

A group of people are dining together at a restaurant. The table is set with a large spread of food, including a roasted turkey, various side dishes, and glasses of wine. The atmosphere is warm and social. The text 'COMMUNITY & EMOTIONAL' is overlaid in white, with a sunburst graphic above it.

COMMUNITY & EMOTIONAL

WELLNESS

Thrive

NOVEMBER TOOLKIT



Social well-being includes having a strong community and is important to our overall wellness because we all have a need for connection to the people around us. Many things can help you build a strong community, and some tips and tricks are included in the toolkit below.

Remember that your community doesn't have to be geographical. Examples of communities you can belong to include:

Your church community.

Your knitting group community.

Your coffee shop community.

Your school/work community.

Any communities bringing together people with special identities (diet, health, recovery, etc.).

Identify your passions through reading and journaling exercises, and then join groups or activities calling to those passions. You can check out the [Thrive website](#) for a list of ways to get involved with organizations and communities around Oklahoma.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Focus on Connections

Reflect on the meaning of the holidays and on the closeness of your relationships. It's not in the amount of money that you spend. Rather, it's in how much love and joy you share that will create the quality of the season. The beautifully wrapped presents and the food on the table are far less important than the people in your life.

Communicate consciously

Communicating consciously can prevent emotional strain with family. Before you speak, ask yourself these three questions: (1) Is what I am about to say true? (2) Is it necessary? (3) Is it kind?

Remember the season

Gratitude is a gift of conscious recognition that we have many blessings in our lives. Even in times when it seems things are going poorly, it can pay off to focus on the positive. Enjoy the day and be sure to tell those people in your life how much you appreciate them.

Perform random acts of kindness

Random acts of kindness are defined as any act in kindness where nothing is expected in return. It is the highest form of love. Perform a small act of kindness (or many) during this season. Anonymously paying someone's bill at a restaurant, paying for the next person's coffee in line behind you at the café, finding opportunities to give a compliment, leaving a nice note for your mail carrier to let them know you appreciate their hard work, or even something as simple as a smile can spread some holiday cheer. There are countless opportunities for this throughout a day.

Commit to your emotional well-being

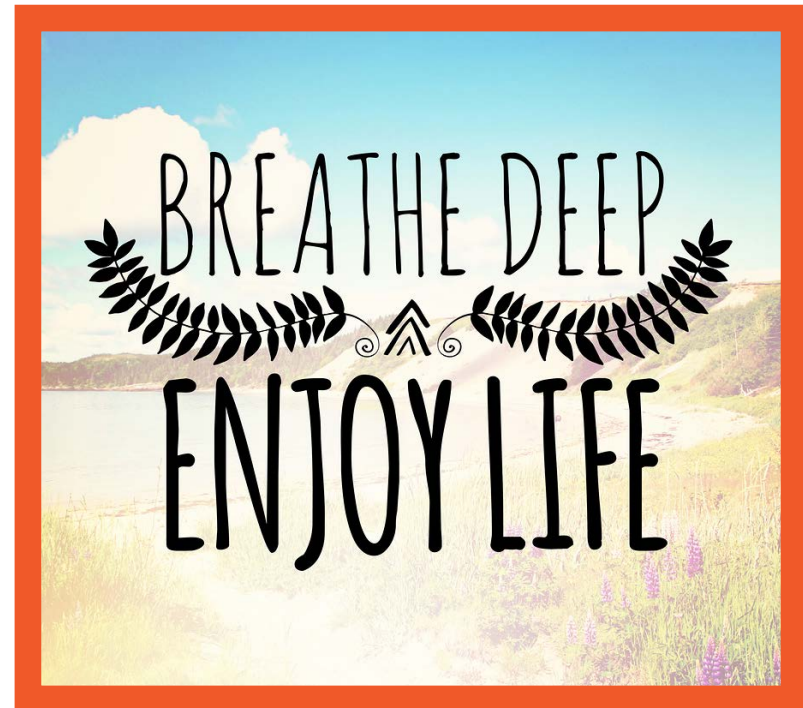
Recognize that your needs and feelings are just as important as other peoples' needs and feelings. You have a right to say no to an event or responsibility if you do not have time for it—even if it's because you'd rather spend your time relaxing! Trust and believe in yourself and in your future. It is never too late to establish a happy attitude.

