



Catch the redbuds this year! This beautiful red-dish-pink flower is one of our favorite first signs of spring and can be spotted in radiant clusters along our scenic byways. Hop in the car for a scenic drive or take one of our road cycling routes along Route 40 to catch this brilliant display of spring.

Cool ideas for your bucket list

Brought to you by our friends
at Allegany County Tourism

Wild Forage! Spring is the perfect time to hunt some of Allegany County's most coveted wild edibles - ramp onions and morel mushrooms. With over 50,000 acres of public, wooded land between Rocky Gap State Park and Green Ridge State Forest, there are plenty of opportunities to forage.

Go paddling with a pet! The great outdoors are for the whole family, and your four-legged friend is no exception. Rocky Gap State Park is hailed as one of Maryland's most dog-friendly state parks. Two out of three beaches on Rocky Gap's Lake Habeeb welcome dogs and even have roped off areas where families can swim with their furry companion. You can even bring the pup along on a canoe ride around the lake.

Try and unplug this March! Why not get outdoors? Take in some fresh mountain air and move your body. Allegany County features over 200 miles of developed trails for hiking and biking, including multiple at Rocky Gap State Park and Green Ridge State Forest.

April will be the one-year anniversary of the unveiling of the Mile Marker 0 medallion at Canal Place. This is where people start, end or pass through their journey on the GAP Trail and C&O Canal. It is a place of pure celebration and one of our most photographed locations. April is also the unofficial/official start of trail season with the Big Savage Tunnel open and passthrough trail traffic can resume for 330-miles from Pittsburgh to Georgetown! Also, Allegany County is Maryland's trail destination with both the Great Allegheny Passage and the C&O Canal Towpath making Bicycling Magazine's 2022 Bicycling Travel Awards for best trails in the nation. Bicycling Travel Awards 2022.

May is the return of Tracks and Yaks, Maryland's only rail biking excursion and the only 22nd of its kind in country!

EX2Adventures is bringing a 25K and a 50K relay to Rocky Gap this October?! <https://ex2adventures.com/trail-running/rocky-gap-25k-50k-relay/>

Spring is in the air

I welcome you to our spring edition of Real Well 2022! I don't know about you, but I am more than ready to get outside after a long cold winter and soak up the warming sun, indulge in longer days, and take in all the beautiful sights and sounds that accompany this magical time of year! Oftentimes, we embark on a thorough "spring cleaning" of our home to brush off the dust, clean out junk, and brighten things up. Have you ever considered this a time to also "spring clean"



Jen Thomas

your health? Take a look at your daily routine and see where you can clean things up a bit whether it be scheduling a long overdue

visit for a preventative health screening, adding more movement to your day, or focusing on filling your plate with more colors of the rainbow.

As you browse through the spring edition, please check out some amazing programs being offered - especially a brand-new workshop called "Building Better Caregivers". The wellness team has some amazing information to share with you - and this month's recipes will you have you running to the store to gather ingredients

to make these mouth-watering meals! Send me pics of your favorite places to be this spring and you just might see yourself next time!

In happiness and health,

Jen

Family Fun!

Spring is a great time to get outside! Here are some fun ideas to get you started.

- Go for a hike
- Make mud pies
- Plant sunflowers
- Play in the rain
- Hunt for 4-leaf clovers
- Plant a tree
- Collect and paint some rocks



Where is Jen?

Submit your guess along with a photo of yourself at your favorite place to thomasj39@upmc.edu. We'll pick a new winner for each edition of Real Well.



Congrats to our Winter edition winners!

Left, Anywhere with her grandkids Ryder and Nicole is Diane Schoenadel's favorite place to be! Right, Robert Prichard loves the entrance to the Rose Bowl in California.





Spring happenings
at the UPMC
Western Maryland
Wellness Center

Building Better Caregivers: This seven week course is for caregivers of a loved one with dementia or a brain-related injury.

Diabetes Prevention Program: DPP is a lifestyle change program to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. Forming healthy habits can be hard without a support system, so we are here to give you the encouragement you need to eat better, increase your physical activity and lose weight – all of which can delay or prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes.

Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support: (DSME/S) This program is for people living with diabetes. It can help you learn skills to manage your diabetes more effectively by checking blood sugar regularly, eating healthy food, being active, taking medicines as prescribed, and handling stress.

Chronic Pain-Self Management Program: This interactive workshop is for people with all types of chronic conditions.

Health Coaching: Have you tried to make changes to your lifestyle only to find yourself falling back into the same routine and/or not-so-healthy habits? A certified health coach can help! Health coaching services are free.

Join us for a free
Women's Health & Wellness EXPO!

