy habits like eating and sleeping well. Remember to give yourself enough time each day to take care of yourself and recognize that you have value.

Be Kind to Yourself; Embrace Self-Compassion

Self-compassion is when you acknowledge the mistakes you've made and the fact that you have imperfections, and accepting all of this with kindness and without judgement. There are three components of self-compassion, they include:

1. Self-kindness: Being kind towards ourselves compared to exhibiting negative responses like judgement, criticism, or shame.
2. Common humanity: Recognizing that everyone makes mistakes at one time or another, and messing up doesn't mean we are isolated individuals who are unworthy of love and belonging.
3. Mindfulness: Viewing mistakes with a mindful perspective instead of over-analyzing all of our failures.

Stop Comparing Yourself to Others

When there are people around us who've accomplished something, whether it's a friend receiving a work promotion or a neighbor having the time and dedication to get in great shape, it can be hard for us not to be jealous of their achievements. Comparing yourself to other people can cause stress. While sometimes comparison and competition can be factors that help motivate a person to push themselves to do better, oftentimes, social comparisons just result in a person not feeling good enough and causing stress, anxiety, guilt, and shame.

Set Personal Boundaries

When it comes to stress management, sometimes you need to draw the line. To preserve your energy, you'll find that you will need to say "no" at work and to your family on occasions. One-sided relationships on the other hand, are when an unequal distribution of energy, control, and thoughtfulness is experienced. Recognize what your needs are and be considerate towards yourself by setting boundaries with the people in your life.

Forgive Yourself and Move On

Stop self-loathing. Practice forgiveness for your past mistakes and find ways to begin healing. If you want to incorporate self-love into your daily life, don't ruminate over your mistakes and regrets. Instead of blaming yourself for things that were likely beyond your control, turn to self-forgiveness and accept that you did your best.

Surround Yourself with a Support System of Loving People

It's vital to have social support. Seek out the love of your family; otherwise, if your connection to your family is strained or they're no longer in your life, you can strengthen the relationships you have with your friends and community instead, so you're able to receive the necessary care and support from them. Break away from one-way friendships that are toxic and energy-draining. Your goal should be to surround yourself with people who believe in you, want to see you succeed, and who are there to support you when you most need someone on your side to get you through the difficult times.

Change Your Perspective from Negative to Positive

Positive thinking isn't about ignoring your problems, instead it's about adopting a positive outlook on life including being full of gratitude and open to an array of different possibilities. If we let anger and hatred consume us, then this could be harmful to our mental and emotional well-being; however, this can easily be resolved if we let go of any resentments or grudges we hold. Speak kindly to yourself. Giving yourself positive affirmations is a great way to boost self-esteem and reduce whatever social fears you have. Remind yourself that you're a kind person, who's doing the best you can.

Source

CERTIFIED PEER SPECIALIST SERVICES

A Peer Specialist is an individual with lived recovery experience who has been trained and certified to help their peers gain hope and move forward in their own recovery. By sharing experiences, peers bring hope to people in recovery and promote a sense of belonging within the community (SAMSHA)

PEER SUPPORT IS..

- Delivered by individuals who have common lived experiences.
- People with mental health and/or substance use disorders have a unique power to help one another based on shared connection and deep understanding of this experience.
- Peer Specialists offer support, strength, and hope to their peers, which allows for personal growth, wellness, and recovery. (SAMSHA)
- Peer support is ongoing, available, and flexible.
- Peer support enhances other health care services by creating emotional, social and practical assistance necessary for staying healthy and managing. (Peers for Progress)

WHAT SERVICES DO PEER SPECIALISTS PROVIDE?

Peer specialists support their peers both individually and in small groups.

- Help peers create individual service plans based on recovery goals and steps to achieve those goals
- Use recovery-oriented tools to help their peers address challenges
- Assist others to build their own self-directed wellness plans
- Support peers in their decision-making
- Offer a sounding board and a shoulder to lean on...and more!

PROVIDING HOPE

Modeling recovery, engaging, and connecting are just some of the ways peers make a difference in the lives of others. The bond that is essential in peer support means that both the person giving support and the person receiving support benefit from the relationship. (MHA)

SERVICES INCLUDE:

Education and skill- building

- ⇒ Wellness planning
- ⇒ Crisis planning
- ⇒ Self- advocacy skills
- ⇒ Budgeting

Services that help

- ⇒ Identify strengths and use the strengths to reach goals
- ⇒ Identify and overcome barriers to participate in community resources

Connect with resources

- ⇒ Visiting community resources to familiarize
- ⇒ Teaching and modeling skills needed to utilize resources
- ⇒ Wrap around services
- ⇒ Cultural wellness and healing

Building relationships and encouraging community based activities

- ⇒ Employment
- ⇒ Relationships
- ⇒ Physical activity
- ⇒ Self- directed hobbies

Using SAMHSA's Eight Dimensions of Wellness to guide a holistic approach to recovery, a Certified Peer Specialist will work with you to discuss meaningful goals in one or more of these important dimensions; financial, social, spiritual, occupational, physical, intellectual, and emotional. Each of the dimensions contribute to your overall wellness and individual recovery.

