

Words of Wellness



April 2021

Environmental Wellness

The spaces where we spend time affect us in many ways. The many places and spaces we occupy each day, including where we live, work, and move around in our local communities, can enhance or detract from our wellbeing.

We also have an effect on our surrounding environment. For health and healing, it is important to take personal responsibility to care for our immediate environment as well as increase our awareness of how our behaviour impact the planet.



Environmental wellness involves being and feeling physically safe, in safe and clean surroundings. We are affected by the place we live, not just our actual living space but the surrounding neighborhood as well. For example, residents in a disadvantaged area have higher levels of depression and anxiety than people in more advantaged areas. This is likely due to poverty, health and safety risks, and stress, as well as the sense that nobody cares.

Being in nature helps people enhance many of the wellness dimensions (physical, environmental, emotional, and spiritual). With the spring weather arriving, get yourself out into a green space, however small, as often as you can.

Songwriting & Meditation Help Me

by Lauren

As a person with anxiety, finding ways to ground myself has been a life-long journey. Since I was younger, I have always tried to find ways to cope by picking up new hobbies, new sports, makeup, cooking, baking, cleaning, playing music, and singing—you name it, I tried it. I found that these things help me be proactive, but anxiety still comes up sometimes, whether I try and prevent it or not. Finding ways to ground yourself and stay calm is essential when you have anxiety.

Throughout the past few months, I have been experimenting with new ways to stay grounded, and meditation has been something that has helped me a lot. When feeling anxious, or even when I don't feel good physically, which can sometimes cause anxiety, meditation helps me become more mindful of the present, and remain calm when necessary. Meditation has helped me prevent panic attacks, decrease stomach and headache symptoms, and much more. It only takes a few minutes out of each day and can be extremely beneficial.

Though mediation is extremely beneficial, there are other ways to be proactive about your anxiety. One of the most important things is finding an outlet to be able to express your emotions, so that your feelings go somewhere, and don't just stay inside of your head.

Something that has been extremely helpful to my mental health, is songwriting. Finding music, and expressing my feelings through something I feel so connected to, has been extremely beneficial to my mental health.

Songwriting & Meditation (continued from p. 1)

I have been playing guitar since June 2020 and picking up a new instrument has not only helped me stay busy throughout the pandemic, it has also allowed me to set goals for myself outside of my academics and career aspirations. Setting goals outside your main focus like jobs, family, friends, education, while working through your mental health challenges, is motivating and energizing.

Working to improve my music has helped me prioritize time for me only and has provided some needed structure to my life. During these hard times, finding a sense of routine and structure is important. Sometimes, though, activities like cleaning your house or doing your homework are a little bit too hard. By having an outlet, I can separate myself from the expectations of others, and do nice something for myself.

Instead of laying in my bed and procrastinating, songwriting leaves me feeling productive and feeling better than I was before. Writing in general is a positive way to release stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms, but you can structure it in such a way that helps you connect to it more. By doing so, you create an outlet for yourself that doesn't feel like an obligation; it feels like you're having fun while being grounded, productive, and simultaneously improving your mental health.

Songwriting has helped me refrain from being impulsive, anxious, and stressed after difficult situations, or even on days that are more difficult than others. With the pandemic persisting, finding an outlet is important to maintaining a healthy balance between mindfulness and productivity. By incorporating an outlet such as writing, songwriting, poetry, exercise, meditation (or whatever feels good to you) into your daily routine, staying grounded and positive will only get easier.

Celebrating Earth Day: April 22

Learn what you can do as an individual, group, organization, or community to take action to better our world. Find out about local events, online activities, and how you can make a difference on your own—even for just one day. Learn about the history of Earth Day, past successes from advocacy and collective action, current environmental challenges, and ongoing campaigns at [EarthDay.org](https://www.earthday.org)

References

Thanks to CONTRIBUTOR Lauren for her contribution this month. Illustrations are listed online as free for reuse without attribution from pixabay.com

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