

Northeast Region Newsletter

Flavors
OF HEALTH



Mental Health Awareness

by Ana Gouge

May is Mental Health Awareness month. The CDC notes that 1 in 5 adults experiences a mental health condition every year. Our youth continue to struggle with depression, anxiety, and suicide at alarming rates. We need to continue to fight against the stigma of seeking help for mental health. According to the American Heart Association, negative psychological health conditions include depression, chronic stress, anxiety, anger, pessimism, and dissatisfaction with one's current life. These conditions are associated with potentially harmful biological responses, such as irregularities of heart rate and rhythm, increased digestive complaints, increased blood pressure, inflammation, and reduced blood flow to the heart.

Ways to improve our mental health:

Invest in meaningful relationships. These relationships should bring out and support our best self. Connections should be genuine and productive.

Find coping mechanisms for daily life stressors. The world that we are in is fast paced and competitive. It is important to find ways to cope with pressure that bring joy and peace into our lives.

Stay active and find motivation to live a more healthful life. We tend to get caught up in the day to day "rat race" of life and we often lose time for ourselves. It is important to establish time to have enjoyable physical activity and also to take time to feed your body nutritious home prepared foods.

If you are in crisis, call your doctor or 911 immediately. If you're having suicidal thoughts, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to talk to a skilled, trained counselor at a crisis center in your area at any time.



Healthy Recipe Box: Wake-Up Smoothie *by Markaye Russell*

With a stash of berries in your freezer, you can jump-start your day with this nutritious, tasty smoothie in just minutes. This delicious breakfast option is a great source of vitamin C, as well as a beacon of fiber and potassium.

Ingredients:

1 ¼ cups orange juice
1 banana
1 ¼ cups frozen berries
1/2 cup low-fat plain yogurt
1 tablespoon sugar

Directions:

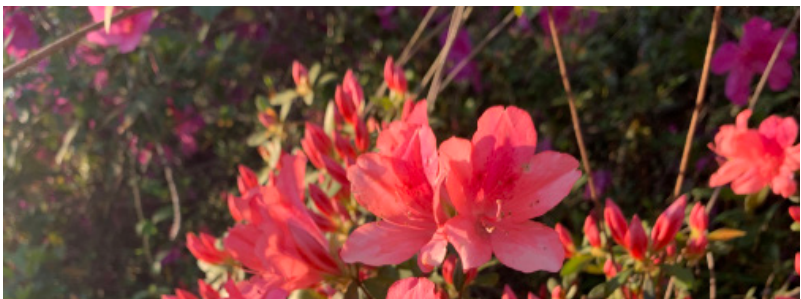
Combine all ingredients in a blender. Cover the ingredients with the blender lid and blend until creamy. Serve immediately.

Source: Eating Well



MEDITATE ON THIS *by Cathy Agan*

Life seems to move at a whirlwind pace with multitasking being the norm. If you are feeling stressed and overwhelmed, you might benefit from adding a little mindfulness to your daily routine. What is mindfulness? Being mindful can help us live more in the moment instead of dwelling on the past or future. You can become more mindful by training yourself to focus on the present moment by being aware of what's going on inside and around you. Meditation is one form of mindfulness, but it doesn't just have to be done sitting quietly.



- Taking deep breaths. Start out by breathing in through your nose to a count of 4, hold your breath for 1 second, and then exhale through the mouth to a count of 5. Repeat as needed.
- Be physically active by taking a walk. Pay attention to the sights and sounds around you. Let your mind clear and focus on the present.
- Be mindful when eating. Pay attention to taste, textures, and flavors. Listen to your body cues for hunger and fullness.
- Practice a body scan by noting how each part of your body is feeling.

Mindfulness can have positive health benefits including improved quality of life, reduced anxiety and depression, lowered blood pressure, and improved sleep. There are also apps and online programs that can be used to help with mindfulness or meditation, but you can start simple on your own!

