

## Upcoming Awareness Campaigns 2025:

### January:

#### Tamil Heritage Month

- Blue Monday
- National Non-Smoking Week

### February:

#### Black History Month

- Eating Disorder Awareness Week
- Pink Shirt Day

### March:

#### National Nutrition Month

- World Water Day
- World Sleep Day

**Q: What do you call a reindeer ghost?**

A: Cari-boo

**Q: What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?**

A: Frostbite.

**Q: What did the gingerbread man put on his bed?**

A: A cookie sheet!.

**Q: What does a snowman eat for a snack?**

A: A snowcone

## Embracing Well-Being over the Holidays

The holidays are often depicted as a time of joy, warmth, and togetherness, but for many, this season can also bring challenges for mental health. Amid the twinkling lights and festive decorations, it's important to acknowledge and embrace our emotional well-being. Taking care of yourself during this time can transform the season into a period of genuine joy and peace.

Firstly, it's perfectly okay to feel a range of emotions during the holidays. While there's pressure to be constantly cheerful and upbeat, it's essential to honour your own feelings. If you're experiencing stress, sadness, or loneliness, it's important to recognize that these feelings are valid and shared by many.



One of the best ways to support your mental health during the holidays is to set realistic expectations for yourself. It's easy to get caught up in the rush of shopping, cooking, and attending events, but remember that striving for perfection is never healthy. Embrace the idea that it's okay to simplify your celebrations and focus on what truly matters to you. If you

find yourself overwhelmed by the demands of the season, it's okay to say no or to scale back your commitments. and prioritize your self care. Mindfulness and gratitude practices can be powerful tools for enhancing your mental health during the holidays. Taking a few minutes each day to focus on what you're thankful for can shift your perspective and bring a sense of calm. Mindfulness techniques, such as deep breathing or gentle meditation, can also help manage stress and foster a sense of inner peace. .

Connecting with others who understand what you're going through can make a big difference. Sharing your feelings with friends, family, or a counsellor can be comforting. Sometimes just knowing that someone else understands can make a big difference. Don't hesitate to reach out and let others in your circle know how they can support you. In the midst of the holiday season, remember that taking care of your mental health is a gift to yourself and those around you. Embrace the holidays in a way that feels right for you, and allow yourself to find joy in the little moments that make this time of year special. If you feel like you're going to need some extra support over the holidays, contact Walmsley EFAP and we will connect you with a counsellor.

Robert Baker, MA RCC  
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## 12 Days of Mental Health Challenge

**Day 1: "A Journal for Your Thoughts"** : Start a gratitude journal. Write down three things you're grateful for and why. Reflect on how focusing on gratitude can positively impact your mood.

**Day 2: "Two Moments of Self-Care"** : Take two moments throughout the day to engage in self-care activities. These could be short breaks for relaxation, a hot cup of tea, or reading a few pages of a book.

**Day 3: "Three Acts of Kindness"** : Perform three small acts of kindness today. It could be as simple as sending a supportive message to a friend, holding the door open for someone, or complimenting a colleague.

**Day 4: "Four Minutes of Mindfulness"** : Engage in a four-minute mindfulness meditation. Use a guided meditation app or simply sit quietly, focusing on your breath and being present in the moment.

**Day 5: "Five Positive Affirmations"**: Write down and repeat five positive affirmations that resonate with you. These could be about self-love, resilience, or personal strengths. Say them out loud or write them in your journal.

**Day 6: "Six Steps to Organize"**: Tidy up a small area of your home or workspace. Organizing your environment can help reduce stress and create a more calming atmosphere.

**Day 7: "Seven Minutes of Movement"**: Dedicate seven minutes to physical activity that you enjoy. It could be a brisk walk, a short workout, or dancing to your favorite music. Physical activity boosts mood and energy levels.

**Day 8: "Eight Deep Breaths"**: Practice deep breathing exercises. Find a quiet spot, and take two minutes to focus on your breath—inhalation deeply through your nose, hold for a few seconds, and exhale slowly.

**Day 9: "Nine Positive Connections"**: Reach out to nine people you care about or who support you. Send a message, make a call, or write a note.

**Day 10: "Ten Minutes of Creativity"**: Spend ten minutes doing something creative, like drawing, writing, crafting, or playing music. Creative expression can be a great outlet for emotions and stress.

**Day 11: "Eleven Deep Stretches"**: Perform eleven deep stretches or yoga poses.

**Day 12: "Twelve Hours of Rest"**: Aim for twelve hours of restful sleep over the course of the day and night. Good sleep is crucial for mental health. Establish a calming bedtime routine to help improve sleep quality.

## Holiday Gingerbread Blondies

### Blondies:

- 1 Cup butter softened
- 2 Cups packed brown sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1/2 cup fancy molasses
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- 2 1/2 Cups all-purpose
- 1 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

### Cinnamon Icing:

- 1 pkg (250g) cream cheese softened
- 2 tablespoon butter softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2/3 cups icing sugar sifted
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

In a large bowl, beat butter and brown sugar until fluffy; beat in eggs 1 at a time. Beat in molasses and vanilla.

Whisk together flour, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and salt; stir into butter mixture in 2 additions. Spread in greased or parchment paper lined 13x9 inch (3L) baking dish; smooth top.

Bake in 350 F (180 C) oven until cake tester comes out moist with only a few crumbs clinging, about 35 minutes. Let cook in pan on rack.

### Cinnamon Icing:

In a large bowl beat together cream cheese, butter and vanilla until smooth. Beat in icing sugar and cinnamon until fluffy. Transfer Blondies to cutting board; spread icing over top. Cut into bars.

*(Make ahead: Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 2 weeks)*

"A kind gesture can reach a wound that only compassion can heal."

- anonymous

