

WELLNESS CONNECTION

Your health, your well-being, our priority!



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THIS MONTH'S EVENTS

LETTER FROM MAK

Hello Miners,

Can you believe it's already December? With finals, the holidays, and 2024 looming just around the corner, we want to say thank you for your readership this year and say congratulations on making it through the fall 2023 semester.

The upcoming winter break is a great opportunity to spend time on yourself and spend time with loved ones, so we've focused our 32nd Wellness Connection newsletter on just that. You can find tips on setting goals and resolutions, prepping for finals, and navigating winter blues and grief. We've highlighted grounding techniques to try, games and apps to get you through the cold season, and ended on a fun section of Holiday Hot Takes, filled out by all the Student Well-Being staff members.

We hope you have great success in your finals and enjoy every moment of your well deserved winter break. We look forward to seeing you back on campus in January!

With warm regards,
 Mak the Mole (and *The Student Well-Being Office*)

P.S.- did you know the Student Well-Being office will be open to support you over break, even if you are away from Rolla? We will be open Monday-Friday, 8am-4:30pm (except from December 25th to January 1st when the university is closed).

DATA BRIEF

Incorporating Stress Relievers into New Year's Resolutions

From Student Well-Being

Students often face a variety of stressors, but there are several effective ways to reduce stress (which many of our students already use) that can also be incorporated into New Year's resolutions.

- 1. Regular Exercise and Healthy Eating: Did you know that 58% of S&T students focus on their physical health to relieve stress?*** Committing to a regular exercise routine can significantly reduce stress. This can be a resolution to join a gym, start a daily jogging routine, or even take up a new sport or fitness class. Adopting a balanced diet improves overall health and can alleviate symptoms of stress. A resolution might involve cooking healthy meals more often, reducing the intake of processed foods, or drinking more water.
- 2. Time Management: Did you know that 51% of students use time management tasks to relieve stress, and that 30% of students say no to additional time commitments to relieve stress*.** Stress often stems from feeling overwhelmed with tasks. Setting a resolution to create and adhere to a structured schedule, using planners or digital tools, can help manage time effectively.
- 3. Mindfulness and Meditation: Did you know that 34% of students meditate or focus on their mental health to relieve stress?*** Regular mindfulness practices or meditation can greatly reduce stress levels. Resolutions could include daily meditation sessions, attending yoga classes, or setting aside time for mindful breathing exercises.
- 4. Adequate Sleep: Did you know that 58% of students focus on improving their sleep when they are stressed?*** Ensuring sufficient sleep each night is crucial for stress reduction. A resolution might be setting a consistent bedtime, creating a relaxing bedtime routine, or improving the sleep environment.
- 5. Social Connections: Did you know that 61% of students talk with friends and family to relieve stress?*** Building and maintaining strong social connections can provide emotional support and reduce stress. Consider resolutions like scheduling regular meet-ups with friends, joining clubs or groups of interest, or volunteering.
- 6. Hobbies and Interests: Did you know that 70% of students focus on their hobbies to relieve stress?*** Engaging in hobbies or interests is a great way to relieve stress. A resolution could be to allocate regular time each week to a favorite hobby or to try out new activities.
- 7. Digital Detox:** Reducing screen time, especially before bed, can improve mental well-being. A resolution could involve setting specific times to disconnect from digital devices daily.
- 8. Seeking Professional Help:** If stress becomes unmanageable, seeking help from a counselor or therapist can be beneficial. A resolution might involve scheduling regular check-ins with a mental health professional.
- 9. Self-Care Rituals:** Self-care activities like reading, taking a bath, or simply relaxing can help in reducing stress. Setting a resolution to dedicate time each week for self-care can be highly beneficial.

Incorporating these strategies into New Year's resolutions involves setting specific, achievable goals and regularly reviewing and adjusting these goals to ensure they remain relevant and manageable throughout the year. Unsure how to set goals? Check out the next article to learn how!

