



2024

Winter Resilience Guide



Winter Resilience Guide

Welcome to the **2024 Winter Resilience Series**! As we embrace the winter months, this guide aims to equip you with practical tools and insights to enhance your well-being during this unique season. Each week in December, you'll focus on a different module designed to help you navigate the winter months.

You'll be encouraged to reflect, set intentions, and actively engage in self-care, so you can emerge from the season feeling resilient and rejuvenated. Dedicate time each week to explore themes like managing stress, self-compassion, and embracing seasonal activities to build a stronger foundation for your overall well-being.

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Week 1: Introduction to Winter Wellness

In Module One, we recognize winter as a time to reflect. This module will show you how winter affects our feelings, relationships, and health. By understanding these effects, you can build resilience and set important self-care goals.



You'll look at practical ways to face challenges, plan how you'll engage in self-care, and create a strong support system to get through winter. Start this journey to take care of yourself and come out feeling stronger and refreshed.

Understanding Winter's Impact on Well-being

Winter has a unique impact on every individual. Some winters, you might feel accompanied by a tinge of sadness. Other winters, you might have looked forward to with happiness. Either way, you're not alone. The lack of sunlight and shorter days can take a toll on our mood. It's essential to be mindful of one's mental health during this time and to seek support if needed.

In a survey of 500 Americans, 3/5 feel their mental health is negatively impacted by the winter season, with 60% reporting an increase in anxiety and 52% feeling an increase in depression. Nearly 70% feel more financial stress in winter than in times of the year.

What causes winter blues?

Stress, fatigue, current events, personal grief, unrealistic expectations, financial stress, over-commercialization, or the physical separation of friends and family.

What protects us from winter blues?

Self-worth, healthy boundaries, safe environments, healthy lifestyles, positive emotions, and meaningful activities.

It's normal to have days when you feel emotionally down. However, if you feel down for days at a time and can't find the motivation to do activities you usually enjoy, please get in touch with the Optum Employee Assistance Program by calling 1-800-886-9747 or see your healthcare provider.



Activity - Understanding Winter's Impact on Your Well-being:

How does winter impact your well-being? Below are some of the common challenges folks face during winter months (Common Challenges). Consider any challenges you might encounter or have faced in the past (Your Challenges). Finally, reflect on things you can do (What You Can Do) to handle these winter challenges.

Dimension of Wellness	Common Challenges	Your Challenges	What you can do
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short, dark days can impact mood,• Feelings of increased stress• Feelings of increased anxiety		
Enviornmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Winter traveling• Cold weather• Harder to connect with nature		
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased cost of heating• Vehicle maintenance• Some winter holidays spending money on gifts, food, travel, etc		
Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rush to complete work projects• Concentration• Sluggishness		
Occupational	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes to normal working schedules for winter• Navigating additional work events focused on winter season		
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exercising and movement• Interruptions to sleep cycles		
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social demands Being alone during winter months Physically separated from friends and family		
Spiritual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Others may celebrate in ways that conflict with your beliefs and values		



Winter Wellness Intentions

Everyone faces unique challenges during the winter months. We also have aspects of life that protect us from challenges, which are called protective factors. Now that you've reflected on how the winter months can impact your well-being, it's time to explore some aspects of your life that protect you from potential challenges.

Diet and Nutrition



Drink water before your meal to help you feel fuller and faster. Watch your portion sizes and fill your plate mainly with fruits and vegetables, balancing it with carbs. Choose water over soda, alcohol, or caffeinated drinks. Remember that fresh fruits and veggies can be harder to find in winter, so look for healthy alternatives to get those nutrients.

Physical Activity and Environment

Physical Activity and Environment: Walk around a mall with friends. Join an exercise class or fitness group in the community. Clean your living area. Enjoy outdoor winter activities. Exercise extra care to prevent slips and other winter injuries.



Health Care

Health Care: Practice good prevention for colds and flu, such as frequent hand washing. If you follow self-management for chronic health conditions, don't let winter events, meals, travel, etc. let you get derailed.

