

NEELY EAP

JANUARY 2026

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WELCOME

We are so pleased to serve as your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider. The EAP is designed to be your first stop for support, offering prevention and short-term problem-solving services when life gets challenging.

Through the program, you have access to confidential short-term counseling, wellness seminars, legal support, and financial consultation services, all at no cost to you.

Each month, you'll receive a newsletter filled with helpful wellness tips along with updates on upcoming seminars, webinars, and additional resources available to you and your household.



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WELLNESS SEMINAR

Nutrition for a Productive
Brain: Eating to Improve Mood,
Focus & Stress Tolerance

01/22/26 | Thursday
2:00 PM CENTRAL TIME

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

QUARTERLY WEBINAR

Coaching Instead of Managing:
Turning Employees Into
High-Performers

03/27/26 | Thursday
2:00 PM CENTRAL TIME

[REGISTRATION PENDING](#)

Nutrition for a Productive Brain: Eating to Improve Mood, Focus & Stress Tolerance

By: Rosalinda Rodriguez, LPCA

Happy New Year everyone, what better way to start the new year than with a little chat on nutrition. Don't fret though, this won't be another whole spiel about "how you should give up your sweets and eat more greens", just stick with me for a bit. I won't give up on my HEB Chocolate Iced Donuts anytime soon, BUT I do want to talk about the correlation between *the food you eat and our mental health.*

Food is Fuel

Whether you like it or not, what you eat directly impacts the way your brain functions. Our brain has neurotransmitters (serotonin, dopamine, GABA, etc.) which are chemicals that allow neurons to communicate across synapses (nerve cell connections). Think of your brain like a group chat; neurotransmitters (NT) are the messages being sent. They're involved in movement, mood regulation, pleasure, pain perception, memory, and so much more.

Dietary Influence on Neurotransmitters Levels

Foods can contain NTs or their building blocks that help synthesize NTs. So, when you eat certain foods, you have the ability to affect your NT activity and, by extension, brain function and behavior (memory, focus, mood regulation). Here are a few NTs, their role, and related foods to eat to support their production:

- **Serotonin** is the mood NT which impacts our social behavior, overall mood, appetite, and learning. Some foods to support serotonin production include: kiwi, oranges, turkey, walnuts, bananas, cherries, and other fruits or vegetables.
- **Dopamine** is the pleasure NT which impacts our memory recall, cognitive awareness, and sleep control. Foods to support dopamine production include: animal products like meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk products, chocolate, fruits (apples, bananas, watermelon), and vegetables (tomato, spinach, peas).
- **Acetylcholine** (ACh) is the learning NT which helps to improve our attention, memory, and understanding. Foods to support ACh production include: egg yolks, salmon, lentils, mung beans, or soybeans.
- **GABA** (gamma-aminobutyric acid) is the calming neurotransmitter that helps quiet the nervous system, reduce stress, and support relaxation and emotional balance. Some foods that support GABA activity include: spinach, broccoli, sweet potatoes, brown rice, oats, almonds, walnuts, and fermented foods like yogurt or kimchi.



There are of course many more NTs but I chose to highlight these specifically because they directly relate to mood, focus, and managing stress. I'm not asking you to give up your favorite meals, rather, wonder how you could incorporate some of these in your routine to support brain health *and* still enjoy your favorite sweet treat.

To learn more about this topic, please join our upcoming webinar, [Nutrition for a Productive Brain: Eating to Improve Mood, Focus & Stress Tolerance](#) on Thursday January 22nd, at 2:00PM CST.

References

Gasmi, A., Nasreen, A., Menzel, A., Gasmi Benahmed, A., Pivina, L., Noor, S., Peana, M., Chirumbolo, S., & Björklund, G. (2022). Neurotransmitters Regulation and Food Intake: The Role of Dietary Sources in Neurotransmission. *Molecules* (Basel, Switzerland), 28(1), 210. <https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules28010210>

Mental Wellness & Healthy New Beginnings

By: Rosalinda Rodriguez, LPCA

What does mental wellness mean to you? How do you define health? The first step in reflecting on new healthy beginnings is defining what it means to live a balanced and healthy lifestyle according to your life. I'm a firm believer that "*comparison is the thief of joy,*" —Teddy Roosevelt. While there are some foundational, across-the-board definitions of what it means to be physically and mentally healthy, much like everything else, health lives on a spectrum. Everyone's sweet spot is different. Let's figure out what yours is.

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." (World Health Organization, n.d.)

Let's consider all that contributes to our overall mental wellness. There are eight dimensions to it including *social, physical, spiritual, emotional, occupational, intellectual, environmental, and financial*. What two dimensions do you feel strongest in? Which could use some TLC? As you start this new year, reflect on these eight dimensions and choose 1-2 to prioritize strengthening. Then write down 2-3 attainable goals for each dimension that you believe you can accomplish throughout this year.



For example, personally, my physical and financial dimensions need the most attention this year. To strengthen my physical health, I plan on prioritizing daily walks, weekly strength training, and monthly social fun movement classes like hot yoga with friends. To me, these are realistic goals that I truly believe I can commit to throughout the year.



While I do focus on mental and emotional health, we can't talk about it without also addressing our physical health. A great [6-item physical wellness checklist](#) created by the National Institute of Health includes movement, muscle strength, a balanced diet, metabolism, healthy habits (like sleep and stress levels), and figuring out what a healthy weight is for *you!* Use this as an easy way to check-in with your physical health goals!

Something I mentioned earlier in this article that I want to come back to is comparison. Our mental health suffers when we compare ourselves to others in an unhealthy way. "I wish I had her body" "I wish I was as smart as him."

Remember that no one else can ever fill your shoes. **Don't let comparison rob you of the gift of being you.** Everyone's goals once started off as just an idea, a hope. Now is a great time for you to start planting the very seeds that will help you grow into the person you want to become.

References:

World Health Organization. (n.d.). Constitution of the World Health Organization. World Health Organization.

<https://www.who.int/about/governance/constitution#:~:text=Health%20is%20a%20state%20of,belief%2C%20economic%20or%20social%20condition>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2025, January 21). Physical Wellness Toolkit. National Institutes of Health. <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/your-healthiest-self-wellness-toolkits/physical-wellness-toolkit>



WHAT CAN MY EAP DO FOR ME?



About Our Logo

For decades, enslaved African Americans looked to the North Star for hope, inspiration, and freedom. Neely EAP (NEAP) provides the **hope** that your situation will improve, the **inspiration** to move you in the right direction, and the **freedom** to live your best life.

At Neely EAP, we understand the challenge of balancing work and life stresses while staying mentally healthy. That's why we've partnered with your employer to offer you the following services free of charge:

- 24/7 Hotline, Access to Confidential Services
- Free Short-Term Counseling and Couch Time Check-In (preventive annual counseling session)
- Legal and Financial Assistance
- Work-life referrals for adult care, childcare, pet care and more
- Wellness Trainings & Online Employee Training Vault
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

