

MEAP QUARTERLY

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Special points of interest:

- COVID-19 and it's impact.
- Upcoming holiday season

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COVID – 19 and it's impact

Is this year over yet?? I think at some point throughout this current year, most of us have found ourselves pondering this very question. Due to COVID-19, the year 2020 has definitely reshaped the way in which we all live and interact in our work and everyday lives. And with new terms and practices of, "social distancing", "social isolation", and "the new normal," individuals are often finding themselves not feeling their normal, but rather feeling more anxious, isolated, and negative than before.

With all these changes having happened so rapidly and now with the holidays fast ap-

proaching, it's time we pull back, slow down, and remember to practice being kind to ourselves, taking some time to re-center ourselves, refocus, and channel our thoughts more positively.

During this holiday season, it's now more important than ever to reconnect with ourselves, and our loved ones, even if we have to do it from a safe distance (which might save us from eating that fruit cake most of us receive and secretly dislike).

Please be sure to read on and enjoy this issue of the MEAP Quarterly for more helpful holiday tips and recipes.

Happy Winter Holidays!



While the holidays this year may be different, there are ways to still celebrate them, safely.

Upcoming Holiday Season Gatherings

'Tis the Holiday season when we pack up and travel to see our family and friends, however with COVID-19, we now have to rethink and be creative in the ways in which we can gather with our loved ones and reach out and include those feeling isolated.

Virtual gatherings and virtual meal times greatly reduce the risk of exposure to everyone

and saves us from eating that dreaded annual over cooked turkey.

However, if you decide to gather in person, here are some tips to follow;

Keep your gatherings small

Have everyone wear a face mask (the most creative and decorative mask wins the turkey leg and or wishbone).

Practice good hygiene and distancing practices.

Also, please be sure to read more helpful tips on how to keep you and your family safe this holiday at;

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html

The Top Well-Being Apps of 2020

We have included the list here in hopes that you may find one or more Apps that are helpful to you and your family. These Apps target personal wellness and address various needs.

My Strength App

This App is designed to provide support for managing depression, anxiety, stress, and sleep disturbances.

Track your mood, set goals and notice changes over time.

www.mystrength.com

Breathe2Relax

A simple, intuitive, and attractive mobile app designed by the National Center for Telehealth & Technology to teach breathing techniques to manage stress.

The skills taught may be applied to those with anxiety based disorders, stress, and PTSD.

<https://telehealth.org/apps/behavioral/breathe2relax-mobile-app>

Happify

This App is a self guided App that aims to increase positive emotions through exercise and games supported by positive psychology and mindfulness research.

www.happify.com



Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

“The draining of one’s energy, feeling moody, irritable, tired, and loss of interest”

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that’s related to the changes in seasons . SAD begins and ends at about the same time every year. The symptoms often start in the fall and continue into the winter months, draining one’s energy and making one feel moody, irritable, and tired, with feelings of loss of interest, weight fluctuations, and frequent thoughts of death and / or suicide. Less often, SAD causes depression in the spring

or early summer.

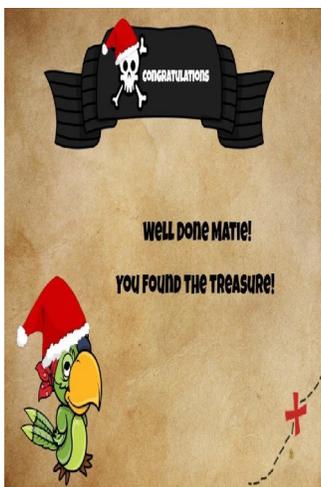
The specific cause of seasonal affective disorder remains unknown. Some factors may include:

Your biological clock (circadian rhythm)- The reduced level of sunlight in fall and winter may cause winter-onset SAD. This decrease in sunlight may disrupt your body’s internal clock and lead to feelings of depression.

Serotonin levels- A drop in serotonin, a brain neurotransmitter that affects mood, might play a role in SAD. Reduced sunlight can cause a drop in serotonin that may trigger depression.

Melatonin levels. The change in season can disrupt the balance of the body’s level of melatonin, which plays a role in sleep patterns and mood.

Fun & Engaging Family Activities



While COVID-19 has resulted in limitations to participate in many activities and gatherings, it has not...

With families being encouraged to stay at home this holiday season, this provides us the opportunity to reconnect and spend quality time with our family (furry family members included).

Check out some free game ideas listed below.

Family Games:

Drawing Game: One person starts by drawing a shape on a piece of paper then passes it to the next person, who adds to it. Keep passing until everyone has a turn, or for a predetermined number of times.

