



Dear CCNY Community,

The upcoming winter break and holiday season can be a sensitive time filled with a variety of strong emotions. For some, being unable to see family and loved ones due to safety reasons can bring on new conflicting emotions, loneliness, and overall stress. For others, the winter break and holiday season can evoke difficult emotions and reminders of stressful family dynamics. It is also common to experience seasonal depression as the sun sets earlier in the day.

This week we present:

Letters to Home – Preparing for the Holidays and Winter Break

Finding ways to cope during the holiday and winter break will help to reduce emotional vulnerabilities and impulsive behaviors. Below are some tips for coping with low mood and stress over the holiday and break.

- **Acknowledge How You Feel:** The holidays might stir up various emotions for you, so it is important to think about how you are feeling right now. Pay attention to and validate the way you are currently feeling, but also consider how you might wish to feel. Try to engage in the opposite of those emotions if they are becoming too overwhelming. Feeling isolated? Call friends and loved ones, go for a walk, or schedule a safe hang out.
- **Reach Out to Loved Ones for Support:** All feelings are valid. To better cope, identify a family member or friend with whom you feel safe and who you trust to discuss these feelings. Try to avoid minimizing your feelings so that you are more inclined to reach out when necessary.
- **Seek Additional Support:** If you find yourself struggling to reach out or unable to engage in coping skills during this time, consider making an initial appointment to speak with a mental health professional or scheduling an additional appointment with your therapist.

- **Prepare a Coping Skills List:** Often times our emotions can get the best of us. Having a list of beneficial skills and tools handy can make it easier to access and utilize them during periods of intense emotional distress. This list can consist of things such as: mindfulness activities, breathing exercises, going for a walk, spending time engaging in hobbies, baking, trying new hobbies, reading, create a soothing playlist, or listening/watching humorous content.
- **Volunteer (Socially Distanced or Virtually) Over the Holidays:** Volunteering can provide a sense of purpose and allow us to feel connected to others. Consider calling someone who spends the holiday season alone or think about delivering meals to the elderly. When you are sharing your time and helping others, you are building hope and spreading cheer.
- **Set Intentions:** As we enter the last month of 2020, set one or two small intentions for December. This does not mean you need to finish the year productively. Setting a small, obtainable goal for this month can help us manage our focus. With classes ending, it can also help us maintain a semblance of routine. Here are some examples of intentions: taking short walks 3 times a week, connect with two friends, or maintain a good sleep schedule. Intentions do not need to be complex and are more beneficial when they are clear and measurable.

Additional Resources:

[Setting Intentions - Activity](#)

[Feeding American Volunteer Opportunity](#)

[Volunteer Opportunities](#)

The Counseling Center is open and providing remote clinical services, via online platforms and phone, to actively enrolled CCNY students. Services provided include screening and assessment, crisis intervention, individual short-term counseling, group counseling, referral and case management, and workshops.

If you are a CCNY student and would like to connect with a counselor, you can do so by:

- Emailing us at counseling@ccny.cuny.edu
- Calling our office's main number (212) 650-8222

For more information, please visit our website: <https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/counseling>

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline \(Lifeline\)](#) -- **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**, or text the Crisis Text Line (**text HELLO to 741741**). Both services are free and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The deaf and hard of hearing can contact the Lifeline via TTY at 1-800-799-4889. All calls are confidential.

Trevor Lifeline, the only national 24/7 lifeline for LGBTQ youth is 1-866-488-7386.

Veterans Crisis Line, for U.S. Military Veterans, call 1-800-273-8255, press 1.

For immediate mental health support please call NYC Well 1-888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355). NYC Well provides free, confidential services to support mental health concerns. NYC WELL is available 24/7 and can provide assistance in over 200 languages.

You can also text WELL to 65173 or access the NYC WELL website at <https://nycwell.cityofnewyork.us/en/> to chat with a counselor.

Stay safe and take care of each other,
The CCNY Counseling Center