

# 15 tips for your mental health in 2022

Twenty twenty-two is here, with all its possibilities and opportunities. You may be wondering how you will achieve all of your personal and professional goals this year. Your mental health in 2022 may hold the key to success. Read on for tips from Magellan Healthcare's behavioral health experts to help you prioritize your mental health in the new year.

- 1. Spread out New Year's resolutions over the year** – At the beginning of the year, people usually try to accomplish too many resolutions all at once. They are quickly overwhelmed and give up. Instead, create a list of resolutions, or goals, to implement—one per month—over the year. Spreading out goals and focusing on one at a time will feel more consistent with lifestyle change than the usual New Year's start and stop. – [Candice Tate, MD, MBA](#)
- 2. Plan things to look forward to** – Having a daily routine is important for our mental health. It limits the chaos and helps us feel grounded. But it can get boring, especially during COVID-19 when we are closed in. Schedule things to look forward to for the upcoming weeks and months. Maybe schedule a day trip on a weekend, a few hours in the evening to watch a movie, or a phone/Zoom call with an old friend, make a reservation at your favorite restaurant or plan to place a delivery order. Choose things that make you feel good. – [Linda Evans, MD, FAPA](#)
- 3. Limit screen time and media exposure** – Social media has been a much needed lifeline for so many of us during the pandemic, but it's essential that we remember to limit our screen time and exposure to content that can be emotionally distressing or traumatizing. Make a habit of

putting your mobile device down and stepping away from your computer to enjoy the people, plants or pets in your environment. Go outside, take a walk, and get some fresh air and sunlight. – [Rakel Beall-Wilkins, MD, MPH](#)

4. **Learn that “no” is a complete sentence** – You cannot pour from an empty cup. Saying yes to every request asked of you when you are already limited on time, energy or resources can increase stress levels. Putting your needs on the backburner is not healthy for you. Being a “yes” person sometimes equates to saying “no” to your own mental health. Recognize not only when to say no, but that you don’t have to feel guilty about it... It’s all about saying yes to you! – [LaShondra Washington, MD, DFAPA](#)
5. **Measure something** – Our perceptions often do not match the reality of a situation but picking something to measure that is related to a concern can help better align our perceptions to reality. And if the results of the measurements indicate that indeed perception and reality *are* aligned, then continued measurement, after an intervention, can determine the usefulness of the intervention on the measure. In other words, take steps to find out if what is bothering you is really a problem, and if it is, then make a change and reassess. – [Louis Parrott, MD, PhD](#)
6. **Engage in journaling** – Journaling is an effective way to manage stress and feelings. It can be cathartic to write about feelings and experiences. It is also a way to monitor your inner self and when it may be necessary to seek professional help. – [Samuel Williams, MD, MBA, FAPA](#)
7. **Practice gratitude** – Share gratitude with others and write three things you are grateful for every day. According to Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, an internationally known mindfulness advocate, we should ask ourselves three questions each day that relate to our relationships with family, friends, and co-workers: What have I received from \_\_? What have I given to \_\_? What

troubles and difficulties have I caused? – [Doris Lebischak, MD](#)

8. **Establish an attainable plan for regular physical activity and stick to it** – Start with one or two days of exercise a week. Plan the days, times, and activities and commit to making it happen. Exercise is proven to reduce depression, anxiety, and negative mood.<sup>[1]</sup> – [Greg Dicharry, CPRP](#)
9. **Consider expanding your exercise routine** – As we age, our muscles must be challenged to maintain strength. Including strength training, stretching and physical activity that raises the heart rate in our workouts will have an immediate impact as well as long-term benefits for the body and mind. – [Paula Hensley, MD](#)
10. **Eat a balanced diet with as many unprocessed foods as possible** – Include colorful fruits and vegetables and prepare food in healthier ways like steaming and roasting rather than frying. If applicable, include children in meal selection and preparation, and eat at least one meal per day as a family. Try not to place food into strict bad and good categories, and understand that you are not-accordingly-bad or good depending on what you eat. It's important to eat a balanced diet for your lifestyle. – [Misty Tu, MD](#)
11. **Prioritize sleep** – Push through busy schedules and life's distractions to maintain eight hours of sleep each night and experience how it helps you think more clearly, feel better and be better able to creatively juggle the multiple demands of family, work, and beyond. – [Barbara Dunn, LCSW, ACSW](#)
12. **Develop a cue that ends your workday** – Whether it is pausing to watch the sunset, moving your body for 20 minutes, or ceremonially closing the door to your workspace, disconnecting from work to focus on rest, joy, or family responsibilities is a necessary way to prioritize mental health in 2022. – [Dana Foglesong, MSW, NCPS, CRPS](#)

13. **Make sure to prioritize yourself** – In a time when kids are home, work is piling up, and there is growing uncertainty in and outside of our homes, it's unfortunately easy to get lost in all we have going on. But it's vital we prioritize ourselves. Whether it's going on a walk or other exercise, meditation, talk therapy, weekly dinner with friends or family... don't ever forget to put yourself first because your mental health is wealth. – [Yagnesh Vadgama, BCBA](#)
14. **Ask for help when you need it** – Recognize that no one person can do everything. Family, friends, and neighbors can be great resources, so ask for what you need and offer help to them when you can. – Kathryn Kvederis, MD, DFAPA
15. **Remember that you are not alone** – One in five American adults has a mental illness and one in 18 American adults has a serious mental illness; one in six American youth has been diagnosed with depression.<sup>[2]</sup> Despite all of the glittery images we may see and our perceptions that others have it better, it's likely that we have family members, friends, and co-workers who are right there with us when we aren't feeling our best. – [Keith Brown, MD](#)

As we sail into a bright new year, with 2021 in the rear-view mirror, let's remember to prioritize ourselves and our mental health. We have all experienced the trials and tribulations of a tumultuous previous two years. If we have learned anything, it's that our mental health in 2022 is what will keep us strong and poised for happiness and success.

Visit [MagellanHealthcare.com/BH-Resources](https://MagellanHealthcare.com/BH-Resources) for free information and tools to address mental/behavioral health needs and spread awareness to reduce stigma. Stay tuned here and on our [calendar](#) for updates on our virtual events throughout the year.

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[1] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1470658/>

[2]

<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/release/2020-national-survey-drug-use-and-health-nsduh-releases>