Hide and Seek; it’s not just for

kids anymore, it’s for adults and furry family members as well.

Hot Potato and or the old game of **Spoons**.

Simon Says “..... “

Or, how about a **Holiday Treasure Hunt** (don’t make the prize at the end of the hunt that fruit cake you don’t want to eat).

Well Being Apps of 2020 (Continued from page 2)

Headspace

This App is targeted to anyone who wants to learn meditation to reduce anxiety and stress and improve their attention and awareness. It's highly recommended for a beginner to establish a regular meditative routine.

www.headspace.com

Anxiety Coach

This App is a self help App that addresses fears and worries using CBT (cognitive behavioral therapy) strategies. The App walks you through making a list of feared activities and helps you master them, leading to less fear and worry.

<https://adaa.org/mentalhealthapps/anxietycoach>

Additional Resources

YouTube has a variety of meditation and guided meditation channels for free. These different channels address various issues such as stress, anxiety, and sleep disruptions. Explore the many different options available and find the one that works for you!



Seasonal Affective Disorder Treatments (Continued from page 2)

Various treatments are available to those who experience SAD. Always consult and collaborate with your physician to find the best treatment option for you. Some options available include;

Light Therapy (LT); LT is a box that gives off bright light that mimics the natural outdoor light. LT is thought to affect the brain chemicals linked to mood and sleep, thus easing symptoms.

Psychotherapy/Counseling;

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a therapy aimed at helping people learn how to cope with difficult situations; It typically focuses on replacing negative thoughts related to the winter season with more positive thoughts. CBT-SAD also uses a process called behavioral activation, which helps individuals identify and schedule pleasant, engaging indoor or outdoor activities to combat the loss of interest they typically

experience in the winter.

Medications: Commonly used anti depressant medications include, fluoxetine, citalopram, sertraline, paroxetine, and escitalopram. Bupropion, in an extended-release form, has proven to prevent recurrence of seasonal major depressive episodes when taken daily from the fall until the following early spring.

“Always consult and collaborate with your physician to find the best treatment option for you”

Easy to Bake Dog Treat Recipe

With the holidays fast approaching, let's remember to take time for our furry K9 family members as well. They provide us with unconditional love and support, and dog hair throughout the year, so what's a better way to show them love, than with some home baked love. We can even sit and enjoy a homemade tasty treat with them, as they're all natural and safe for human

consumption.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup of coconut flour
1 cup of all natural peanut butter
4 eggs

DIRECTIONS

Combine coconut flour, peanut butter and eggs in a mixing bowl.
Mix thoroughly.
Shape into 1-inch balls or roll out and cut shapes with a cookie cutter.

Bake in the oven at 350 degrees F for 17-20 minutes.

**Due to a lack of preservatives in this recipe, these cookies will need to be stored in the refrigerator and can also be frozen!

Lastly, sit, eat, and enjoy!

www.k9instinct.com/blog/simple-and-easy-homemade-grain-free-peanut-butter-dog-cookie-recipe



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We're on the web!

[https://aarcinfo.org/
services/meap](https://aarcinfo.org/services/meap)

MEAP

As we look ahead to 2021, MEAP has provided employee assistance services to the Michiana community since 1974. We continue to provide employers with a structured service to assist employees with personal or work-related concerns, providing employers with professional guidance in supporting their employees, and providing employees and their family members with a secure, comfortable, and confidential environment to seek assistance for alcohol, other drug, personal, or work-related concerns. We want to remind you that our services are available to you and your family members, free of charge. Please call us with any questions or concerns you may have this holiday season and into the new year. Thank you for letting us be your first call, and we look forward to serving you .

MEAP's Response to COVID-19

As we continue with times of uncertainty, Michiana EAP is available to you and your family members.

In our attempt to limit the spread of COVID-19 our office has opted in to utilizing telehealth services, which include scheduling appointments to occur by telephone or video using the HIPPA-Compliant Platform, Doxy.

To schedule an initial appointment, simply call our office at 574-287-1879.

Easy Bake Holiday Cookies

Ingredients

14 ounces sweetened shredded coconut
14 ounces sweetened condensed milk
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
2 extra-large egg whites, at room temperature
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt



Directions

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Combine the coconut, condensed milk, and vanilla in a large bowl. Whip the egg whites and salt on high speed in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment until they make medium-firm peaks. Carefully fold the egg whites into the coconut mixture. Drop the batter onto sheet pans lined with parchment paper using either a 1 3/4-inch diameter ice cream scoop, or 2 teaspoons. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until golden brown. Cool and serve.

www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/ina-garten/coconut-macaroons-recipe3-1916155