

Staff Health and Wellness Newsletter

December 2023



Staff Wellness Programs Expanding!

A Staff Wellness group was recently formed to plan for the expansion of the wellness programs offered to both school and town employees in Newtown. As a first step, a survey was sent out to all employees to gather information on interests and needs. Thank you to all who responded!

The survey results showed strong interest in :

- Physical activity (fitness classes, yoga, walking programs)
- Preventive health screening (flu vaccines, cancer screenings, etc)
- Nutrition & healthy weight management
- Emotional wellbeing/stress management/mindfulness

The best time for programs for most people is after work or during lunch.

Most people preferred in person programs at work. There was also interest in virtual programs, mobile apps and team competitions.

In response to these survey results, the Staff Wellness planning group is investigating a range of possible programs which we hope to make available to Newtown BOE and Town employees, starting in January 2024!

Unwrapping Wellness: Managing Holidays and Mental Health



From the hustle and bustle of preparations to expectations around social gatherings and gift-giving, there are many challenges that can impact our mental health during the holidays. Research on holidays and mental health finds 68% of people feel financially strained, 66% feel lonely, and 63% feel under pressure during this time of year. Forty percent of people who already struggle with a mental health condition say the holidays make their condition "a lot" or "somewhat" worse. Learning ways to safeguard your mental health during the holidays can help you navigate the season with resilience and enjoy this time of year.

Why does mental health suffer around the holidays?

Throwing the perfect party, giving the best gift, preparing large meals—the holidays come with a lot of pressure, and as those pressures rise so do feelings of stress and overwhelm that can impact our mental health. Naturally, we want to feel like we're part of the culture and community around us, so we may start to chase those expectations. And with the holidays seeming to start sooner every year, we may experience stress, holiday anxiety, or holiday depression because we're chasing a target that feels like it's always moving.

Some other contributors to holiday blues and other mental health challenges include:

Loneliness

A common message about the holidays is that it's a season of togetherness. If you don't have a close family or you have complicated relationships with loved ones, you may feel isolated rather than joyful—and it may seem easier to withdraw than engage, which can compound loneliness.

High expectations

The holidays come with societal pressures around decorating, meals, gift-giving, and socializing, which can feed anxiety.

Adapted from Autumn Walker (14 Nov 2023) *Unwrapping Wellness: Managing Holidays and Mental Health*. Retrieved from: <https://www.lyrahealth.com/blog/holidays-and-mental-health/#:~:text=Research%20on%20holidays%20and%20mental%20health%20indicates%20that%2068%25%20make%20their%20condition%20%E2%80%9Cca%20or%E2%80%9D%20or%20%E2%80%9Csomewhat%E2%80%9D%20worse>
www.solutions-eap.com | 1-800-526-3485

Link to full article:

[Managing Holidays & Mental Health](#)

It's not too late to get protected!
Click these links to find flu and COVID vaccines available locally:

[Find Local Flu Vaccines](#)
[Find Local COVID Vaccines](#)



Register for **December 6th**
QPR Suicide Prevention Training

HOPE IN ACTION



QPR SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING
Uniting Research & Compassion to Save Lives

Join us for an immersive training that equips you with life-saving skills to prevent suicide and become a *Merchant of Hope*.

In this training, you will:

- Recognize warning signs of suicide
- Use the "Question, Persuade, Refer" (QPR) approach to connect individuals to help
- Become a beacon of hope for others

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2023
7:00-8:30 p.m.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED
SCAN THE QR CODE OR
REGISTER HERE



SAINT ROSE OF LIMA CHURCH CAMPUS
HOLY INNOCENTS FAITH FORMATION CENTER
38B CHURCH HILL ROAD
NEWTOWN, CT 06470

ST. ROSE OF LIMA CHURCH

SPONSORED BY:



Contact Nancy Rhodes, parishnurse@strosechurch.com with any questions

COVID Testing Guidelines



Take an at-home test:

- If you begin having COVID-19 symptoms like fever, sore throat, runny nose, or loss of taste or smell, or
- At least 5 days after you come into close contact with someone with COVID-19, or
- When you're going to gather with a group of people, especially those who are at risk of severe disease or may not be up to date on their COVID-19 vaccines

4 free COVID test kits available to all families. Click this link for more info:

<https://www.covid.gov/tests>



It's soup season! Here's a delicious soup recipe to try:

[Lemon Chicken Orzo Soup](#)