**2023 Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors*

BOOST YOUR WELL-BEING

Setting Goals You Can Stick To

From Student Well-Being

It's that time of the year again when we reflect on the past 12 months: the highs, the lows, and the missed opportunities. As the calendar turns, many of us feel a renewed sense of motivation to set New Year's resolutions and make the upcoming year even better. However, it is a common experience to start the year with a list of well-intentioned resolutions, only to see them fall by the wayside as the weeks go by. So, how can you set meaningful resolutions and, more importantly, stick with them?

One popular method is to use SMART goals, which stands for specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound. Setting SMART goals also takes practice but can be incredibly useful in helping you stay focused and motivated.

- **Specific**: Identify what you want to accomplish. Instead of a vague resolution like "I want to run more," make it more specific, like "I will commit to running for 30 minutes at least three times a week."
 - **Measurable**: Determine how you will measure your progress. For example, if your goal is to read more, set a measurable target, like "I will read 20 books this year." This makes it easier to track your progress.
 - **Attainable**: Make sure the goal is achievable. An unattainable goal can lead to frustration and lack of follow through. Consider time, ability, and resources.
 - **Realistic**: Ensure that it's relevant and important to you. It should align with your values, long-term objectives, and be personally meaningful to you and not just something you feel pressured to do.
 - **Time-bound**: Assign a time frame or deadline that's reasonable for the goal. Try having an overall goal completion deadline as well as milestones to check progress along the way.
- In addition to SMART goals, here are some other tips and tricks to help you stick with your resolutions.
- **Create an action plan**: Outline the steps you need to take to achieve your goals. Physically writing down your plan or setting reminders on your phone will help you visualize what you want to accomplish.
 - **Track your progress**: Use a journal, app, or a calendar to monitor achievements. Creating an action plan is the first step, and regularly tracking your progress will help you keep motivated.
 - **Break it down**: Big goals are intimidating. Break them down into smaller, more manageable steps. For example, if your goal is to read 20 books in a year, break it down into a monthly reading target.
 - **Find an accountability partner**: Having someone who supports and encourages you can be extremely helpful. This should be someone who can keep track of your progress, provide honest feedback when needed, and can help motivate you.
 - **Embrace flexibility**: Change is a process and life is unpredictable; there will be obstacles along the way. It is important to be open to adjustments in your plan as needed. Don't view setbacks as failures, instead, see them as opportunities to learn and grow.
 - **Celebrate small successes**: Rewarding yourself can reinforce positive behavior and motivate you to continue toward your goals. If your goal is to run three times a week, choose one of those days to run to a coffee shop and get an after run treat!
 - **Believe in yourself**: The most important ally you have is yourself. When you believe in yourself, you are not just setting resolutions; you are setting a course for self-discovery, growth, and achievement. Remember to do what's best for you.
- As you set your resolutions for the upcoming year remember that you have the power within you to transform your aspirations into reality. The path may be challenging at times, but with SMART goals, accountability, and unwavering self-belief, you are equipped to conquer the obstacles that come your way. Here's to a new year of growth, accomplishments, and embracing all the adventures it brings. You've got this!

BOOST YOUR WELL-BEING

Prepping for Finals and Winter Blues

From Student Well-Being

Preparing for final examinations can be a difficult process, especially if you suffer from seasonal depression. Developing an organized study schedule that allows enough time for each subject, while also giving time for mental and physical well-being breaks, helps us to keep organized and in control.

Begin by breaking the curriculum down into digestible chunks and setting reasonable goals for each study session. To improve focus and productivity, locate a quiet and comfortable work place that is devoid of distractions. Implementing good study practices, such as summarizing notes, reviewing prior assignments, and organizing study groups, can boost knowledge and recall of the content greatly. Maintaining a balanced lifestyle is also important; make sure you get enough sleep, eat healthily, and engage in frequent physical activity.