Family, Friends and Supporters

Family, Friends, and Supporters: Think about who in your support network is helpful and who might be negative for you. Determine how much socializing you need to feel good. Use winter gatherings as a chance to connect with family and friends you don't see often.



Spiritual Wellness

Attend gatherings and celebrate the winter season in ways that are meaningful to you and match personal values and beliefs. Share/express gratitude each day.



Activity - Starting Winter Well

What wellness activities can you commit to this winter season? Use the calendars below to plan your winter wellness activities. Once a week? Twice a week? Every other week? Your winter wellness calendar will be unique to you. Remember to use the activity you completed on the 8 Dimensions of Wellness.

How often will you complete winter wellness activities? _____

December 2024						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28



January 2025						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25



February 2025						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	1



2

Week 2: Belonging & Support for Winter Well-Being

In this module, we will explore mental well-being by looking at Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and sharing practical self-care tips. We want to help you understand effective support systems and highlight the importance of building social connections and community engagement. By the end, you'll have tools to boost your emotional resilience and create a supportive environment for personal and collective growth.



Understanding Seasonal Effects on Mood: S.A.D

We've talked about the "winter blues" in the last module. Sometimes, these mood changes are more serious and can affect how a person feels, thinks, and behaves. If you have noticed significant changes in your mood and behavior when the seasons change, you may be experiencing seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

In most cases, SAD symptoms start in the late fall or early winter and go away during the spring and summer; known as winter-pattern SAD or winter depression. Other people experience depressive symptoms during the spring and summer months, known as summer-pattern SAD or summer depression. Summer-pattern SAD is less common. SAD is a type of depression characterized by a recurrent seasonal pattern, with symptoms lasting about 4–5 months out of the year.

For winter-pattern SAD, additional symptoms can include oversleeping (hypersomnia), Overeating, particularly with a craving for carbohydrates, leading to weight gain, and social withdrawal (feeling like "hibernating").

Winter-pattern SAD should not be confused with "holiday blues"—feelings of sadness or anxiety brought on by stresses at certain times of the year. The depression associated with SAD is related to changes in daylight hours, not the calendar, so stresses associated with the holidays or predictable seasonal changes in work or school schedules, family visits, and so forth are not the same as SAD.

If you or someone you know is showing symptoms of SAD, please get in touch with the Optum Employee Assistance Program by calling 1-800-886-9747 or see your healthcare provider.



Activity - Self-Care in the Winter

The winter season can make 5 PM look like midnight. As the daylight hours get shorter and the weather gets colder, the season can often bring a sense of loneliness or detachment from social connections. Maybe your loved ones and friends are at a distance. Regardless of your winter weather concerns, there are several ways to prioritize your well-being and stay well.



Get Outside: You might not be outside as long as you typically are in the summer season, but getting outside when it's cold has many benefits, such as improving mood, boosting immunity, reducing stress, burning calories, and getting better quality sleep.



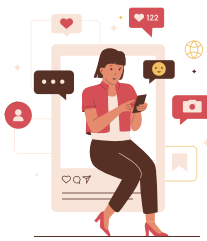
Hydrate Your Body: The winter air is drier than in other seasons. Make sure you're using lotion and moisturizer to hydrate dry areas. Don't forget to drink water, too!



Get Enough Sleep: During the colder months, our bodies are naturally drawn to sleep more. Take advantage of this and aim to get at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep per night. If you have trouble sleeping, try relaxing activities before bed, such as reading or taking a warm bath.



Eat Comforting Food: Incorporating comforting foods into your diet can help you feel cozy and warm during the colder months. Aim to include nourishing foods such as soups, stews, and healthy carbs.



Limit Social Media Use: Limiting social media use during the winter season can be especially beneficial. The winter months can already bring feelings of isolation and low mood, and excessive time spent on social media may exacerbate these emotions. Instead, try to prioritize activities that you enjoy during this season.

How will you practice self-care this winter?



Building and Maintaining Social Connections

Why does socializing in the winter become more challenging than at other times of the year?

