

My Word*Happy and healthy holidays to all of Humboldt County***By Christy Fausone**

The Humboldt Allies for Substance Abuse Prevention (ASAP) coalition would like to send the gifts of health and happiness to Humboldt County.

Our wish for our county is better health —physical health, financial health, mental and emotional health. The winter months can be difficult for many people. Less sunlight, colder, wetter weather and more time spent indoors may contribute to stress, anxiety and depression. If you struggle with any of these, help is available.

Stay healthy

Eat healthy foods and include more fruits and vegetables (even canned or frozen) in your meals. Avoid or cut down on high-cal-

orie and sugary foods and beverages.

Quit tobacco; chewing, smoking, or e-cigarettes.

Avoid or reduce alcohol and other drug use. If you drink, have one non-alcoholic drink for every alcoholic drink. This makes you less likely to over-drink or have a hangover in the morning

Use a sober driver if you do drink alcohol or use other drugs.

Exercise or get some physical activity every day. Yoga, Tabata, Pilates, dancing and Tai Chi can be done indoors during cold, wet weather.

Get enough sleep.

Stay happy

Stay on your regular schedule for medications during the busy holidays. Plan ahead for refills and take medications only

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as prescribed by your health care provider. Some medication should not be combined with alcohol or other drugs.

Exercise and physical activity may help improve mood.

If you feel blue, attend or join a support group.

Helping others can be a great way to boost your spirits. There are many volunteer and community service needs — from toy drives to serving meals.

Reduce stress

Create a budget for gifts, food, entertainment and transportation and stick to it if possible.

Homemade and handmade gifts can save money and can be fun to make.

Maintain a balance. Take some quiet alone time if you feel overwhelmed but avoid too much isolation.

Help is available

Mental Health 24-hour crisis line 707-445-7715. If it is not a crisis, consider a few visits with a Marriage Family Therapist or Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

Hospice of Humboldt offers grief counseling and support to those who have lost family, friends and loved ones. 707-445-8443.

Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment — adults 707-476-4054 or adolescents 707-268-3370.

Alcoholics Anonymous 707-442-0711 and Narcotics Anonymous 707-444-8645.

Financial Resource Center 707-822-8536 offers financial coaching, help with debt consolidation and other services.

Christy Fausone is vice chairwoman of Humboldt Allies for Substance Abuse Prevention.