These behaviors not only improve academic achievement but also aid with stress management and overall mood improvement. Seasonal depression, a prevalent problem among students, can exacerbate an already difficult situation. It is critical to notice and address symptoms like chronic melancholy, loss of energy, or changes in diet or sleep patterns. Engaging in outdoor activities during the day can help because sunshine is good for mood elevation. Mindfulness and relaxation exercises, such as meditation or yoga, can also help to manage depression symptoms. Most significantly, institutions frequently have resources to assist students with their mental health.

If you relate to any of the symptoms mentioned above, remember that you are not alone and that you can always stop by Student Well-Being in 204 Norwood for a wellness consultation. Student Well-Being services provide a safe space for students to discuss their struggles and receive professional guidance and support. By taking advantage of these resources, students can find tailored strategies to manage their mental health while navigating the demands of university life.

BOOST YOUR WELL-BEING

Navigating Grief Around the Holiday Season

From Student Well-Being

For many of us, the holidays mean more time with family, friends, and a helpful break from our stressors and anxieties. But for some, this time of year can mean a holiday season, traditions, and new memories without a loved one. While the grief we feel from losing someone dear to us never truly leaves us, there are methods to help cope and get through each day.

The most important factors in healing from loss are acknowledging your feelings and having the support of other people. Even if you aren't comfortable talking about your feelings under normal circumstances, it's important to express them when you're grieving. This can include writing them out which many people find very helpful, as sharing your loss with someone else often makes the burden of grief easier to carry. Wherever the support comes from, accept it and do not grieve alone. Connecting to others will help you heal.

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- **Turn to friends and family members** – Now is the time to lean on the people who care about you, even if you take pride in being strong and self-sufficient. Draw loved ones close, rather than avoiding them, and accept the assistance that’s offered. Oftentimes, people want to help but don’t know how, so tell them what you need – whether it’s a shoulder to cry on or help with funeral arrangements. Don’t worry about “making others feel sad” sharing your thoughts and feelings is the #1 way to heal.
- **Draw comfort from your spiritual beliefs** – If you follow a religious tradition, embrace the comfort its mourning rituals can provide. Spiritual activities that are meaningful to you – such as praying, meditating, or going to church – can offer solace. If you’re questioning your faith in the wake of the loss, talk to others in your religious community. There are many faith-based organizations on campus. Additionally, many churches have a ministry called “Griefshare” that can help.
- **Join a support group** – Grief can feel very lonely, even when you have loved ones around. Sharing your sorrow with others who have experienced similar losses can help. To find a bereavement support group in your area, contact local hospitals, hospices, funeral homes, or counseling centers.
- **Talk to a therapist or grief counselor** – If your grief feels like too much to bear, call a mental health professional with experience in grief counseling. An experienced therapist can help you work through intense emotions and overcome obstacles to your grieving.

When you’re grieving, it’s more important than ever to take care of yourself. The stress of a major loss can quickly deplete your energy and emotional reserves. Looking after your physical and emotional needs will help you get through this difficult time.

- **Face your feelings** - You can try to suppress your grief, but you can’t avoid it forever. In order to heal, you have to acknowledge the pain. Trying to avoid feelings of sadness and loss only prolongs the grieving process. Unresolved grief can also lead to complications such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and health problems.
- **Express your feelings in a tangible or creative way** - Write about your loss in a journal. If you’ve lost a loved one, write a letter saying the things you never got to say; make a scrapbook or photo album celebrating the person’s life; or get involved in a cause that was important to them.
- **Look after your physical health** - The mind and body are connected. When you feel good physically, you’ll also feel better emotionally. Combat stress and fatigue by getting enough sleep, eating right, and exercising. Avoid alcohol or drugs to numb the grief or lift your mood artificially.
- **Don’t let anyone tell you how to feel, and don’t tell yourself how to feel either** - Your grief is your own, and no one else can tell you when it’s time to “move on” or “get over it.” Let yourself feel whatever you feel without embarrassment or judgment. It’s okay to be angry, to yell at the heavens, to cry or not to cry. It’s also okay to laugh, to find moments of joy, and to let go when you’re ready.
- **Plan ahead for grief “triggers”** - Anniversaries, holidays, and milestones can reawaken memories and feelings. Be prepared for an emotional wallop, and know that it’s completely normal. If you’re sharing a holiday or lifecycle event with other relatives, talk to them ahead of time about their expectations and agree on strategies to honor the person you loved.