Scheduled Events Include:

- 3-4:30 pm Five-minute Seated massages
- 3-3:30 pm Dementia Matters, Jayne Seymour
- 3:30-4 pm Women's Nutrition, Theresa Stahl, RD
- 4-4:30 pm Mind Body Skills, Pam Jan, Health Coach
- 4:30-5 pm Breast Health, Dr. Blanche Mavromatis

And at 5:00 pm join us for a FASHION SHOW featuring:

MIXX112 BOUTIQUE, MADISON PAIGE BOUTIQUE, TRUE ELEGANCE, and more!

DOOR PRIZES GALORE!!

Exhibits Include:

Nutrition, Blood Pressure Checks, Heart Health, Stroke and Sepsis, Stress Management, Lung Health, Local Community Resources, Diabetes Screening, Make-and-Take Art Booth, and much more!

Stop by to visit some of your favorite vendors including Neora, Pampered Chef, and many more!

**WEDNESDAY, April 20, 2022
3:00 - 6:00 PM
@ the Cumberland YMCA
601 Kelly Road**

For more information please contact Shelly:
shelly@cumberlandymca.org or 301-777-9622

Aetna
Aetna Better Health of Maryland

the

UPMC
WESTERN MARYLAND

Activities and events are always being added. For an up-to-date listing, contact the Wellness Center or visit Get Healthy Allegany on Facebook.

To register for any of these opportunities, give us a call at 240-964-8424 or Email leesm9@upmc.edu

Self-care
with Carey

Emotional Exhaustion:
What is it telling us?

Are you feeling emotionally exhausted? If so, you are not alone. What is it trying to say? It is a messenger. Something is out of balance. It is time to change.

There is no shame in the struggle. It is a sign for the need of self-evaluation. Be kinder to yourself by becoming aware and mindful of your needs.



Do you take the time to hold space for the suffering you are enduring or have endured? Or do you try to bury your feelings? Hurt does not just disappear. If unaddressed, it grows. Denying brings more suffering. The more we ignore ourselves, the more disconnected we become.

Take the time to own your wounds and name them. If your wounds could speak, what would they say? Take a moment to sit with your feelings. Checking in with your emotions daily helps you reconnect and reset.

Find "your" way of practicing daily check-ins. The vowel check as outlined in Brene Brown's book "The Gifts of Imperfection" is a great example. Below is the reference with ideas for self-reflection in the parentheses. Remember, you are not alone. You matter. You deserve peace.

A = Have I been Abstinent today? (However, you define this. Whatever you need to let go of. Some examples include negative self-talk, overeating, and perfectionism)

E= Have I Exercised today? (Try a five-minute exercise snack. Or skip it if this causes more stress.)

I=What have I done for myself today? (Make a self-care contract and stick with it.)

O=What have I done for Others today? (Pay it forward or are boundaries an issue? Do you sacrifice too much for others?)

U= Am I holding on to Unexpressed emotions today? (Write an angry letter that you do not send or a thank you note to yourself. Talk to someone or start a journal. Acknowledge the feeling and let it go. Create a healing/ releasing ritual for yourself.)

Y=Yeah! What is something good that has happened today? (No matter how small, name one thing for which you are grateful. Practicing gratitude boosts the neurotransmitter serotonin.)

For more information contact Carey Moffatt at moffattcl@upmc.edu

Laughter is the
best medicine!

How do you know flowers are friendly?
They always have new buds!

How did the bee brush his hair?
With a honeycomb!

What do sheep do on a sunny spring day? **Have a baa-baa cue!**

What do you call an angry carrot?
A steamed veggie!

**05
KEY FACTS
ABOUT
STROKE**

**FACT #1:
stroke kills
brain cells**

Stroke happens when a clot or rupture interrupts blood flow to the brain. Without oxygen-rich blood, brain cells die.

**FACT #2:
types of
stroke**

Ischemic caused by a clot, Hemorrhagic caused by a rupture and Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) or "mini stroke" caused by a temporary blockage.

**FACT #3:
about one
in four stroke
survivors
is at risk
for another**

Fortunately, up to 80 percent of second clot-related strokes may be preventable.

**FACT #4:
prevention
is key**

Had a stroke? Create a plan with your doctor to prevent another, which may include managing high blood pressure and discussing aspirin or other medicine.

Aspirin is not appropriate for everyone, so be sure to talk to your doctor before you begin an aspirin regimen.

**FACT #5:
time lost
is brain lost**

Now that you know prevention, here's how you spot one. Learn the FAST warning signs:

F Face Drooping	A Arm Weakness	S Speech Difficulty	T Time to call 911
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StrokeAssociation.org

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Together to End Stroke
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A time for a new you

In 2022, many of you are facing multiple issues, and it may be hard to think about spring coming. The birth of new life is often seen in crocuses, tulips, and daffodils - or the West Virginia state flower, the Rhododendron. They grow well in the heat and the rain of spring.