Taking a walk for 30 minutes a day can strengthen your bones, eliminate body fat, reduce your risk of developing certain health conditions, and give you an extra boost of energy throughout the day. Although 30 minutes of physical activity per day is typically suggested, you can try starting with however much time you like until you are able to handle longer sessions. Sometimes, changing the way we carry out our day-to-day activities can also play a huge role in the amount of physical activity we receive each day. Parking further away from the door when you arrive at your work or a store is an effective way to help accomplish your physical activity goals for the day. You can also try taking the stairs instead of the elevator or choosing to walk to stores that are closer to your home.

The best part about walking is that you don't need any fancy equipment to do it! Walking can be done at your own pace at no cost. All physical activity does not have to be strenuous or done for an excessive amount of time in order to improve your health. Walking can also be done at any time of the day, making it easy to work into your daily schedule. Simple changes can be effective, and in some cases, they can be really fun. Walking groups (also known as accountability groups) are great motivators. They are also helpful if you struggle with finding the motivation to take a daily walk. Check with your local community health center or Facebook community page to find out about walking groups in your area. If there aren't any existing walking groups in your area, try starting your own!

When taking a walk outdoors, be sure to warm up beforehand and always remember to stretch afterwards. Walking close to home is a safe way to get out and get moving, but

**Activity
Corner**
*by Jocinda
Jackson-Jones*

if there are other safe walking spaces in your community, feel free to explore them as well. Switching up your walking locations will keep your daily walks interesting and enjoyable. Once you have established a daily walking routine, be sure to add in a little intensity. A few ways to add intensity is to increase your speed, walk for longer periods of time, and walk up hills/inclines. The month of May has been identified as Physical Fitness & Sports Month, so it is the perfect month to get out & take on a new challenge!



Local Food Finds: Farmers Markets

by Cecilia Stevens

Memorial Day weekend often marks the start of Louisiana farmers markets, but the vendors have likely been working for months in preparation to ensure that high-quality, local produce is available to shoppers. Shoppers can also prepare by following a few tips to shop smarter at their local market.

- **Take time to get to know your local vendors.** Most of the sellers love sharing their knowledge with clients. One question shoppers should ask is about produce varieties because they each offer different flavor profiles. A knowledgeable vendor can suggest a specific variety for different needs. Another important question to ask vendors is the origin of the produce. Items grown closer to your market will be fresher and of higher quality than those which have been packed and shipped.
- **Shop smarter.** Visit the market early in the day for the best selection as seasonal items are often in limited supply. Bring your own cooler to keep produce at the peak of freshness. Produce quality begins to decrease rapidly in hot summer temperatures, so try to refrigerate items as soon as possible.

Kid Stuff

by Kimberly Butcher

Tips for Creating Happy, Healthy Environments for Kids:

1.) Happy Parents, Happy Home

Parents must always show each other mutual respect. Parents should cautiously watch their language and behavior towards each other and towards the child, because kids tend to imitate their parents. Abusive language and disrespectful behavior can influence their tender minds in a negative way.

2.) Quality Family-time

It is important for families to spend time together. No matter how busy you might be, you should try and set aside some time every day to play and interact with your kids. They are more important than anyone else in our lives!

3.) A Calm, Happy Home

You should try and maintain a cheerful environment at home. In spite of our stressful lifestyle, we should try to keep the environment at home as peaceful and jolly as possible for the positive mental development of our children.

4.) Meal times & Bedtime Stories

Making it a habit to eat at least one meal together, which is usually dinner in most families, is a very good opportunity for interaction. Talk about each other's day and share anecdotes. Television, stressful topics, or family issues should be avoided, and positive topics discussed while enjoying meals together. Bedtime storytelling and reading can contribute positively toward your child's mental growth. Spare 30 minutes after dinner and read to your child in bed. You could also make stories together or narrate your own childhood experiences!




