

National Health Observances

December

American Heart Month
Bake for Family Fun Month
International Boost Self-Esteem Month
National Black History Month
Relationship Wellness Month

Week of February 1—7

Women's Heart Week

Week of February 4—8

International Networking Week
International Friendship Week

Week of February 10—16

Children of Alcoholics Week
Random Acts of Kindness Week
National Pancake Week

Week of February 21—23

National Conference on Education

What is the EAP?

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a **FREE** and **CONFIDENTIAL** service that can assist you and your eligible family members with **ANY** personal concern, large or small.

Employees and family members can call Cascade 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We can help! Call Cascade to schedule an in-person appointment or get the resources you need. For more information, please call us at:

800.433.2320

www.cascadecenters.com



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Tips for Better Communication with Your Spouse

Relationship wellness is mostly focused on the overall "health" of the relationship with your significant other; however, it's not a bad idea to build good skills and habits within relationships with friends and family as well. Take a moment to think about some of the most important relationships in your life. How do you generally treat others? Do you put yourself first a lot or think of others more? Are you usually gentle or more overbearing? How do those important people around you receive love? How do you receive love, and do others know this about you? (a good resource for this is The Five Love Languages by Dr. Gary Chapman) Knowing the answers to some of these questions is important in having successful and meaningful relationships.

To keep a relationship strong and healthy, effective communication is a key skill. Communication allows couples to share their thoughts and feelings and engage in healthy problem solving. The following communication tips can help show you how to better communicate and connect, whether you and your partner have been together for months,

years, or decades:

Tip: Take time to be with one another.

It can be easy for life's daily responsibilities and obligations to interfere with the time you allot to your relationship. However, every relationship needs nurturing and attention. Try not to let your busy schedules come between the time you take for intimacy. Set aside at least one hour of private time each day to spend with your spouse. Enjoy it by engaging in a fun activity or even spending some quiet moments together. You can also strengthen your bond by using this time to talk about the highs and lows of your day.

Tip: Talk about the tough stuff- at an appropriate time.

Try not to accost your spouse the minute he or she walks in the door from work.

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Did you know that February is Bake For Family Fun Month?

Bake for Family Fun Month is the perfect time to share the goodness of baking with your family. From toddler to grandparent - baking is the perfect family activity.

Why Bake?

Besides creating delicious treats, baking gives kids the opportunity to:

Learn real-world math.

Measuring teaches fractions. Cutting brownies or a cake into servings demonstrates division. And waiting for the oven buzzer helps kids understand units of time.

Develop patience and precision.

If you mismeasure or skip a step, your baking project will disappoint.

Improve reading

comprehension and

vocabulary. Recipes are good practice for other kinds of instructional reading.

Cultivate scientific curiosity.

What makes a cake rise? What happens when you heat chocolate? Kids love baking "magic" and the explanations behind it.

Organize and follow through.

From shopping for ingredients through cleaning up, baking projects show kids the value of doing a job properly and thoroughly.

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Instead, ask your mate for a specific time when you two can discuss an important topic. Choose an appropriate time when you can both give your undivided attention. Before you meet to talk, write down your thoughts so you can keep the conversation on track. When you come together, share your thoughts and listen to each other for ten minutes, making sure each person has ample time to share feelings. If you need more time, schedule another time to talk about the issue at a later date.

Tip: Say what you mean and mean what you say.

Try to speak your point clearly and directly. Avoid beating around the bush; get right to your point as soon as possible. After you've finished saying your part, listen to what your spouse's reply is. Don't badger and argue over opinions; this is your opportunity to create solutions and problem solve.

Tip: Listen to both sides.

Don't elevate your voice when a disagreement occurs. Stick to a gentle, calm, but firm tone of voice, and only talk about what's most important: Choose your words wisely and tell your partner what you need, why it's important, and what your partner needs to do. Listen to what your partner needs as well, knowing that understanding his or her needs is just as important as you voicing your needs.

Tip: Talk about how you feel. Don't blame.

Share your feelings, rather than accuse the other person. A helpful way to do this is to use "I" statements, instead of "You" statements; for example, say "I'm disappointed that you didn't show up to dinner on time," instead of "You're always ruining dinner by being late." When your spouse doesn't feel blamed, he or she is less likely to react defensively, and more likely to listen and think about what's needed to correct the situation.

Tip: Appreciate your differences.

Understanding and accepting your differences can help you appreciate that you may communicate in a different way than your spouse. He may prefer to write about his feelings instead of vocalize them. Or she may prefer to take a walk after a disagreement, and then work on solutions when she returns. Honor these differences, and be creative in accommodating them when solving your problems. When you appreciate the unique communicative style of the other person, you'll be better able to get along and better able to nurture a healthy relationship with your loved one.

Written by Life Advantages - Author Delvina Miremadi ©

Frozen Fruit Skewers with Honey-Yogurt Dipping Sauce

- 6 bamboo skewers
- 1 cup fresh fruit pieces (berries, grapes, pineapple chunks)

Honey-Yogurt Dipping Sauce

- ¼ cup plain yogurt
- 2 teaspoons honey

- Have the kids place the fruit on the skewers. Encourage nibbling.
- Freeze the skewers in an airtight container or a zip-top bag for at least 5 hours until frozen solid.
- Just before serving, mix together yogurt and honey. Serve with frozen skewers.