If you aren’t feeling better over time, or your grief is getting worse, it may be a sign that your grief has developed into a more serious problem, such as depression, especially if you are starting to have thoughts of death. Talk to a mental health professional right away. Members of Missouri S&T Student Well-Being counseling staff are available to assist students affected by grief. Students who wish to seek counseling services may contact the Student Well-Being office by calling 573-341-4211 or by emailing wellbeing@mst.edu. Additional details are available at wellbeing.mst.edu.

FEATURED RESOURCES

Student Success Center

With finals in progress, don't forget the Student Success Center's tutoring services. They offer personalized academic assistance to all S&T students from 8 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday. No appointments are needed – just walk in during your class's scheduled time. For that schedule and availability, check the [Fall 2023 Academic Mentoring Services](#).

This is a great opportunity to brush up on your knowledge and get the extra help you need to ace your finals. Good luck again Miners!

BetterYou App

Now that you have your SMART goals and New Years resolutions made, check out the BetterYou app for how it can help you achieve your goals.

You can set a goal to get more sleep, hit a few more steps, read more, keep in touch with loved ones, or meditate for a few minutes each week. Your mind and body will appreciate it. And your wallet will appreciate it- working toward and completing your goals allow you to get multiple \$5 rewards to be used at hundreds of your favorite places, such as Starbucks, Dominos, Amazon, Apple, Applebees, over 200+ retailers, and so many more.

Learn more and sign up at wellbeing.mst.edu/betteryou.

Plant Nanny App

One aspect of physical health that many of us can improve on is making sure to drink enough water each day. Did you know that the average adult should be drinking at least 100-120 ounces of water a day? It's especially important to track water consumption over winter when we naturally aren't drinking as much due to less activity/sweating, less sunlight, and our normal daily routines getting shifted around.

The Plant Nanny app is a free and fun way to help increase your water intake. In Plant Nanny, each glass of water you drink helps grow the cute plants in your garden so you can both thrive. Set a daily schedule so that you can collect and grow plants.

The app can help those of us motivated to keep our fun plants alive, but it also motivates with goal tracking, reminders, and bonus items for the plants for sticking to your goals.

Download the app in the Google Play or App Store, or learn more about the app at sparkful.app/plant-nanny.

MINDFUL MOMENT

New Board Games You Should Know

The holiday season is upon us, and what better way to bring joy and laughter to your gatherings than with a selection of board games? Board games are not just a source of entertainment but rather they offer a perfect blend of social engagement, competition, and cooperation. If you are weary of the same old same old with classics like Monopoly, Clue, and Risk, it's time for a refreshing change. Highlighted are four recently released board games that offer both extended and quick gameplay, catering to the entire family.

Spy Alley: Using strategy and deduction, 2-6 players take on secret identities, collect spy gear, and strive to unmask their opponents. The secret identity is represented by a country and the goal is to collect all the items needed for your spy mission while keeping your identity hidden. On your turn, you can move around the board, gain gear, or attempt to expose an opponent's identity. The first player to complete their mission without being discovered wins.

Tapple: Tapple is a fast-paced word game for 2-8 players. The game revolves around an electronic timer with lettered buttons. Players take turns naming words that fit a given category, the catch being the word must start with the letters on the timer. Once a player uses a letter, they "tap" that letter down and pass the timer to the next player. As the timer goes on, it's up to players to think on their feet for answers with letters left on the timer. When the time runs out, the player with the timer at the end loses the round.

Wingspan: This strategic card-driven game allows 1-5 players to become bird enthusiasts, collecting and nurturing a diverse array of bird species. Players collect birds in their habitats each round to earn points. Each bird comes with a specific power, and strategic decisions on which birds to attract and how to utilize their abilities are crucial. The player with the most points at the end of four rounds wins.

