

# Targeting Wellness Newsletter

## Good News for Good Health!

May 2020

Debby Schiffer, Wellness Director for BURLCO & TRICO JIFs



The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to create a new normal for ourselves, our employees and our families. These changes and the uncertainties of what lies ahead are key components to consider as we all return to the workplace. This monumental shift in what was once acceptable practices must now embrace a renewed sense of focus on our employees feeling safe, healthy and inspired. Recalling our Theme for 2020 of Stress Management; transitioning back to a new normal work day will undoubtedly create some anxiety and fear. Let's help our employees feel that THEIR safety and wellness come first!

### *In this issue*

- 1 Prepare for Post-pandemic with self reflection
- 2 Areas of self-care: how are you doing?
- 3 Managing the transition back to "not so normal"
- 4 Create a Stress Relief kit
- 5 Deep breathing to prepare for stressful environments
- 6 In honor of "Men's Health Month"
- 7 Recipe Corner



## Preparing For Post-Pandemic Through Self-Reflection

During the last two and a half months, no doubt you have experienced many different emotions created by the unforeseen, unbelievable, and uncertain crisis we all encountered. Perhaps during this time you learned a new skill, or became your child(ren)'s fill-in school teacher. Maybe you were able to exercise more, eat healthier home-cooked meals, got more sleep and maybe maintained or even lost a little weight. Or maybe not.

Whatever transpired over these last several weeks, reflect on what you learned, about yourself. Maybe you realized strengths you weren't aware of that helped you be more resilient and adaptable. Or maybe you realize you do not handle stress in the healthiest of ways. Regardless, show yourself some self-compassion and congratulate yourself because in both situations, it required **being aware**. That's a reason to celebrate!

Being aware and acknowledging the situation is the first step towards positive change and growth. Give yourself some credit for doing as well as you did.

Take a moment to think about how you would respond to these self-reflection questions. You may find it helpful to write down your thoughts, sometimes seeing the words on paper helps you process them and begin to see patterns you may not have other-wised noticed. But not writing down your responses can be just as beneficial....it's more about taking time to **reflect, reframe and reset** that matters most. This self "assessment" can be done at any time. One or two of the questions may become your "resiliency reset" questions when you notice you are ruminating or self criticizing.

- ★ **Am I taking anything for granted?** If so, what can you do right now to move towards a more grateful existence?
- ★ **Am I demonstrating a healthy perspective?** If not, what can you change that you are ready to tackle?
- ★ **Am I having negative thoughts before I fall asleep?** What is one thing you can do to help clear your mind?
- ★ **Am I taking care of myself physically?** If not or if there is room for improvement, what are you ready to add to our daily/weekly routine to put your physical well-being as a priority?
- ★ **Am I taking care of myself emotionally?** If not, what one thing could you start right now that would allow you to move towards the life you desire?

As you transition back to the workplace and resume your dealings with the public inside your buildings, there is no doubt you will experience many different emotions, some justified and some may be automatic without an obvious trigger, but will still feel real just the same. Be patient with yourself. And start to strengthen your resilience and adaptability by practicing self-care.



## Areas of Self-Care: How Are YOU Doing?

The concepts of self-care are not new. We all know what we should and shouldn't do to help our body, mind and spirit be as strong as possible. But that isn't always something we remember to do in the break of a stressful life. Let's face it...there will ALWAYS be stress in our lives. Our goal should not be to try and eliminate it, but rather, cope and adapt to it. That is where we find empowerment and overall well-being. Where are you in the following areas of self-care?

### Physical Self-Care:

This involves movement of the body, health, nutrition, sleep, relaxation, physical embrace and intimacy.

- ★ Going for a walk on the beach or your favorite park (or golf course)
- ★ Learning a new dance or exercise routine
- ★ Getting enough sleep
- ★ Eating nourishing foods
- ★ Having an Epsom salt bath

### Psychological Self-Care:

This involves learning new things, being able to assess your choices, finding intrinsic motivation, practicing stillness and creativity.

- ★ Practicing meditation or mindfulness
- ★ Journaling
- ★ Reading a book
- ★ Learning or teaching a new skill
- ★ Doing a digital detox

### Emotional Self-Care:

This is when you understand and are in touch with your emotions, you increase empathy and manage stress effectively and develop compassion for self and others.