1. The weather: harsh weather conditions such as snowstorms, icy roads, and extreme cold can make it difficult and unsafe to travel for social gatherings.
2. Seasonal changes can affect mood and energy levels leading to feelings of fatigue and low motivation to socialize.
3. Limited daylight: shorter daylight hours during the winter can impact energy levels and lead to a preference for staying indoors.
4. Stress: The winter season can bring added stress due to financial pressures, increased social obligations, and other expectations which may detract from the enjoyment of socializing.

We know social wellness is an important aspect of our overall health. And we can't possibly stop the winter from coming. So, how can we stay engaged and social during these winter months?

Consider the following:



1. Join an IDOC Employee and Friends Resource Group (EFRG)! The IDOC EFRGs are volunteer groups made up of IDOC staff, friends, and family members who get together for like-minded activities across the state. For more information about the IDOC EFRGs, please visit: <https://www.in.gov/idoc/about/commissioners-office/division-of-diversity-and-development/>



2. Give back by volunteering your time. For more information about volunteer opportunities in your area, please visit [Serve Indiana](#).
3. Socialize virtually from the comfort of your home. Eventbrite has virtual events covering most personal and professional skills, wellness, and more! Please visit: <https://www.eventbrite.com/d/online/events/>



Activity – Identifying Support Systems

Identify the positive people in your life who can support you during the winter season:

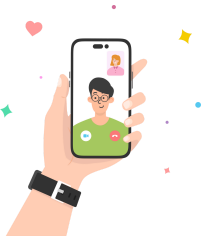
Positive People in My Life	How They Can Help

Some ways to cultivate social support in the winter months include:



Stay Social

Plan and attend in-person or virtual gatherings with friends and family.



Check-in

Check-in: Plan regular check-ins with your friends and family. They'll appreciate your support, too!



Listen

The positive people in your life care about you and the experiences you have. Identify those who are there to listen to you in times of need. This could be family, friends, or professionals.



Inclusivity and the Winter Holidays

Holidays should be accessible to everyone! Here are a few tips to create inclusive experiences this holiday season with friends and family with disabilities.



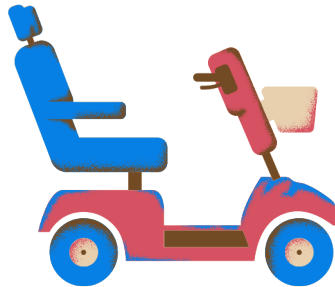
Allergies

- Ask about allergies and prep portions without these foods or offer alternatives
- Use separate cutting boards and kitchen tools to avoid contact with unsafe food
- Read food labels and allergy warnings before purchasing



Sensory Needs

- Include calm, private spaces for those who experience sensory overload
- Be mindful of background music and crowded spaces that make it harder to hear
- Allow guests to decide if they want to be hugged or touched



Mobility Needs

- Clear a path guests can take from the curb to the bathroom, to the tablet, etc.
- Provide extra seating for people who need to sit or rest more often
- Offer a ride or cover the cost to help eliminate transportation barriers



How We Belong

Humans have a basic need to belong, whether at work, school, in teams, or with family and friends. This need is deeply rooted in us. Belonging is the need for human connection. “Studies have shown that we crave connection in the same region of the brain that we crave food.” The feeling of exclusion or unacceptance means the natural need for belonging is unfulfilled. Its absence is just as detrimental as your body's lack of nutrition to thrive. This unfulfillment has been linked to anxiety and depression, and with S.A.D being common around this time of year, it makes connecting with those who give us a sense of purpose and value more important.



Before we go into tips on taking charge and fostering a sense of belonging, let's debunk some myths. Searching for belonging does not make you desperate. Nor should you feel pressured into becoming someone you are not. It's about connecting with people who share your interests and value the authentic version of you, flaws and all. Somewhere out there is a book club, peer group, or charity organization that's missing a special piece that they never knew they needed, and that's you.

