



Junior Officer Advisory Group

Readiness & Deployment Committee

[Behavioral Health Team]

Practicing Wellness

January 2023

‘Tis the season for stress free resolutions

Submitted by: LT Falisha L Begay

The holiday season is a time to reflect on the past year of joy, celebrations, and lessons learned. The cold and gloomy weather bringing families together with hot chocolate and hot apple cider by the fireplace. Unfortunately, it can also be a time of stress, anxiety, and depression with increased heating bills, holiday spending, family commitments, and busy schedules. An American Psychological Association survey demonstrated that 38% of people experienced increased stress during the holiday season. In addition to regular stressors, the officers committed to our mission of protecting the health of the nation may be deployed during these times and may not be able to be with family.

As the New Year approaches, resolutions begin and adapt to the many life changes over the past year as we continue pandemic challenges. In the midst of resolutions pertaining to weight management and physical health, improved mental health was among these top resolutions. According to a recent Forbes poll, 45% of all respondents prioritized mental health as their New Year’s resolution, whereas 39% replied improved fitness, 37% weight loss, and 33% improved diet. Results also support this trend in younger generations aged 18-25, suggesting a cultural shift to overall wellness in 2023.

Suggested mental health resolutions are as follows:

- Improving Quality Sleep habits of consistent and adequate durations help reduce symptoms of depression. Your psychological state is greatly affected when sleep deprived.
- Practicing Mindful Meditation. It has been shown to relieve stress and cope with symptoms of depression while improving cognitive and behavioral functioning.
- Practices of Gratitude through daily reflection on good things that have happened, no matter how small. We tend to focus on the negative outcomes that can lead to more stress and anxiety. It also allows us to connect with others around us and decrease the negative effects of loneliness.
- Prioritizing Self-Care is critical in caring for other healthcare professionals to mitigate burnout and stress. Replenishing the capacity to provide compassion and empathy for improving quality of care.

**A special thank you to those officers currently deployed during the holidays and your families for your service.
Happy New Year!**

References:

- Ahmed, S. (2019). Meditation and Mental Health. Does the science support the hype? Psychology Today.
- Davies, S. (2022) 50% Of Gen Z Cite This Health Improvement As A Top New Year’s Resolution For 2023. Forbes Health.
- NIH News in Health. (2019). Practicing Gratitude Ways to Improve Positivity. <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/sites/nihNIH/files/2019/March/NIHNIHMar2019.pdf>
- World Health Organization. (2022). COVID-19 Pandemic Triggers 25% Increase In Prevalence Of Anxiety And Depression Worldwide.