

31 DAYS – 31 WAYS

to Make the World Around You Work for Your Mental Health

This Mental Health Month, take some time to look around and make note of your surroundings. Look within to see how they might be affecting you. While many parts of your environment can be out of your control, there are actions you can take to change your space and protect your well-being.

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| MAY 1 | Breathing deeply in through your nose and out through your mouth, become aware of your surroundings. Name 5 things that you can see around you. List 4 things that you can touch. Listen for 3 things you can hear. Find 2 things you can smell. Name 1 emotion that you feel. |
| MAY 2 | Create a "favorite things" corner, basket, or space with pictures of people/things you love, textures that bring you joy, or your favorite color. |
| MAY 3 | Remember that your mind and body are connected. Use your space to assist you with physical movement such as stretching, practicing yoga, or doing other types of exercise. |
| MAY 4 | Surround yourself with loved ones—if not physically in person, seek out communities online. |
| MAY 5 | Write affirmations or notes that you can look at throughout your day. |
| MAY 6 | Sign up to volunteer for your favorite charity. Volunteering is a great way to meet like-minded people, stay active, reduce stress, and contribute to your community. |
| MAY 7 | Do your spring cleaning with mental health in mind! Remove objects in your home that might trigger negative thoughts or habits. |
| MAY 8 | Put pictures of loved ones or pets in places you often look to stir positive thoughts. |
| MAY 9 | Set a timer and clean whatever you can in 10 minutes. Try doing this daily to tackle cleaning up your space in a non-overwhelming way. |
| MAY 10 | Consider adding plants to your space. They will improve air quality and cognitive functioning. |
| MAY 11 | Get comfortable and read a good book. Reading can help relieve stress and tension. |
| MAY 12 | Hold the door for a stranger or call your barista by name. Studies show that random acts of kindness increase release of oxytocin – the “feel good” hormone. |
| MAY 13 | Take the stairs instead of the elevator, or park your car farther away from the store. Even small additions of exercise throughout the day can decrease tension and improve sleep. |
| MAY 14 | Incorporate your favorite color into your living space – if you can't paint walls, use art, pillows, blankets, or curtains. |
| MAY 15 | Limit your media exposure, especially if you are prone to anxiety: check news from reliable sources only once or twice a day |

For free, confidential access to resources that support total well-being, call or connect any time, any day.

COUNSELING SERVICES

REQUEST FORM:
cca.eapintake.com


ACCESS LINE: 888-978-1262

WEB: www.myccaonline.com

Company Code: **JHEAP**

APP: CCA@YourService

Access Code: **JHEAP**

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- MAY 16 Reduce air pollution to prevent cognitive decline – change the filter in your furnace regularly, clean dust often, and buy an air purifier if you can.
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- MAY 17 Try prepping your lunches or picking out your work clothes the night before. You'll save some time in the morning and start the day with a sense of control.
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- MAY 18 Keep it cool for a good night's sleep. The optimal temperature for sleep is between 60 degrees and 67 degrees Fahrenheit.
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- MAY 19 Keep hobby supplies easily accessible for when you are stressed or need a creative outlet.
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- MAY 20 Dance while you do your housework. Not only will you get chores done, but dancing reduces levels of cortisol (the stress hormone) and increases endorphins (the body's "feel-good" chemicals).
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- MAY 21 Incorporate pleasing scents in your spaces. This could be lighting candles, using diffusers, or even creating DIY smells (for example, boiling oranges and cinnamon on the stove).
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- MAY 22 Use noise-canceling headphones or earplugs to block out noise at home. Especially if the sound of specific people or things gets triggering, or if you find yourself getting overstimulated.
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- MAY 23 Make your sleep environment as dark as possible. Try blackout curtains or use a sleep mask.
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- MAY 24 Practice acceptance. Recognize and accept what you're not good at, but focus on what you do well. Feeling good about yourself boosts confidence and helps you cope when life takes a difficult turn.
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- MAY 25 Fill a box with fidgets or soft things to occupy your hands when you feel stressed, anxious, or need help focusing.
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- MAY 26 Try listening to white noise if you have trouble falling asleep. You can use a white noise machine, phone app, or turn on a fan.
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- MAY 27 Give yourself a break! Take 10 minutes out of your day for a walk. Small breaks (and exercise) improve your ability to deal with stress.
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- MAY 28 Consider changing the settings on your phone to "do not disturb" or mute your notifications when possible.
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- MAY 29 After you're done using something, put it away, don't just put it down – this can help prevent clutter and piles of stuff from accumulating.
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- MAY 30 Try keeping a journal or notepad by your bedside. If you struggle with shutting your mind off at night, write down your thoughts to attempt to clear your mind and find rest.
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- MAY 31 Make a wall or jar of gratitude where you write things you are thankful for, that bring you joy, or positively impact your mental health.
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