Tips to Help You Be More Organized

Do you have a messy room in your home that you are embarrassed by? Have you been unable to find an item you've been looking for? Is your desk at work a mess from having paperwork cluttered on top of it? If so, factors like these could be what's causing you to experience bouts of stress and anxiety.

The solution: Organization. While cleaning your room won't automatically cure your depression, the action may be enough to help decrease its intensity. Making a conscious effort to become more organized—especially if this extends to multiple areas of your life—can significantly reduce stress levels, as there will be less rushing when you need to find things or complete tasks.

However, putting in the effort to become more organized isn't easy. As not everyone's definition of organization is the same, since one person's technique may not always be compatible with another individual's way of doing things. If you decide to try becoming more organized, consider asking yourself these questions: What does "organized" mean to you? At what point are you "organized enough"? Which areas of your life are the most important that you want to get organized?

In celebration of January being Get Organized Month, here are some tips to help you stay organized; the information below comes from the website, verywellmind (<https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-be-more-organized-6541406>).



Choose an Area to Focus on

Time and effort are needed when it comes to trying to get organized, so it can be overwhelming when you tackle multiple things at once. Start off by picking an area to focus on and do your best to get everything for it under control. For example, you could start by organizing your closet, your personal documents, or your office desk at work.

After being able to organize one area of your life, you'll be able to move forward and begin tackling other areas. The more time you practice improving your organization skills, the better you will get at being able to use them.

Write a To-Do List

You can write in a planner and list all the things you need to get done. Otherwise, if you'd rather have things readily available that can be pulled up in seconds, another option is to maintain a list on an electronic device like on a phone, tablet, or laptop. There are apps you can access on these devices to help with creating to-do lists, setting up reminders, and tracking the progress made on tasks.

Separate lists can be made for all the different areas in your life, such as 'Office Work,' 'House Chores,' 'Grocery List,' etc. When you begin listing tasks, you may want to sort them from most urgent to least, so you can complete the most important tasks first.

Remember when putting together your to-do list always include things that need to be done immediately. Otherwise, if you don't write it down, you may end up forgetting about the task completely.

Set Personal Goals

Think over what goals you want to achieve and then write them down. After determining what your goals are, break each one down into smaller, more manageable steps. Set deadlines of when you want to complete each step by and keep track of the progress you are able to make.

For instance, say you are looking for a job, the steps on your to-do list could include actions such as the following: writing down your previous education and job experiences on a resume, applying to companies you have an interest in, and sending follow-up emails.

Clean Up Cluttered Physical Spaces

Make it a priority to keep the physical spaces you interact with clean, such as your home, your garage, your vehicle, and your office at work. To avoid cluttered physical spaces, try to have surfaces be clean and clutter-free for as long as possible.

Since cleaning can be very time consuming, tackle one area at a time. Identifying what things you want to keep and whatever you don't need, could either be thrown out or donated to charity.

Clear Digital Clutter

Digital spaces are another area that can become disorganized if no attempts of management are made. To free up space on your phone, you can uninstall apps that you don't use and also delete photos, videos, and documents that you no longer need to have on hand.

For your laptop, consider keeping important documents all together in one space and make sure a password is required to access this information. Create folders to sort your emails and delete junk mail from your account. Unsubscribe from newsletters that you've stopped reading and no longer keep up with. If you don't need a browser tab open, close it or create a bookmark to return back to it later.

Return Things to Their Designated Places

What you can do while cleaning is decide where each thing you come across will go, in other words, choose a designated spot you can return an item back to after using it. When you have fixed spots for your things, you are less likely to lose track of those items, as you have a specific location you have in mind for it to be.

Use a Calendar for Time Management

Physical or digital calendars can be used to keep track of:

- Appointments
- Meetings
- Project deadlines
- Social commitments
- Birthdays
- Anniversaries

By writing down important dates in a calendar, this will ensure you are reminded of these events ahead of time and you'll be less likely to miss out on them.

Digitize Important Documents

Cut down on the amount of clutter you have by digitizing important paperwork, this includes other paper items as well like recipes and photographs.

When documents are stored digitally, not only does this guarantee that you have copies on backup if the originals were to be destroyed, but you also have the ability to easily access those documents whenever you like and can share them digitally with others.

Use Organizational Tools

For physical spaces, there are a multitude of storage options available that can be used to help you organize items such as clothes, shoes, jewelry, makeup, utensils, and paper documents. For digital spaces, you can use your electronic devices to access apps and online tools that you can use to organize your reminders, emails, and calendar.

10 Ways to Boost Your Creativity

Whether you are a writer, artist, or hobbyist, you may find yourself experiencing a slump in creativity and this can happen at any time. In celebration of January being International Creativity Month, here are 10 ideas to help jumpstart your creativity; the information below comes from the website, LifeHack (<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/boosting-your-creativity-10-great-ways.html>).

