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The BHWP Messenger

Culturally relevant, evidence-based, and trauma-informed behavioral health and wellness resources for schools, staff, students, and families

We would like to wish you a Happy New Year and best wishes for the coming year! May it be a season of health and wellness for our students, families, educators, and staff. –The BWHP Team

Upcoming Wellness Wednesday

The Behavioral Health and Wellness Program (BHWP) will continue its monthly Wellness Wednesday series with **“The Power of Gratitude” on January 12, 2021**. This webinar will focus on the importance of gratitude and will share ways to practice gratitude on a regular basis. Our facilitators will be Wellness Specialists David Brave Heart and Leon Leader Charge of the BHWP team. To register, please [click here](#).

Our Wellness Wednesday schedule will be adjusted for 2022. Wellness webinars will increase to 90 minutes in length from one hour in response to feedback from participants. In addition, we will offer only one session per month. Webinar times are **1:30 p.m. Pacific, 2:30 p.m. Mountain, 3:30 p.m. Central, and 4:30 p.m. Eastern**. We hope to see you there!

Thank you to everyone who attended our December Wellness Wednesday, **“Wellness Strategies for Stress-Free Holidays.”** If you missed it, it is available on our YouTube page, or you may [click here](#) to view it.

An Indigenous Approach to Healthy New Year’s Resolutions

By Autumn Drags Wolf, BHWP Behavioral Health Specialist

Indigenous people have historically had ways of identifying cycles of renewal, like phases of the moon (months) and even years (winters). Among various tribes, there are countless ways





that we have honored a new year or a new cycle of seasons. Furthermore, there is a heightened development of Indigenous people seeking deeper and more culturally appropriate meanings beyond the colonial constructs that have forever changed our lives and harmed our Nations.

A common practice for many, including Indigenous people, is to create a New Year's resolution each year in January. Setting achievable goals or resolutions can improve your productivity and create a sense of accomplishment when achieved. This year, try setting a resolution that is sustainable and focused on your wellness.

For my New Year's resolutions, I want to direct my energy and focus on both tangible and spiritual goals that allow me to be as optimistic as I want to be in my visions for the year ahead. For example, I want to drink more water and be more considerate about eating healthy foods, not because I want to lose weight or 'tone up, but because I want to have a healthier body *and* mind so that I can show up for life and for my loved ones authentically. Additionally,



- I set cultural and spiritual intentions, such as harvesting traditional foods and medicines.
- I want to learn more of my history and be more courageous in using my Lakota, Hidatsa, and Arikara language.
- I want to visit relatives I haven't seen in years and spend more time outdoors with family, reconnecting to Unci Maka (Mother Earth), who has nourished and rooted generations of ancestors to health and well-being.

Remarking on the many ways that we can better nourish our spirits and minds, heal our hearts, and strengthen ourselves, our families, and communities – these are more than just resolutions. These are daily prayers for many of us; prayers that come into focus through ceremony and our own cultural new year celebrations.

Virtual Talking Circles in the New Year

The BHWP continues to offer virtual Talking Circles for any staff or employee working for a Bureau-operated school (BOS), Tribally controlled school (TCS), Navajo K-12 school, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI), Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU), or any Tribal college and university (TCU), and employees within any BIE department.

Two talking circles will be offered each month starting in January. Our next talking circle will be held on Thursday, January 20, 2022, at **1:30 p.m. Pacific, 2:30 p.m. Mountain, 3:30 p.m.**



Central, and 4:30 p.m. Eastern. Space is limited to ensure our team is aligned with best practices to keep group sizes small. Please [register here](#). Please take a moment to watch our Talking Circle public service announcement, which is [available here](#), and on our YouTube page.

Meet a member of our BHWP Counseling Team

Autumn Drags Wolf, LCSW, Behavioral Health Specialist

“Háŋ mitákuyepi, Autumn Drags Wolf emáčiyapi. Čhaŋté wašté napé-čiyúzapi. Hello, my relatives. My name is Autumn Drags Wolf. I greet you with a handshake from the heart. I am a Behavioral Health Specialist working with the counseling team. I am from the Cheyenne River Lakota Nation, and I belong to the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation. I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and received my master’s degree in Social Work from New Mexico Highlands University.”



Indigenous Recipe

During the winter months, cooking at home can be a healthy and comforting tradition for families. Here is one recipe for you and your family to try this month.

Wild Rice Pilaf

½ cup sweet yellow onion, chopped
 1 cup uncooked wild rice
 ¼ cup chopped green onions
 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
 5 cups water
 Pinch of salt
 Salt and pepper to taste



In a medium saucepan, melt unsalted butter. Add onions, and sauté for 8 minutes. Next, add water, pinch of salt, and wild rice. Reduce heat and cover rice. Allow to simmer for 45 minutes or until rice is tender. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking. Lastly, add green onions, salt, and pepper to taste. Cool and serve.

We welcome your suggestions for the BHWP Messenger.

Contact us at biebhwp@tribaltechllc.com