



Soboba Tribal Family Services

MAY NEWSLETTER

National Mental Health Awareness Month

Mental Health Awareness Month

Wellness is so important to living a full and productive life. It includes your general physical health, mental/emotional health, and social well-being. It is not only about getting healthy, but staying healthy.

There are things that each of us can do to achieve wellness and maintain our wellbeing. These include eating a healthy balanced diet, getting regular exercise, getting enough sleep, having a sense of self-worth, developing or enhancing good coping skills, and keeping connections to family, friends, and the larger community.



Let's look at each of these things individually:

Eating healthy means eating a diet that is balanced in nutrition with plenty of fruits and vegetables; healthy protein such as chicken, fish and lean beef; complex carbohydrates such as whole grain rice, whole grain pasta, and legumes (beans); healthy fats such as those found in avocados, olive oil, and canola oil. While most of us have fond childhood memories of macaroni and cheese, baked potatoes loaded with butter and sour cream, crispy French fries, and ice-cream it is usually best to limit foods high in fat, simple carbohydrates and sugar to better manage weight and control blood sugar. Drink plenty of water and limit alcohol consumption.



Regular exercise can be as simple as taking the kids, grandkids, or the dog for a walk. You don't have to go to the gym to get exercise. If you play softball, warming up before practice and games, stretching after games, and walking on days when there is no practice or a game will help get you or keep you in shape and reduces the risk of injury. For those with arthritis, swimming can be a great way to get exercise that is easy on the joints and movement in the water can help keep joints flexible.



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Mental Health Classes and Events

Visit www.namicalifornia.org/event-classes.php to view the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) classes, events, conferences and meetings that may be taking place in your area.

Mental Health Awareness Month (Cont'd)

Change things up a little: you can do yard work or house work and get exercise; play catch or chase with the kids or grandkids; get together with your friends and make a commitment to each other to walk or do some type of physical movement for 30 minutes five days a week. Regular exercise is a great way to reduce stress.

Regular exercise also assists in getting better sleep. Since it helps reduce stress it is less likely that you will lay awake at night worrying. Make sure that you have the right pillow for the way you sleep and your mattress is the correct firmness for your body. Going to bed each night at the same time and getting up at the same time each day helps your body find a rhythm and will make going to sleep much easier.

Having a good sense of self worth comes from many places. Some of us were brought up in families that instilled a strong sense that we were of value simply because we were loved. Unfortunately, not everyone is blessed with a loving childhood and that often makes developing a strong sense of self worth more challenging. Often our self worth is developed by being a good student, a good athlete, a good parent, a good friend, a good artist, or anything that gives us joy and makes us feel wanted and useful. Often being an at home parent, a caregiver, or retiring takes away the things that used to help us feel useful.

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Soboba Tribal Family Services Staff:

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Office Hours:

Mon-Fri 8:00am to 4:30pm
(951) 487-0283

Alternatives to Domestic Violence 24-hour Hotline

Riverside City and out of County: (951) 683-0829
Remainder of Riverside County: (800) 799-SAFE (7233)
(800) 787-3224 – TDD Line
Hemet Office: (951) 929-3079

If you are in immediate danger call 9-1-1



**24 – Hour Child Abuse Hotline
for Riverside County
(800) 442-4918 or (800) 442-4453**

Mental Health Awareness Month (Cont'd)

One way to address this is by volunteering. You can volunteer at your kids' or grandkids' pre-school or elementary school, a nursing home, a women's shelter, or for your tribe. **Soboba's Cultural Center has been working to clean up and restore the canyons. Help is always welcome.**

All of the things above can help in developing good coping skills. When stressed, you can go for a walk or read to the kids instead of eating a pint of ice-cream or of a bag of potato chips. A cool glass of iced tea may hit the spot on a hot day instead of a beer. Regular exercise and sleep is important to stress management, to help reduce stress hormones and help your body restore itself. **Finding something to do that you love increases your sense of self worth and reduces stress.** You can knit or garden as a means to cope with stress. Digging in the earth and having beautiful flowers or home grown tomatoes or squash is often its own reward. Knitting keeps your hands busy and often allows your mind to relax. **Find a little time for yourself.** Prayer is also a way to address stress and better coping skills. Regardless of the type of spirituality you may practice the sense that there is a greater power to talk with and gather support from is invaluable.

Family, friends, and community connections can all help with increasing our sense of well-being. That sense of human connection is important for us all. Listening and being there for others and allowing others to be there for us lifts our burdens as we support each other. Finding things to do in the larger community, whether it is for the Tribe or for a group in town helps to keep us connected to things which are larger than just ourselves.

None of us are in balance all the time. But **working towards that balance is what keeps us physically, emotionally, and spiritually connected.** When being out of balance becomes overwhelming **it is often helpful to talk to someone. Spiritual leaders, healers, and therapists can help us find our way to balance.**

Excerpted in part from www.mentalhealthamerica.net

Strong Hearted Native Women's Coalition, Inc., by honoring our women ancestors, will advocate for women and their families by promoting safety and a traditional non-violent lifestyle. Working towards empowering women with the tools for independence, courage, and a strong direction to make healthy life choices for herself, her children, and family.

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www.strongheartedwomen.org

Stress

Note: This is the second of a 2-part article compiled by Walidah Thrift, Family Therapist with the Soboba Tribal Family Services Department.

Step 1: Identify Source of Stress

What do you find stressful? The first step in developing healthy coping strategies for stress is to be able to identify what trigger stress in you. Stress is experienced for many different reasons and what one person considers being stressful may not be stressful to another person. Many things can a source of stress; the following list is to name a few:

- Emotional stressor, such as thoughts of worry and fears.
- Family stressor, such as family conflict, sibling rivalry, and changes within relationships.
- Social stressor involves one's relationships with others and with our society; social stressors can range from interactions during dating and job interviews to experiencing racism and prejudices.
- Physical stressor, such as lack of sleep, over exercising, and physical pains in the body.
- Environmental stressors, such as overcrowding, traffic, extreme weather conditions, noise and pollution.
- Chemical stressors, such as tobacco, alcohol and drugs.

Step 2: Make Mind & Body Connection

Stress can sneak up on you, becoming aware of what changes you experience within your body when you are feeling stressed is the next step in developing healthy coping strategies for address stressors and working toward regaining balance in one's life. The following is a list of common physical stress symptoms:

- Irritability,
- Agitation, difficulties feeling relaxed
- Depression, general sense of unhappiness persisting for a 2 week period
- Aches and pains, including neck and shoulder pain and tension.
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Chest pains and rapid heartbeat

Step 3: Practice Healthy Coping Strategies

When experiencing stress, it takes practice to learn ways to cope in a healthy manner. Coping strategies are individual, what works well for one may not work well for another. The following are suggested techniques:

- Learn and practice deep breathing exercises, shallow breathing is a common response to stress.
- Practice daily prayer, meditation, and/or spirituality; making a spiritual connection can provide comfort and strength during stressful times. Taking time to quiet your mind is essential to feelings of relaxation and renewal.
- Listen to music, use heat to relax any tense muscles
- Exercise regularly and eat balanced meals packed with nutrition from plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Increase social support
- Take a positive approach to life
- Talk a walk with nature, enjoy a sunrise/sunset

Practicing the above described 3 steps will help you to restore balance in your life. If you would like additional information on stress and how to cope with stress in your life, visit Soboba Tribal Family Services (walk-