MINDFULNESS

Practicing mindfulness includes both informal, staying-in-the-present-moment, and formal practices such as meditation, helping you experience thoughts and emotions with greater balance and acceptance.

Informal practices teach that we stay rooted to the present experience through whatever routine activities we have. While you are washing the dishes, notice the temperature of the water, the weight of the dish, the gleam of the water that washes the soap away. While you brush your teeth, notice the smell of the toothpaste, pause, notice the taste in your mouth, pause, and notice how your body feels in its position.

Formal practices, like meditating, for even five minutes a day can reap profound benefits on well-being. Experience “My Loving Kindness Meditation” [here](#).



To help with your holiday gatherings even more, try these easy and healthy recipes. They could become a staple addition to your table.

ROASTED SWEET POTATOES

(Serves 5)

Ingredients:

1 lb. sweet potatoes (about 3 medium), diced

1 fresh sprig of rosemary

1 tablespoon cinnamon

½ teaspoon cloves

5 cloves of garlic

1 tablespoon olive or coconut oil

Salt and pepper to taste

½ cup water

Optional: ¼ cup brown sugar or honey & ¼ cup boiling water (Note: this is considered “added sugar” and will add extra calories).

Directions:

- Heat oven to 350° F.
- Dice sweet potatoes, peel and chop garlic and run through the rosemary leaves with a knife to release the internal fragrance and taste.
- Add sweet potatoes, ½ cup water, rosemary, cinnamon, cloves, garlic, oil, salt and pepper to an oven-safe dish. Mix well to incorporate spices.
- Cover dish with foil and put in the oven for about 30-40 minutes, or until sweet potatoes are soft all the way through. Uncover the foil and broil on high for about 5-10 minutes, or until the potatoes get crispy.
- Pull dish out of the oven and serve. Be careful, it's hot.
- Optional: If you like your sweet potatoes a little more sweet, you can mix ¼ cup brown sugar or honey with ¼ cup boiling water to make a sweet syrup, and then pour over the potatoes.

CRANBERRY SAUCE FROM SCRATCH

Ingredients:

1 lb. fresh raw cranberries
1 cup freshly squeezed apple juice

Directions:

Add both to a small pot, and slowly bring to a boil. Make sure to stir it from time to time. Cranberries will pop as they heat up. The consistency will get thicker as more cranberries pop. Once they are all popped, the sauce is done. Pour or spoon into a heat-safe bowl, cover and chill in the refrigerator until meal is served.



BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

(Serves 8; blender needed)

Ingredients:

1 butternut squash (whole or frozen cubed; if whole peel, seed and dice)
1 sweet potato, washed and cut into chunks
2 large carrots, washed and chopped
1 onion, peeled and chopped
4 cups of bone broth or chicken stock, as needed
2 tablespoons butter, olive oil or coconut oil
2 cloves of garlic
Salt and pepper to taste (you'll need more salt if using bone broth)
Dash of pumpkin pie spice, for garnish (optional)

Directions:

- Melt butter or add oil to large pot over medium-high heat. Add squash, sweet potato, carrots, onion and garlic and let cook until brown (about 5-10 minutes).
- Add chicken stock/bone broth and bring to boil. Once boiled, reduce heat and let simmer for 45 minutes, or until squash and sweet potato are tender.
- Pour the mixture into blender; fill only halfway (so you will need to work in batches). Cover and pulse slowly and then blend until smooth. Repeat until all soup is blended.
- Add soup back to pot or into a glass bowl, add salt and pepper, and mix. When poured into bowl to eat, garnish with a dash of pumpkin pie spice. Enjoy!

REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

<https://www.mentalhelp.net/blogs/establishing-healthy-family-relational-boundaries/>

Insight Timer
App for meditation

Boundaries and Relationships: Knowing, Protecting and Enjoying the Self
by Charles L. Whitfield

The Language of Letting Go
by Melody Beattie

Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life
by Marshall B. Rosenberg

Full Catastrophe Living
by Jon Kabat-Zinn

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/mindfulness-exercises/art-20046356>