- ★ Writing a gratitude journal
- ★ Saying no (nicely J)
- ★ Making time to reflect on feelings and developing emotional literacy through awareness
- ★ Practicing self-compassion

### Financial Self-Care:

This involves being responsible with your finances, (living expenses, income, insurance, savings, retirement, etc) and having a conscious relationship with money.

- ★ Knowing where your income is coming in
- ★ Knowing what expenses are due and paying on time
- ★ Opening and saving money wisely

*Clearly our self-care involves many components in life.*

*Each can be addressed individually yet each will positively or negatively impact ones overall well-being.*



### Environmental Self-Care:

This involves having an organized, clutter-free work and home environment, Breathing clean air. Shelter and safety.

- ★ Decluttering your home or work area
- ★ Recycling if possible
- ★ Monitoring your use of technology/social media
- ★ Maintaining a clean and safe home and work environment

### Social Self-Care:

This involves having a supportive group and network of people around you that you trust and can turn to when needed. Having a sense of belonging and connectedness.

- ★ Belonging to 3 groups or communities outside of work
- ★ Honoring your commitment to other people (follow through on what you say you will do)
- ★ Asking for help when needed
- ★ Meeting new people

### Professional Self-Care:

This involves sharing your strengths and gifts with others, having clear professional boundaries while living your purpose.

- ★ Eating a nourishing lunch each day at work (don't give in to peer pressure)
- ★ Negotiating your needs
- ★ Knowing your role and responsibilities
- ★ Attending professional development sessions or having coaching

### Spiritual Self-Care:

This involves your beliefs and values, those things that are important and guide you in life. This includes pursuing your noble goal and the practice that support you developing spiritual awareness.

- ★ Practicing meditation or mindfulness
- ★ Journaling
- ★ Reading a book
- ★ Learning or teaching a new skill
- ★ Doing a digital detox

## Managing The Transition Back To “Normal”

*Everyone has had their own unique experience during this pandemic. Some may have lost a loved one or know someone who got sick (for which I am very sorry). Therefore, everyone's emotional reaction to transitioning back to “business as not-so-usual” will no doubt be met with various emotion such as disbelief, fear or even anger.*

*Minimizing the potential for exposure among your employees is of top priority. Some of this you may have already made provisions to change.*

### **Germ Alleviation:**

- \* Increase communication beyond emails to remind employees of new policies, updated cleaning procedures, and best practices in germ mitigation.
- \* Consider a temporary ban on refillable cups and reusable silverware and only use disposable solutions.
- \* Create staggered lunch schedules to allow not only social distancing but also more time to sanitize common areas.
- \* Provide more outside space that is clean and shaded which can offer an alternative for large gatherings or somewhere to “escape” when an employee needs a stress break.
- \* Discover ways to reduce the number of surfaces employees have to touch throughout the day.
- \* Promote stand-up meetings where you typically had sit-down meetings to reduce contact with conference room, seating, and gathering areas. (Side benefit: standing meetings are usually shorter in length ☺) And having these meetings with less people present at any one time would be encouraged for a while too.

### **Minimize Stress and Create A Safe Haven:**

- \* Create a “Stress Relief” kit\* for each employee. This could be in addition to a “safety” kit that may include sanitizer, masks, gloves and a safety guide. Your wellness and/or SIP funds can be used to stock your kit. (see page 5 for some idea on what to include in your kit)
- \* Great time to start a new daily routine with your staff that will encourage setting a positive intention for the day and offer each other support to get through it together. For my First Responders, perhaps it will be a new “tactical procedure” for mental well-being.
- \* If you don't already have one, consider giving more thought into creating a “quiet space” or “Zen Den”. As things get back to more of a routine, having an area where folks can lay out their own mat and do some yoga stretching or meditation would help manage stress.
- \* Consider making an area for virtual workout classes. Encourage walks outside.
- \* Remind all employees of your Employee Assistance Program, the benefits and services, available to them any time they need.