Here are some steps to take charge:

1. **Self-Care:** self-care goes beyond exercising and eating well but it's also taking the time to discover more about who you are. How do you like to spend time? What are your interests? What type of people do you like to be around? What qualities in others bring out the best in you?
2. **Make an effort:** Putting yourself out there is a challenge because it often requires us to step out of our comfort zone. It's even more difficult for those of us that have experienced rejection. Either way, this isn't an easy step for anyone. Our brains are wired to protect us from reliving hurtful past experiences. Our response may show up in avoidance, anxiety, or rejection of others. Don't feel bad about where you are. Just know that you are worthy of human connection and experiencing the gratifying feeling that comes with a sense of belonging.
3. **Get with those who get you:** Who are your people? Who welcomes you any time they see you? Who supports your endeavors? Who is available when you need them? Who can you be your authentic self around? Sometimes, the people who get us are right underneath our noses.
4. **Volunteer:** This is a great time of year to volunteer. Many organizations want to spread some holiday cheer but are short of helping hands. Volunteering will boost confidence and a sense of purpose. Research also shows that it reduces the risk of depression. It also opens the opportunity to service others in need, give them a sense of value, and make new social connections.



3

Week 3: Managing Stress During the Winter

As winter arrives, we face challenges that can increase stress and affect our well-being. In this module, we'll discuss simple strategies for managing stress, such as setting boundaries, practicing mindfulness, and appreciating what we have. Our goal is to give you tools to handle the winter with strength and calmness.



Thinking Ahead to Be Intentional

We've all likely experienced additional stress in the winter months before. In previous modules, we've covered all the changes that happen during the winter that can cause additional stress. But what can we do to reduce our stress levels during this time?

Finding balance during this season requires thinking ahead about the season and being clear about what you intend to participate in or not participate in. You may be intentional about your winter finances, social obligations, etc. Take inventory of everything you think your winter might include, and think about how you want to engage in what you come up with. Some things to think about:

- How often do you want to socialize versus having quiet, reflective time for yourself?
- Do you want to maintain your fitness routine despite the season's busyness?
- Do you want to travel to see family for any of this year's holidays?
- Is contributing to charitable causes or volunteering part of your holiday plans?
- Are there creative or personal projects you want to work on during this time?
- Would you like to embrace outdoor activities despite the colder weather?
- How can you honor and connect with your beliefs during this time?
- Besides family visits, are there other places you wish to explore or visit during the season?



Techniques for saying no and setting boundaries

Work often intrudes on personal time, which can make it feel like the workday never truly ends. This can lead to exhaustion and burnout. Work-life boundaries keep your work and personal lives separate so you can shed your work persona, engage more in your personal life, rest, and recharge.

Wind down.

Tying up loose ends just before the end of your workday prepares you to set a firm boundary.

Tidy up your work area.

Write down tomorrow's tasks.

Silence work notifications on your phone.

Set an intention.

Making a *conscious* decision to set a firm boundary increases the chances of follow-through. It also helps to pair your intention with a small, meaningful activity.

Find a landmark you see every day on your way home from work. As you pass it, say to yourself, "From this moment on, I'm leaving work behind."

Choose a container and put it by your front door. When you get home, drop in your keys and any work items, and tell yourself, "I'm done with work until tomorrow!"

When you finish work, splash some cold water on your face. Say to yourself, "Goodbye, work!" and imagine rinsing away your work worries.

Modify your environment.

Your environment can make or break a work-life boundary. Making your personal space look and feel distinct from your workspace is critical.

Change into comfortable clothes.

Use relaxing or invigorating lighting, scents, and music.

If you work from home, close off your workspace with partitions.

Change your behavior.

Doing a non-work activity lets you step into another role and creates distance from work thoughts. Aim for an activity that helps you relax, recharge, and get into a different mindset.

After work, it's tempting to zone out on your phone or in front of the TV. Indulge in this for 15 minutes, then get up and do something more enriching.

Immerse yourself in an activity distinct from your work, like playing with a pet, taking a walk, or visiting with a friend.

When work thoughts pop up, gently turn your attention away from them and refocus on the activity you're doing.



Activity - Recognize, Allow, Investigate, Nurture

Mindfulness is a state of nonjudgmental awareness of what's happening in the present moment, including awareness of one's own thoughts, feelings, and senses. RAIN is a mindfulness practice that will help you focus on the present and cope with uncomfortable thoughts and emotions.

Prepare

Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes or let your gaze soften. Take three slow, deep breaths. Follow the steps below, lingering for a couple minutes on each step.

