



CONNECT WITH EASE

Employee Assistance Service for Education

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EASE can help during difficult times

Connect with EASE:
800-882-1341

Free confidential professional help for district employees and family members*:

- Work-related concerns
- Family issues
- Emotional distress
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Substance use
- Grief and loss
- Life transitions

Professional counselors are ready to help.
Call the EASE Hotline for 24/7 assistance.

MESSAGE FROM EASE

December is here, bringing both the festivities of the holiday season and, for many, unique stressors. This month's newsletter is packed with practical tools and resources to help you thrive, from setting healthy boundaries to finding joy in your own traditions. We're here to support you in making this season fulfilling, balanced, and truly yours.

To support you during the holiday season, we've included tips on "**Setting Healthy Holiday Boundaries**" to help you navigate family gatherings, maintain your self-care routines, and find time to recharge. Whether it's making time for a favorite activity or setting limits around holiday commitments, these strategies can give you a greater sense of control and peace. Remember, setting boundaries is not only about protecting your energy but also about enhancing the quality of time spent with others.

This month, we also celebrate several meaningful observances, including **World AIDS Day, International Volunteer Day, and Human Rights Day, as well as fun days like National Cocoa Day and Look on the Bright Side Day**. These dates offer moments to reflect on self-care, inclusivity, community support, and gratitude.

For those interested in a deeper dive into wellness, join us on December 4 for a "**Wellness Conditioning**" workshop with Gabrielle Gonzalez, LMFT. You'll explore ways to break cycles of stress and develop self-care habits that reinforce mindfulness and self-praise. Gabrielle's expertise will provide valuable insights to carry into the new year. In addition, check out the **Calm app's seasonal calendar**, which features short practices and reflections to help you stay grounded.

As we celebrate this season, let's remember to prioritize self-care, set boundaries, and take time to reflect on what brings us joy. Wishing you a peaceful and joyful December!





Setting Healthy Holiday Boundaries

The holiday season is commonly a time of abundant joy, connection, and warmth. At the same time, it can easily become stressful and overwhelming. Setting clear and healthy boundaries is essential in maintaining your wellbeing. Here are a few ways to navigate the holiday season to support your peace of mind.

- 1. Communicate Early and Directly**
Inform family and friends about your availability as early as possible. Be clear and honest about your limits.
- 2. Prioritize Your Time, Energy, and Budget**
Remember that it's okay to say no. Think about which gatherings or traditions matter the most - don't stretch yourself!
- 3. Set Time Limits for Events**
Determine a specific time for how long you plan to stay and communicate with others.
- 4. Maintain Your Self-Care Routine and Be Honest about Your Needs**
Schedule time for activities that will help you recharge your social battery and relax. Go for a walk, take a nap, enjoy a hobby.
- 5. Make Traditions of Your Own**
Create activities and small gestures of your own to give yourself a sense of control and personal joy. It's easy to feel overwhelmed with all the events taking place in your social circles
- 6. Reinforce Boundaries as Needed**
Restate your needs and limits as necessary kindly and with confidence.

It is essential to take care of yourself during the holiday season. Setting clear boundaries will allow you to create an enjoyable and sustainable experience for yourself and your loved ones.

happy holidays

Low-Cost/Free Events and Activities

Sunday, Dec. 1, 2024 1 p.m - 8 p.m

Downey Christmas Parade - Downey

Who will be the Grand Marshall this year?

The parade procession goes through Downtown Downey, coming down Downey Ave from Florence and then turning on 3rd.

Sunday, Dec. 1, 2024 1 p.m - 3 p.m

44th Annual Spirit of the Holidays Parade - San Pedro

The festive tradition brings families, little leagues, scouts, students, high school bands, equestrian units, and volunteers to downtown San Pedro to celebrate the holiday season and the community.

Friday, Dec. 6, 2024 3 p.m - 6 p.m

Kidspace Children's Museum - Pasadena

Come join in on the fun and experience the museum for Free First Fridays.

Saturday, Dec. 7, 2024 10 a.m - 8 p.m

LA Habra Tamale Festival - Free

La Habra's annual Tamale Festival is the largest Tamale Festival in the O.C. The event includes the holiday tree lighting and a holiday fireworks show.

All December 2024

Enchanted: Forest of Light - Descanso Gardens

Enchanted: Forest of Light is an interactive, nighttime experience, featuring a one-mile walk through unique lighting displays throughout Descanso Gardens.

Please "click" the underlined text for event links

Workshops & Resources



EASE HEALTH & WELLNESS SERIES
#3 WELLNESS CONDITIONING



Be Well, On Purpose.



ABOUT THIS WORKSHOP

Develop habits and routines to manage stress and promote wellness.