[www.nelsonworldwide.com](http://www.nelsonworldwide.com)

Continue to follow the recommendations set forth by the CDC on social distancing, cleaning practices of common areas and options for wearing protective gear, like cloth face masks

*The effects of the global pandemic will reflect the flaws of our past but will also give us the opportunity to emerge stronger than before.*

-NELSON

*“When we feel powerless against something greater than us, a little control over one's immediate environment can bring peace of mind.”*



## What is a "Stress Relief" Kit?

I stress about stress  
before there's  
even stress  
to stress  
about!



Think of it as you would a survival preparedness or car emergency kit. You have tools and products to help you through a specific situation. Some ideas may include:

- \* **Herbal Teas**—while some may prefer alcohol during stressful times, that can actually heighten one's level of stress (and would be unacceptable at work). A better idea is reaching for a bag of herbal tea which can slow down the activity of the stress hormone known as cortisol. Some other benefits: boosts metabolism, improves mental alertness, helps your digestion, and can strengthen your immune system.
- \* **Dark Chocolate**—Although you should avoid stress eating, eating just **1.4 ounces (40 grams)** of dark chocolate a day could lower stress and anxiety levels. Now remember, more of a good thing does not mean it's better. And you'll want to aim for over 72% cocoa (or 100% Cacao). Don't worry, your taste buds will get used to less sweet in no time ☺ The higher the percentage the more antioxidants, called flavonoids, it will contain.
- \* **Personal Journal and Pen**—writing down our thoughts can help with our mental health. Focusing on what went right, what you accomplished and what you are grateful for creates more inner peace and happiness.
- \* **Headphones**—to allow for 2-5 minute meditation or music breaks. Or for noise-cancelling.
- \* **Coloring Book**—something relaxing to do on a break or lunch and can be a great distraction from worrying. Brain exercise and stimulation.
- \* **Essential Oils**—calming scents, like lavender, can help with relaxation. Peppermint can help with grounding if you find yourself dissociating or disconnecting.
- \* **Affirmation Cards or a daily "positive thought"**—repeating an inspirational word or phrase while really trying to connect the thought to a feeling can help to reprogram a calmer response when faced with future stressors.

### Various Mediation Apps:

- \* Insight Timer
- \* Headspace
- \* Evermind
- \* Stop, Think, Breathe
- \* Calm
- \* Simply Being



\* **Eye Pillow**—can help relieve tension in the eyes, can be used during meditation or yoga.

\* **A tennis ball**—this can help roll out tension spots in the body. Can be a great foot massage while sitting or standing at your desk. (Make sure your socks don't have any holes in them the day you decide to take off your shoe ☺).

*Use your own imagination and assemble your own kit. Maybe it would be a nice offering to your employees as they transition to public interaction once again.*





## Can You Prepare For Stressful Environments?

Think about our US Military. Think about our First Responders. These folks are taught to handle stressful environments. Some come out of training and succeed. Others do not. Why? Training oneself to respond in a controlled manner in an uncontrollable situation requires practicing those learned skills over and over and over again until they become automatic. When you find yourself in a stressful situation, what is the first thing you want to do?

**Find something you are able to control**—the one thing you are able to control is your breathing. This takes practice and patience with yourself. Example: Knowing the unbelievable stress of being strapped to a bomb filled with rocket fuel and shot into space, resulted in the NASA study of teaching their astronauts what they could control was their breathing.

We often don't even think about our breath throughout our day, yet without it we would not be here. When we become aware (mindful) and practice slowing it down, we provide our body with benefits beyond the standard respiration required to live.

**Diaphragmatic or Belly Breathing** is the most basic of breathing methods and therefore, should be the first one you'll want to master. It's very simple and requires only a few minutes of concentration.

1. Sit down comfortably, or lay down on a yoga mat, depending on personal preference.
2. Place one hand on your stomach, just below your ribcage. Place the second hand on the center of your chest near your heart.
3. Breathe in deeply through your nostrils and let your first hand be pushed out by your stomach. Your chest should remain stationary.
4. Breathe out through your lips, pursing them as if you were about to whistle or drink through a straw. Gently guide the hand on your stomach inwards, helping to press out the breath.
5. Slowly repeat between 3 and 10 times.

*When You Own  
Your Breath,  
Nobody  
Can Steal Your  
Peace.*



### Some Benefits of Deep Breathing:

- \* It ignites the parasympathetic nervous system which helps calm the body and reduce stress.
- \* Lowers your heart rate and blood pressure
- \* Helps cognitive functioning by supplying more oxygen to our brain, especially important for clearer thinking during a stressful situation.