R

Recognize

Let yourself feel at ease in the present moment. Slowly take in your surroundings. Recognize your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations. Name your feelings out loud or silently to yourself.

A

Allow

Observe your experience as if watching a movie. Let your thoughts, feelings, and sensations come and go as they are. Let go of any judgment—it is okay to feel however you are feeling. You may tell yourself, "This is how it is right now."

I

Investigate

What words are going through your mind? What emotions are you feeling, and where are they coming from? How are these feelings experienced in your body? Sense the most vulnerable part of yourself and reflect on what it needs, such as acceptance, forgiveness, love, or belonging.

N

Be kind toward your experience. Give yourself a comforting message, such as "I love you," "you are okay," or anything else you need. Think of a friend, family member, pet, or spiritual figure, and imagine their love flowing to you. Let in healing and compassion until you feel calm and centered.

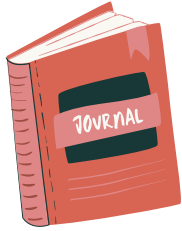
Conclude

Take three slow, deep breaths. Continue to be mindful and kind to yourself throughout your day.



Activity – Gratitude Practice

Gratitude means appreciating the good things in life, no matter how big or small. Making the practice of gratitude a regular part of your day can build happiness and self-esteem and provide other health benefits.



Gratitude Journal: Take a few minutes each day to jot down positive things that happened. It can be anything from enjoying a good meal to chatting with a friend or getting through a challenge.



Give Thanks: Look for reasons to say "thank you" every day. Pay attention to when people do good things, whether it's for you or others, and make sure to acknowledge their kindness with a genuine "thank you."



Mindfulness Walk: Go for a walk and make a special effort to appreciate your surroundings. You can do this by focusing on each of your senses, one at a time. Spend a minute just listening, a minute looking at your surroundings, and so on. Try to notice the sights, sounds, smells, and sensations you would usually miss, such as a cool breeze on your skin or the clouds in the sky.



Gratitude Letter: Think about someone you appreciate, like a person who has influenced your life or someone you want to thank. Write a letter explaining why you value them, including specific examples. You can decide if you want to share the letter or keep it private.



Gratitude Conversation: With another person, take turns listing 3 things you were grateful for throughout the day. Spend a moment discussing and contemplating each point rather than hurrying through the list. Make this part of your routine by practicing before a meal, before bed, or at another regular time.



Agency-Wide New Year Wellness Challenge in 2025!

Are you ready to put your wellness front and center? Join IDOC from January 27th to February 21st for an exciting journey that focuses on all dimensions of wellness! In this agency-wide challenge:

- You'll receive a tracker and focus on completing wellness activities of your choice!
- Attend optional weekly meetings virtually to check in at 10 AM, 1 PM, 4 PM, or 7 PM EST every Monday!
- By participating, you'll also have the chance to earn wellness rewards through ActiveHealth.



In January, plan to stop by to pick up your tracker from your Wellness Champion. Let's make this New Year our healthiest one yet!

Don't know who your Wellness Champion is? Visit the IDOC Staff Wellness Portal by visiting:

<https://www.in.gov/idoc/staff-portal/staff-resources/benefits/wellness/>



4

Week 4: Cultivating Your Inner Calm

Welcome to our self-compassion module! Here, you'll discover the importance of treating yourself with kindness, just like you do for your friends and loved ones. You'll learn some myths about self-compassion and try activities to improve these skills. By the end, you'll have the tools to build a kinder relationship with yourself, boosting your resilience and well-being.



Understanding Self-Compassion

Self-compassion involves responding in the same **supportive** and **understanding** way you would with a good friend when **YOU** have a difficult time, fail, or notice something you don't like about yourself.

Self-compassion means being kind to ourselves when we're struggling, instead of being critical. Research shows that treating ourselves with care is important for our emotional health. While it might not come naturally at first, we can learn to be more self-compassionate over time.



Myths about Self Compassion



Self-compassion is a form of self-pity. While many people think of self-compassion as feeling sorry for yourself, self-compassion makes us more willing to accept, experience, and acknowledge difficult feelings with kindness, which helps us process and let go of them more fully.



