

# Compass

## Strive for emotional wellness and health

It's the middle of winter. While you might feel like doing little more than hibernating as the year begins, it can be a good time to assess and improve your emotional wellness.

When you're emotionally well, you can maintain the elements of good mental health. This includes having supportive relationships, keeping your emotions balanced, and facing life's challenges with resilience and a positive attitude. The beginning of the year represents an opportunity to get off to a healthy start.

Being emotionally well doesn't mean you won't experience difficult problems in life. It means that you have developed the internal resources you need to bounce back from those hard times.

In this edition of *Compass*, we take a look at:

- Ways to develop and maintain a more optimistic attitude about everyday life.
- Ideas on how to adopt healthy emotional habits that can sustain you through challenges.
- Information about how exercise can actively support your emotional health.

**Log on and learn!** Look for *Emotional Wellness* on the Magellan member website. You'll find a wealth of resources that can help you start the year with a healthy outlook.

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More Information!**



### Creating and keeping a positive attitude

- You might feel that your personality is set in stone. However, change is always possible. For example, you can transform the habit of having a negative attitude about things into a positive one. This can help you feel more in control of life.
- When you're faced with a new situation, try to turn off negative "self-talk." Instead, try to foresee a positive outcome.
- Just because you woke up "on the wrong side of the bed" doesn't mean your entire day is lost. Sometimes the roughest of starts can lead to surprising successes.
- Focus on positive friendships. The people you surround yourself with can have a big effect on your attitude. Try to steer clear of people who are mostly negative.
- If you feel like you're stuck in a rut, it helps to try something new. Take a class, volunteer some time to a charity, or plan a weekend getaway to an unfamiliar place.

# Building strong emotional habits

If you'd like to be able to better handle life's ups and downs, it may help to develop a set of healthier emotional habits. Strategies such as staying balanced, managing stress and overcoming unhealthy habits can help keep you on track.

## Seek balance

Staying on an even keel can help you navigate better through life. Both the big victories and the painful defeats in life can be valuable if you choose to learn from them rather than just responding emotionally. Also, it's important to always seek a balance between your daily responsibilities and other activities you enjoy. If you stay balanced, you'll be able to handle challenges better.

## Follow your own path

Don't compare your life to others or try to be someone you think others expect you to be. Instead, take time to identify what's truly important to you in life. Then take small daily steps toward reaching goals that are uniquely yours.

## Manage stress

Stress can harm mental and emotional health. Keep it controlled with stress management techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation and/or massage.

## Shed destructive habits

Perhaps you've picked up an unhealthy habit or two. This could include overeating, smoking, drinking, drug use, gambling or unhealthy relationships. If this is the case, work at phasing the activity out of your life. If you've developed an addiction, seek help to overcome it.

## Establish a healthy routine

Make sure you're eating a well-balanced diet with foods from each of the major food groups, and drink plenty of water daily. Also, try to get seven to eight hours of sleep per night, liven up your routine with a new type of exercise, and get as much winter sunlight as possible.

## Exercise boosts emotional wellness

*Workouts work wonders.* Regular physical activity improves your mood, helps relieve stress and depression, and increases feelings of well-being.

*Find winter fun.* Even though it's colder now, you can still find fun exercise options. Check out your community's indoor recreation programs. Exercise types include swimming or water exercise (aquacise), martial arts, cardio and strength training, Zumba and yoga classes, indoor walking and cycling tracks, and much more.

*Take vigorous outdoor walks.* An outdoor winter walk can be very refreshing. Just be sure to bundle up in layers so you stay warm, and wear reflective gear for safety if it's not very light out.

*Set exercise targets.* Improve your health by shooting for measurable, attainable exercise goals. Celebrate your successes!

