



GBS HEALTH & WELLNESS

Clinical Corner

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Savoring the Season: Cultivating Presence Throughout the Holidays

As the holiday season approaches, we find ourselves amid the hustle and bustle of festivities, gift-giving, and gatherings. During this whirlwind, it's easy to get caught up in the rush and miss the true essence of the holidays. This month, explore the concept of "Purposeful Presence" – a practice that can transform how we experience the holidays, foster deeper emotional connections, find joy in simplicity, and reduce anxiety.

Embracing Purposeful Presence

Purposeful presence isn't just a catchy phrase; it's a mindful approach to the holiday season. It means being fully present in each moment, embracing the richness of our experiences, and cultivating gratitude for the simple pleasures that surround us. There are many benefits we can gain from practicing purposeful presence such as:

Finding Joy in Simple Pleasures

Amid the grandeur of holiday decorations and extravagant feasts, it's the simple moments that often leave a lasting impact – the warmth of a

cup of cocoa, the laughter shared with loved ones, or the quiet glow of candlelight. Purposeful presence encourages us to savor these moments and find joy in the everyday simplicities.

Enhanced Emotional Connections

Being fully present deepens emotional connections. It's about being genuinely present in conversations, sharing authentic smiles, and appreciating the nuances of our relationships. Engaging with loved ones on a deeper level fosters a sense of belonging and strengthens the bonds we share.

Reducing Anxiety Through Mindfulness

Social commitments and to-do lists can make the holiday season overwhelming. Purposeful presence, rooted in mindfulness, provides a sanctuary of calm amidst the chaos. By focusing on the present moment, we can alleviate anxiety and approach each task with clarity and composure.

Practicing Purposeful Presence

How can we practice Purposeful Presence during the holidays?

Mindful Gift Giving

Embrace meaningful connections by moving away from materialism. Consider providing experiences over things, creating lasting memories rather than temporary possessions. A nature retreat, a cooking class, or tickets to a favorite show can kindle joy that lasts long after the holiday season has passed. Foster cherished moments and strengthen bonds with loved ones through the gift of quality time.

Creating a Mindful Home

Infuse your home with positivity – be it through cozy decorations, calming scents, or soothing music – create a sanctuary of peace and tranquility. Create zones of serenity by designating specific areas in the home for quiet activities such as reading or meditating. Establish specific tech-free areas in your home, such as the dining room or bedroom, where digital devices are not allowed.

Gratitude Practice

Embrace the power of gratitude. Regularly reflecting on our blessings can transform our

perspective, making us more appreciative of the abundance in our lives.

The Gratitude Advantage

Research demonstrates how a gratitude practice can have a profound impact on our well-being. Gratitude practice has been linked to reduced cortisol levels, providing a natural stress-relief mechanism. Moreover, it enhances mood and sleep, fostering a sense of contentment and relaxation. Neuroimaging studies demonstrate that gratitude activates brain regions associated with empathy, social bonding, and reward, reinforcing the neurological basis of gratitude's benefits.

Consider integrating gratitude into your holiday rituals through the following activities:

Gratitude Jar

Dedicate a jar to gratitude notes – moments of joy, love, and appreciation. Each day, add a note, creating a tangible reminder of life's blessings.

Journaling

Keep a gratitude journal, to jot down things you're thankful for. Reflecting on positive experiences can shift our focus from stressors to sources of joy.

Mindful Walks

Take leisurely strolls outdoors, immersing yourself in the beauty of nature. With each step, express gratitude for the wonders surrounding you.

Gratitude Tree

Create a "Gratitude Tree" where family members add leaves expressing what they're thankful for. Watching the tree bloom with gratitude fosters a sense of shared appreciation.

Volunteering

Dedicate time to volunteering – whether at a local shelter, food bank, or community event. Contributing to the well-being of others magnifies our own sense of gratitude and purpose.

This holiday season, let's embark on a journey of purposeful presence and gratitude. By embracing the richness of the present moment and cultivating gratitude, we can transform our experiences, foster deeper connections and reduce anxiety.

Wishing you a holiday season filled with mindful moments, heartfelt connections, and abundant gratitude.