Caldwell Parish **Columbia Farmers Market:**
Saturdays from Memorial Day to Labor Day
8 AM-12PM, Downtown



Catahoula Parish **Harrisonburg Farmers Market**
Saturdays seasonally
8 AM-12PM, Ballpark



Concordia Parish **Vidalia Farmers Market**
Wednesdays
9 AM-1PM, Old Courthouse



East Carroll Parish **Lake Providence Farmers Market**
Saturdays from June 4th-Labor Day
8 AM-12PM, Briery House




Tensas Parish **St. Joseph Farmers Market**
Saturdays from Memorial Day to Labor Day
9 AM-1PM, Downtown




Franklin Parish **Crowville Farmers Market**
Thursdays
3 PM-6PM, 157 Football Field Road



Madison Parish **Tallulah Farmers Market**
Tuesdays and Thursdays
8 AM-12PM, Madison Courthouse



Union Parish **Farmerville Farmers Market**
Monday - Saturday
8 AM-4PM, 407 South Main Street



Ouachita Parish **Monroe Farmers Market**
Monday - Saturday
6 AM-12PM, 1212 Washington Street



Ouachita Parish **West Monroe Farmers Market**
Monday - Saturday
7 AM-6PM, 1700 N. 7th Street

UPCOMING EVENTS

Small Changes, Healthy Habits Nutrition Series (in-person and virtual) *Richland and West Carroll Parishes*

Contact Brittney Newsome for more information.

Smart Portions Nutrition Series, 12:00PM *Richland Parish:*

This work shop series will take place on the following dates: April 14th and 28th, May 5th, 12th, 19th, and 26th, and June 2nd and 9th. Please contact Richland parish office for more details.

Home Food Preservation Training *Franklin Parish:*

Please contact Quincy L. Vidrine at 318-623-5217 for more information.

Pressure Canning Testing, 10AM-12PM *Several Parishes:*

Please contact Markaye Russell for more information.

Crowville Walk Audit, 9AM *Franklin Parish:*

Starting at 5381 Hwy 17 in Winnsboro on May 25, 2022. Please contact Quincy Vidrine for more information.

Franklin Parish Healthy Communities Planning Meeting, 10AM-11:30AM *Franklin Parish:*

At the Franklin Parish Extension Office 6562 Main Street in Winnsboro. May 26, 2022. Please contact Quincy Vidrine for more information.

Crowville TeenChef Camp, 9AM-12PM *Franklin Parish*

At First Baptist Church of Crowville on June 14, 15, & 16, 2022 for ages 13-18. Please contact Quincy Vidrine for more information.

Crowville KidChef Camp, 1PM-3:30PM *Franklin Parish*

At First Baptist Church of Crowville on June 14, 15, & 16, 2022 for ages 9-12. Please contact Quincy Vidrine for more information.

INFORMATION

Catahoula/Concordia Parishes, Ana Gouge, (318) 414-6055

East Carroll/Morehouse Parishes, Jocinda Jackson, (318) 559-1459

Franklin Parish/Caldwell Parishes/FCS Regional Coordinator, Quincy Vidrine, (318) 435-2903

CDC Food Systems Coordinator, Cecilia Stevens, (318) 435-2908

Madison/Tensas Parishes, Joy Sims, (318) 574-2465

Ouachita Parish, Cathy Agan, (318) 323-2251

Ouachita/Morehouse Parishes, Kimberly Butcher, (318) 323-2251

Ouachita/Union Parish, Markaye Russell, (318) 323-2251

Richland/West Carroll Parishes, Brittney Newsome, (318) 281-5741



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Dr. Luke Laborde, LSU Vice President for Agriculture Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, LSU College of Agriculture. The LSU AgCenter and LSU provide equal opportunities in programs and employment. Dr. Luke Laborde, LSU Vice President for Agriculture Louisiana State University Agricultural Center Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service LSU College of Agriculture If you need an ADA accommodation for your participation, please contact Quincy Vidrine at least two weeks prior to the event. The LSU AgCenter provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.