

# Words of Wellness



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## BEAT THE WINTER BLUES

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The mercury is dropping, the nights seem endless, and all you want to do is live under the covers with an unlimited supply of carbohydrates (and left-over holiday treats) and pout. You're battling the winter blues!

Seasonal depression, characterized by mood swings, anxiety, weight gain or loss, exhaustion or any combination thereof, can make swimming pools and sandals seem like long-forgotten dreams, never to recur. Here are a few ways for teachers to **shake off the winter blues**, and stay happy and hopeful throughout the coldest, dreariest months of the year.

### CONSIDER YOUR MENTAL FITNESS

Mental Fitness is the ability to cope with life and personal changes in healthy and productive ways. It includes:

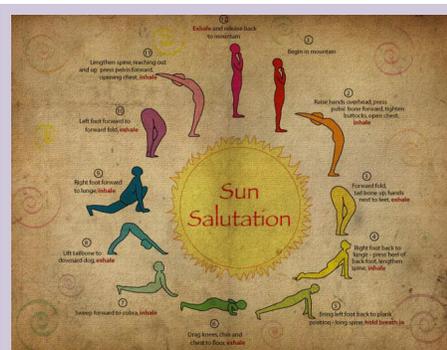
- Building Healthy Relationships
- Emotional Fitness
- Relaxation
- Coping with Stress
- Facing Difficulties
- Overcoming Addictions

### COMBAT STRESS AND ANXIETY

- Stress is the “wear and tear” on the body. It is how we respond to events in our lives.
- Not all stress is bad. It can pump you up and give you energy if it's not too much.
- Stress is unavoidable – so we have to learn ways to deal with it.
- Too much stress on your mind and body can make you feel sad, miserable and anxious. Teachers who wait too long to compensate can end up burned out.

### TAKE PHYSICAL ACTION

- Physical activity
  - Releases hormones that enhance mood
  - Reduces the stress response
  - It's not just running! Also includes walking and yoga
- Relaxation
  - Helps refocus energies
- Eating well
  - Provides stamina
  - Poor eating creates distress in the body



### FIND SOME PEACE

- **NAPS** Relax, recharge, refresh! 20 Minute naps seem to be the ideal length – enough to refresh but not too long to make you feel groggy.
- **“UNPLUG FROM THE WORLD”**

- from cell phones, computers, and smartphones. Do photography, take a slow walk, try new recipes, play a board game, or read a book.

- **QUIET AND STILL...**sometimes when we're stressed we need a couple minutes to chill! Look out the window, lie on your bed, use positive and calming self-talk; you can get through this!

### WORK ON YOUR SELF-ESTEEM

- Surround yourself with positive people
- Do activities which make you feel happy and proud of yourself
- Celebrate your achievements
- Set realistic goals for yourself
- Make sure you are good to yourself: Eat right, exercise, get enough sleep