Self-compassion is weak. Researchers are discovering that self-compassion is one of the most powerful sources of coping and resilience available to us when we encounter major difficulties, such as divorce or chronic pain.



Self-compassion is selfish. Contrary to the idea that self-compassion is selfish, a growing body of research shows that self-compassionate people tend to be more caring and supportive in romantic relationships, are more likely to compromise in relationship conflicts, and are more compassionate toward others.



Self-compassion is self-indulgent. Research shows that self-compassionate people engage in healthier behaviors like exercise, eating well, and going to the doctor more regularly. Compassion advocates for long-term health, not short-term pleasure (just like a compassionate mother doesn't let her child eat all the ice cream they want but says, "eat your vegetables.")



Self-compassion is a form of making excuses. Self-compassion provides the safety needed to admit mistakes rather than needing to blame someone else for them. Research also shows that self-compassionate people take greater personal responsibility for their actions and are more likely to apologize if they've offended someone.



Self-compassion will undermine motivation. Most people believe self-criticism is an effective motivator, but it actually undermines self-confidence and leads to fear of failure. Motivation with self-compassion comes from the desire for health and well-being. Research shows that self-compassionate people have high personal standards and don't beat themselves up when they fail. This means they are less afraid of failure and are more likely to try again and persist in their efforts after failing.



Activity: Practicing Self-Compassion

It's easy to give our friends love, compassion, and understanding, even when they fail or make a mistake. It can be much harder to extend that same understanding and compassion to ourselves when we make a mistake.

First, think about times when a close friend feels really bad about them or is really struggling in some way. How would you respond to your friend in this situation (especially when you're at your best)? Write down what you typically do, what you say, and note the tone in which you typically talk to your friends.

Now think about times when you feel bad about yourself or are struggling. How do you typically respond to yourself in these situations? Please write down what you typically do, what you say, and note the tone in which you talk to yourself.

Did you notice a difference? If so, ask yourself why. What factors or fears come into play that lead you to treat yourself and others so differently?

Please write down how you think things might change if you responded to yourself in the same way you typically respond to a close friend when you're suffering.

An exercise like this can be a first step toward treating yourself like a good friend – not just for a quick, 10-minute exercise, but for life.



5

Week 5: Cultivating Your Inner Calm

In this module, we want to help you enjoy winter activities while staying safe. You'll learn important tips for outdoor adventures, as well as ideas for indoor coziness. By understanding safety and proper preparation, you can feel confident and ready to embrace the winter season.



Understanding Cultural Winter Holidays

Cultural holidays are rooted in customs, values, beliefs, history, and heritage. They serve as an opportunity to boast in and celebrate one's cultural identity. Cultural holidays bring unity and provide a sense of belonging. Often, they force us to pause our busy lives to give gratitude and reflect on what's important.

Here are some diverse holidays being offered in this season:

Hanukkah is a Jewish festival that celebrates the reclaiming of the Holy Temple. This year, Hanukkah begins on Wednesday, December 25, 2024, and runs until Thursday, January 2, 2025.

Bodhi Day is a Buddhist holiday celebrated on December 8th to commemorate the day The Buddha obtained enlightenment or awakening.

- Feast Day of Our Lady Guadalupe, December 12th, is a Mexican/Mexican American tradition celebrating the Patron Lady Guadalupe, symbolizing patriotism and devotion.
- St. Lucia Day, December 13th, is widely celebrated in Scandinavia and Italy. It is a Christian feast day commemorating Lucia of Syracuse, an early 4th-century martyr.
- Yule Day is observed between December 21st and 23rd. This holiday tradition celebrates the winter solstice, the return of winter days. It is celebrated by Germanic people and some pagan traditions.
- Christmas is a holiday celebrated by Christians on December 25th, commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ.
- Kwanzaa is a 7-day African festival celebrating family, community, and culture from December 26th to January 1st.
- Luna New Year is observed and celebrated by many Asian cultures to welcome the new year. Those who celebrate this holiday traditionally clean their homes and perform religious rituals to honor household deities.