1) Calm Down—Learn to Relax

Overthinking stomps creativity and when this happens, the best thing you can do is to not indulge in those thoughts. When you are relaxed, not only does this help to rejuvenate your mind, but you may find that your creativity is able to flow much more easier. There are a multitude of ways a person could relax and finding the ones that you enjoy whether it's something simple like taking a walk outside or playing your favorite outdoor sport, will free your mind.

2) Start Meditating

If you've ever found yourself overwhelmed by hectic thoughts constantly running through your mind, try meditation to relieve your stress and calm your inner dialogue. Practicing meditation promotes inner calmness, helping a person to be more open minded and allowing for creative thoughts to flow more naturally.

3) Write Down Ideas

A great habit to encourage creativity is to write down any ideas you have as soon as they pop into your head. The benefit of keeping track of your ideas is that you have an open mind to start thinking up other ideas and this process also means you won't have to worry about forgetting your previous ideas, since you've already written them down.

4) Write Lists to Expand Your Creativity

Jotting down lists about the things in your life that you care about and that you find interesting can be influential on the state of your creative thought process, as engaging in this activity can be productive and help you to generate new ideas.

5) Stop Being Overly Critical of Yourself

Doubting yourself can lead to a barrier that disrupts your flow of creative ideas. To overcome this barrier it's important to realize that you are doing things the best you can and you need to stop criticizing yourself. Everyone has self-limiting beliefs; however, by actively making an effort to let go of those negative perceptions of yourself, you come out not only more resilient, but also more patient towards the creative thought process.

6) Put Less Pressure on Yourself to Meet Expectations

For many people, they get hung up by their expectations and they stress about the outcome. Instead of fretting over outcome expectations, focus your attention towards putting love and passion into all your creations going forward, as this will increase the likelihood of you feeling satisfied with the creative endeavors you do end up pursuing.

7) Spend Time Reading

Reading relaxes and stimulates the mind. Aside from your mind being introduced to new ways of thinking, reading can also inspire you and help to increase your creativity. If you find reading daunting or a "chore," don't force it. Instead begin by setting aside 30 minutes a day to read a book, choose one with a topic that interests you. The book can be about anything that catches your attention, like your favorite hobby, a historical figure you admire, or a place you want to travel to one day. Once you get into the habit of reading a set amount each day, you'll find yourself reading one or two books a month with little effort or sacrifice.

8) Start Listening to Classical Music

Listening to certain songs and compositions can lead to your brain functioning much more efficiently and you may find this helps you to be more creative. This is especially true for classical music like Mozart, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, etc. The idea that listening to music will enhance one's thinking abilities is something that's been proven by today's science research. Certain frequencies in music including isochronic tones and binaural beats has a direct effect on the brain, not only helping to improve the brain's performance ability, but also increasing creativity.

9) Try Something New

To boost creativity and to help come up with new ideas, make an effort to do something new that you've never done before. Maybe you'd be interested in doing something you've always thought you'd enjoy (for example: skydiving, bungee jumping, etc.) but held off on doing for one reason or another.

10) Practice Makes Perfect—Practice Every Day

If you practice your hobby or craft every day, even if you're just able to devote a small amount of time to it, this will help to keep your mind stimulated and open to creative ideas. For example, if you enjoy writing, then make it a habit to try writing something new every day.

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-ANNOYANCE-

Name it to Tame it



If you have ever seen the movie, "Despicable Me" you probably know what "annoyance" is. The main character of this movie is Gru, who's a villain who wants recognition for his evil deeds and to be seen as a real threat. In order to gain this kind of respect, Gru decides he's going to pull off a big heist and steal the moon. However, Vector, a rival villain is able to steal an item that Gru needs to capture the moon – a shrink ray, forcing Gru to put his plan on hold until he's able to steal the device from Vector. This leads to Gru trying to break into Vector's lair, so he can steal the shrink ray, but Vector is always one step ahead of him and uses his technology to throw a wrench in all of Gru's plans. Gru nonetheless doesn't give up and after seeing 3 orphan girls be allowed in, so Vector can order cookies, Gru comes up with a plan to use the 3 girls as decoys to unknowingly sneak in his technology when they deliver Vector's cookies.

For this plan to work, Gru adopts all 3 girls; however, he isn't an ideal parental figure and is disinterested in bonding with them. The main characteristic that Gru displays when interacting with the girls for the first time is for them to be quiet and obedient, but quickly realizes that children are messy and hyperactive. Even though Gru's annoyed by the children and their behavior, he knows that once the robotics are ready, his plan to have the technology snuck in with the cookies to Vector's lair can be carried out and he'll finally get the shrink ray he needs for his heist.

However, after Gru spends more time with the 3 girls, he finds that they aren't as annoying as he once perceived them to be and he realizes that they actually bring him joy, making Gru question himself on whether the 3 girls he adopted are more important to him than stealing the moon.

To learn more about annoyance, including tips of how to handle annoying behavior in children and what things you could do if you feel annoyed, visit the links below:

<https://parentology.com/kids-are-annoying-its-all-in-how-you-handle-it/>

And

<https://www.verywellmind.com/8-things-to-do-if-you-feel-irritable-5081875>