The Chameleon: This social deduction, party game is for 3-8 players to practice their wit and deception. Players are given secret roles and a grid of related words. Everyone, except the Chameleon, knows the target word. Players take turns providing one-word clues related to the word, aiming to secretly communicate with teammates. The Chameleon must blend in by guessing the target word without revealing they do not know what it is. Others must deduce who the Chameleon is based on the clues given.

MINDFUL MOMENT

Student Well-Being's Holiday Hot Takes

From Student Well-Being Staff

With the holidays in full swing, opinions and perspectives on how to celebrate, what traditions to uphold, and even the significance of the festivities vary widely. Whether it's deciding between what kind of Christmas tree to have in the house, the ever-controversial debate if "Die Hard" is a Christmas movie, and the question of when is too early to start playing Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas Is You," holiday hot takes add a dash of spice to the season. **Our team took to the office to see what the department had to say about the holidays. Do you agree with these hot takes?**

- *58% of the department favors some peppermint flavor in their candies and coffees during the holidays.*
- *The office was split on their thoughts about snow, we had everything from a handful, it's pretty, and we must have a white Christmas!*
- *41% of the department loves eggnog!*
- *Are Christmas sweaters actually ugly? 83% say nope, they are super cute!*
- *Christmas Carol Adaptation? Muppets Christmas Carol takes that vote!*
- *A third of the office would listen to Christmas music all-year-round!*
- *Experiences and memorable/homemade gifts split the vote on what kinds of gifts are the best.*
- *Everyone agreed that PJs are the must-wear outfit on the holiday morning.*

And then some specific hot takes that were just too good to pass up:

- "Lethal Weapon is also a Christmas movie. Don't throw coal at me!"
- "Presents should be opened on Christmas morning, however, Santa gifts are not wrapped!"
- "Breakfast and brunch with the family is better than a dinner during the holidays"
- "Ham is the best holiday main course hands down!"
- "Elf is the best movie for kids, while The Holiday is the best movie for adults"
- "Real or artificial tree? Neither! Save the environment and avoid cutting down trees and avoid using plastic!"

Do you have any holiday hot takes? Let us know by emailing us at wellbeing@mst.edu or DM'ing us on instagram @sandtwellbeing!

MINDFUL MOMENT

Grounding Techniques to Try this Winter

Grounding techniques are valuable tools used to bring a person back to the present moment, especially during times of stress, anxiety, or dissociation. These methods focus on reconnecting with the immediate environment to detract from overwhelming emotions or thoughts.

One common technique is the "5-4-3-2-1" method, which involves identifying five things you can see, four you can touch, three you can hear, two you can smell, and one you can taste. This sensory exercise is effective in anchoring the mind and body in the present.

Another grounding method involves deep breathing exercises, where one focuses on the sensations of inhaling and exhaling, which can help reduce physiological symptoms of anxiety.

Physical grounding can be as simple as feeling the texture of an object, walking barefoot to feel the ground, or holding a piece of ice, which draws attention to the here and now.

Mental grounding techniques might include counting, reciting a poem, or naming objects in the environment.

Regular practice of these techniques can significantly help in managing acute stressors, providing a sense of control and calm in challenging situations.

GET IN TOUCH



wellbeing@mst.edu



[573.341.4211](tel:573.341.4211)



[sandtwellbeing](https://www.instagram.com/sandtwellbeing)



[sandtwellbeing](https://www.facebook.com/sandtwellbeing)

UPCOMING DATES

December 11: Beginning of finals week

December 25 - January 2: University closed

January 1: New Year's Day

January 16: Classes resume for the Spring 2024 semester

MEET OUR WRITERS

Unless otherwise stated, all articles are written by one of the Student Well-Being staff members below. We thank you for your continued readership!

Debora Andrade - Student Employee

Abigail Krimmel - Student Employee

Laura Woods-Buchanan - Health Communications Specialist