Embracing the Cold Safety

The environmental cold can affect anyone exposed to cold air temperatures and puts you at risk of cold stress. As wind speed increases, it causes the cold air temperature to feel even colder, increasing the risk of cold stress, especially for those working outdoors.



Risk factors for cold stress include:

- Wetness/dampness, dressing improperly, and exhaustion
- Predisposing health conditions such as hypertension, hypothyroidism, and diabetes
- Poor physical conditioning



Dressing properly is extremely important to preventing cold stress. When cold environments or temperatures cannot be avoided, the following would help protect you from cold stress:

- Wear at least three layers of loose-fitting clothing. Layering provides better insulation.
 - An inner layer of wool, silk, or synthetic (polypropylene) to keep moisture away
 - A middle layer of wool or synthetic to provide insulation even when wet.
 - An outer wind and rain protection layer that allows some ventilation to prevent overheating
- Tight clothing reduces blood circulation. Warm blood needs to be circulated to the extremities. Insulated coat/jacket (water resistant if necessary).
- Hat that will cover your ears as well. A hat will help keep your whole body warmer. Hats reduce the amount of body heat that escapes from your head.
- Insulated gloves (water resistant if necessary) to protect the hands.
- Insulated and waterproof boots to protect the feet.



Exploring Winter Outdoor Activities

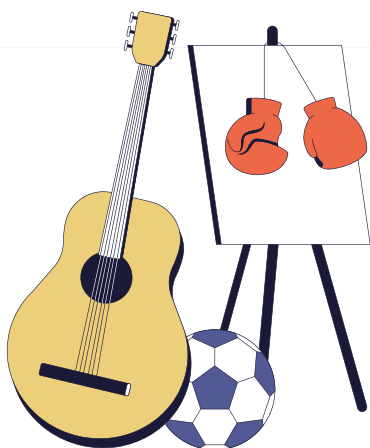
Spending time outside is important for our health. Sunlight helps our bodies make vitamin D, which is vital for growth and mood regulation. During winter, it can be hard to get outside, but there are many activities to keep you active. You can hike, walk around your neighborhood, or explore local parks with friends and family. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has an online calendar with information on parks and winter events nearby!

Access the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Calendar by visiting:
www.in.gov/dnr/places-to-go/events/



Engaging in A New Indoor Hobby or Activity

When we think of wellness, the aspects that first come to mind are physical and mental wellness. But, it is important to also think about your intellectual wellness and how you can care for your brain and tend to your curiosity and ideas. Intellectual wellness is all about learning, exploring new ideas, and being more well-rounded. This winter consider trying a new activity or hobby to promote your intellectual wellness:



- Pick up a new artistic hobby like knitting or painting
- Read a book for fun
- Listen to an informational podcast
- Play a musical instrument
- Complete a crossword or puzzle
- Play a board game or video game
- Learn a new language
- Watch a new movie



Learn More about How this Guide was Developed

As we conclude the 2024 Winter Resiliency Series, remember that winter is not just a season to endure, but an opportunity to nurture your wellness and cultivate resilience. By incorporating these practices into your daily life, you can emerge from this winter not only feeling rejuvenated but also equipped to face whatever challenges lie ahead. Let this be a time of reflection, growth, and warmth, and carry these tools into the brighter days ahead. Stay warm, stay connected, and most importantly, be kind to yourself. Here's to a winter of wellness!

Don't forget to visit the IDOC Staff Portal to access resources like the Optum Employee Assistance Program (EAP), ActiveHealth, and more! Please visit www.in.gov/staff-portal for more information.

<https://www.liveandworkwell.com/en/member/indiana>

<https://www.in.gov/idoc/staff-portal/staff-resources/benefits/wellness/>

<https://sesamecare.com/blog/lowering-holiday-stress-2021>

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<https://alcoholstudies.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/Winter-well-planner-2021-22-final.pdf>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder>

<https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma16-4958.pdf>

<https://mindfulcenter.org/shorter-days-but-busier-schedules-self-care-and-boundaries-for-winter-and-holidays/#:~:text=Setting%20Boundaries%20for%20Winter&text=Some%20boundaries%20you%20might%20consider,family%20doesn't%20respect%20that>

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