- Participate in a live experiential workshop
- Receive workshop recording and resources
- Access to monthly mindfulness challenge
- Reflect through journal prompts
- Use Infographic for ongoing learning

DECEMBER 4, 2024
3:30-4:30 P.M.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

GABRIELLE GONZALEZ, LMFT
Mindful Revamp, Inc. | EASE Therapist

Gabrielle Gonzalez is a licensed marriage and family therapist dedicated to integrating mindfulness and somatic therapy into her practice. With a passion for educating individuals on the brain science behind mental health struggles, she equips clients with practical skills to manage stress and anxiety. Committed to guiding those who have faced challenging life experiences, she empowers them to rediscover their happiness through mindfulness-based skills and embodiment techniques and she looks forward to empowering you too!



Learning

The Habit of Stress: Understand the "habit loop" of stress and how it affects your behavior, based on Dr. Judson Brewer's research.

How to Intervene on the Cycle of Stress: Learn techniques to break the cycle of stress and anxiety and intervene effectively.

Condition Yourself Through Mindfulness: Discover how to use mindfulness to reinforce positive behavior and manage stress.

Create Routines of Self-Praise: Develop a daily routine that includes self-reflection and self-praise to support your mindfulness practices and build new habits.

CONTACT EASE FOR MORE INFO

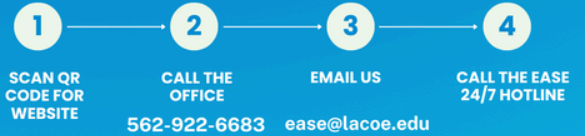
562-922-6683

[LACOED.EDU/STAFF-SUPPORT/EASE](https://lacoed.edu/staff-support/ease)

EASE IS AVAILABLE



HOW TO CONTACT EASE



EASE Hotline: 1-800-882-1341

Select "1" for EASE office
Select "2" to speak with a Counselor

December Awareness Days:

Dec 1: World AIDS Day – Recognize the mental health impacts of HIV/AIDS and support affected communities.

Dec 3: International Day of Persons with Disabilities – Promotes inclusivity and well-being for all.

Dec 5: International Volunteer Day – Strengthen well-being and purpose through community service.

Dec 10: Human Rights Day – Spotlights mental health as a human right.

Dec 13: National Cocoa Day – Enjoy a cozy, relaxing treat.

Dec 21: Winter Solstice & Look on the Bright Side Day – Reflect on self-care and gratitude during the year's shortest day.

Dec 31: New Year's Eve – Reflect and set well-being intentions for the new year.

Contribute to EASE Newsletter

Calling all educators, administrators, counselors and school employees: We invite you to contribute to our upcoming newsletters by writing an article for the months of January, June and August. Your insights are invaluable in sharing knowledge and fostering community within our educational network.

Please Click on "Contribute" to submit a proposal.

December Calm Calendar

DECEMBER

"Why wait to celebrate huge milestones when our days are full of simple delights?"
— Mel Mah

1 Do something to celebrate a small or big win.	2 Try the "Let's Celebrate" Daily Move today.	3 Infuse some playfulness into your day: sing, dance, smile, create, explore!	4 Praise yourself for something you've achieved this year.	5 Give someone (or yourself!) a warm hug.	6 Write a list of the things that make you happy!	7 What gifts has mindfulness brought into your life? Celebrate your growth.
8 Try a meditation from the "Quick & Easy" section.	9 Fill in the blank: I'm proud of myself for _____.	10 Reach out to a loved one and share why you value the relationship.	11 Celebrate the ways you've shown up for your mental health this week, month, or year.	12 What (non-material) gift can you give yourself and others today?	13 Let the day go with the "Stop, Breathe, Release" meditation tonight.	14 Spend some time outside today. Enjoy any feelings of connection or peace.
15 Reflect on the people who helped you get here.	16 Do something today just because it makes you happy.	17 Consider the gifts of the present moment with the "Celebrate the Now" Daily Joy.	18 Take 5 mins to list the things that make you feel warm and fuzzy.	19 Give yourself the gift of sleep by taking a short nap.	20 Play an uplifting Calm playlist as you cook, clean or work today.	21 Gift your body some mindful movement. Walk, run, dance, stretch, whatever feels great.
22 Give yourself permission to do less today.	23 May you feel the gifts in your life.	24 Take 2 deep breaths. Enjoy the present moment.	25 There's no right or wrong way to feel at this time of year. Embrace it all.	26 Appreciate the past year with the "In Honor of a Year" Daily Calm.	27 List the gifts you've received from others that aren't objects. Celebrate them!	28 Get cozy with a blanket or warm drink. Notice the temperature and sensations.
29 Breathe in love. Breathe out ease. Repeat 3 times.	30 Organize a get-together with close friends. Celebrate new beginnings!	31 Reflect on the past year. Celebrate your growth, efforts, and the gifts it brought.				



TALK TO US

EASE has counselors available. 800-882-1341

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