## Men, This One's For You

A pilot clinical trial involving asymptomatic hormonally untreated male patients experiencing a consistently rising Prostate-specific Antigen or PSA level, were put on a plant-based diet and were studied for six months to determine if the level of intake of such food would have any impact in the rate their PSA levels rose over that time. Patients and their spouses were encouraged to adopt and maintain a plant-based diet. (PubMed.gov)

Findings revealed that those who were compliant with abstaining from all animal products saw a **regression** in their PSA level! However, knowing that it may be difficult for men to attempt this dietary path, let alone maintain it, the researchers did another study to determine what **ratio** between animal products and vegetables eaten (A:V) could be more self-sustainable and still show some degree of benefits.

*In brief, here are the findings:*

- \* Part of the group maintained a 2:1 (A:V) ratio and another group was able to maintain 1:1 (A:V) ratio.
- \* Their PSA doubling time, an estimate of how fast the tumor may be doubling in size, slowed from 21 months to 58 months only after 6 months of eating this way.
- \* The tumor did continue to grow with this part-time plant-based diet, however, the expansion of the tumor slowed down.

(note that those who went full plant-based, in one year not only did the tumor stop growing, it actually trended down which is an indication of tumor shrinkage!). Clearly going plant-based is the desirable choice but let's get real. You or the males in your life may be saying "there is no way I'm ready to give up animal products". Okay, so what is the **worst** animal product to avoid and the **best** vegetables to add, if that is all you are willing to change?

**Worst animal product for PSA progression: Eggs and Poultry**

- \* There was a 2-fold risk of prostate cancer progression among men who ate the most eggs (eating less than a single egg a day)
- \* Men with high prognostic risk disease and high levels of poultry, had a quadruple increased risk of progression eating a single serving of chicken or turkey a day)

*If you could only add one thing to your diet that's plant-based, what would be the best thing to add?* **Cruciferous vegetables**

- \* Adding even a single serving a day of either broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower or kale could cut the risk of prostate cancer progression (defined as cancer coming back, spreading to the bone or even death) by more than 50%!
- \* The ratio may also be useful for cancer prevention measures.

*Even a small change in your diet could have significantly positive effects on your health now and in the future!*

**"If you do not make time for your wellness, you will be forced to make time for your illness."**  
**#readThatAgain**



## Mango Black Bean Salad



Mango Black Bean Salad with corn, tomatoes, bell pepper and zesty lime comes together in 15 minutes. Fresh and healthy salad rich in protein and fiber that everyone will absolutely love. It's a win-win!

### Ingredients:

- 2 medium mangos, chopped
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 1 large bell pepper, chopped
- 1 cup corn, cooked or frozen (thawed)
- 15 – 19 oz can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1/2 cup cilantro, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp red onion, minced
- 2 tbsp olive oil, extra virgin
- 1 lime, juice of
- 2 tsp cumin, ground



### Directions:

1. In a large bowl, add mango, tomato, bell pepper, corn, black beans, cilantro, onion, olive oil, lime juice, cumin, salt, hot pepper flakes.
2. Gently stir to combine. If you have time, allow flavors to marry each other in the fridge for a few hours.
3. Add cooked quinoa, Farro or brown rice to make it one complete meal.

**Store:** Refrigerate covered for up to 24 hours. **Make Ahead:** Refrigerate without olive oil, lime juice and salt for up to 24 hours, and then add before serving.

### Notes:

- Make sure to drain and rinse canned beans with cold water. You do not want the liquid in a salad. Plus it will reduce sodium content.
- The "healthiest" canned beans are low sodium, organic and in BPA free cans.
- Avoid buying very soft mango for salad as it will become a mush.
- You can add one diced avocado. Just like with mango, use ripe but firm fruit. And remember it browns easily, so add before serving.
- To thaw frozen corn, run it under warm water in a colander and then drain

Debby Schiffer, Targeting Wellness LLC

JIF Wellness Director

Email: [debby\\_schiffer@targetingwellness.com](mailto:debby_schiffer@targetingwellness.com) Phone: 856-322-1220