Just like in nature we improve by being able to move and exercise outside and see the beauty of God's creation. It's time to get outside and connect with the God who loves you.

God's Word often gives us a chance to see that God thrives in starting a new work in people's lives, and spring is the season of growth and renewal. There are many scriptures that help focus on renewing our faith and trust in the God of creation.

Isaiah 40:31 - "But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

This year let's think about your personal faith and desire to reconnect to the God who cares for you even in the crisis and hard days. Many live by feelings, fear or faith. We can choose faith in the Lord so we can depend on Him in days of uncertainty.

When we are given a difficult diagnosis, we have a choice to make. Trust in the medicine or the doctor's treatment and procedures, plus we can pray and renew our faith in the God who can calm our storms.

Many songs come to mind in valleys of our lives. Music can reach across our souls and help us deal with physical and spiritual battles we all face. Renewing our souls can be experienced if we just stop and pause and worship the God who loves us. I hear the birds singing in the morning. The mountains are filled with all kinds of wildlife. God makes the best sounds: ocean waves, wind blowing, cats meowing, orioles and cardinals singing, and squirrels scampering.

We need a new birth to cope with life and just like spring, it starts in the heart. God gives us ways to start fresh and enjoy a new you. Get outside and feel the sun and hear all creation saying, "it's time for a new you."

God specializes in making you new from the inside out.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, behold the new has come."

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

Pastor Bruce, spring 2022



Bruce and Judy McBride

Got weights? You can reverse bone loss!

Everyone remembers the "Got Milk," campaign and the benefits that were so well marketed. Strength, growth, and stronger bones were and still are the main selling points, but you'll have to ask the dietician for those facts.

There is another scientifically proven way to produce those same benefits and that is resistance training. If your doctor has diagnosed you as having osteopenia, or, even worse, osteoporosis, you should be asking them about how to safely start your own resistance training routine.

If you don't have these conditions, you do certainly have another condition called aging. Unfortunately, we all have this condition even if we don't want to admit it. As we get older, we naturally lose muscle and some bone density, so it's a good idea to use preventative measures regardless of whether you have been diagnosed with significant bone loss. The more muscle and stronger bones you build in your youth, the more you will maintain as you get older. Even more exciting, you can reverse bone loss at any point of your life.

In this article I will share the scientifically proven critical factors to consider when resistance training for bone health and reversal of osteopenia and osteoporosis.

In a peer reviewed study by the journal for Endocrinology and Metabolism states that "Weight-bearing impact exercise such as hopping and jumping, and/or progressive resistance exercise (RE), alone or in combination can improve the bone health in adults. Among them, RE has been highlighted as the most promising intervention to maintain or increase bone mass and density. This is because a variety of muscular loads are applied on the bone during RE, which generate stimuli and promote an osteogenic response of the bone." So, the most crucial factor in recovering bone density or improving bone density through exercise is that the weight you use must be significant.

The best way I can explain "significant weight," is that it must be "heavy for you." Obviously heavy is a rel-



Mike Browning

ative term to each individual, what is heavy to me may or may not be heavy for you.

Resistance training needs to be performed properly to reduce your risk of injury, so if you have never done resistance exercise or have a significant injury or are at enhanced risk for physical injury, consult your primary care doctor and/or a licensed physical therapist. If you are in fair health and have some experience with resistance exercise a certified personal trainer may be all you need, but it is still a good idea to see your doctor first.

Okay, disclaimers done! How do you resistance train or perform weight bearing exercise as the aforementioned journal suggests? You do not need to hop or jump as the article mentions, and I would not suggest that unless you are young and in good health.

If you have ever worked out in a fitness center, look for the pin place machines with weight as a first option for a beginner. This will be the safest way to begin and if you work with a trainer or therapist, most likely they will have you begin on these types of machines. These machines control your range of motion for safety and give you detailed instructions for use. Another form of safe resistance exercise are body weight movements such as push-ups and squats. These two exercises are the best for building upper body strength and lower body strength respectively and can be performed almost anywhere safely. Push-ups at an angle such as off a wall or table may be

where you need to begin. Squats can be performed safely over a stable chair. Finally, once you become more advanced you can move on to things such as free weights or dumbbells. This method of resistance training is more difficult but also more effective.

Now that you know what equipment and exercise to look for let's examine how much weight, how many reps, and how often you should be performing resistance exercise. Building bone health requires consistency and effort equally. You should be aiming to perform 2-3 days of full body resistance training until your muscles tire, duration of your workouts are not as important as making sure your muscles are fatigued and this is relative to each individual.

Obviously, beginners will tire much more quickly. Additionally, you should not resistance train on back-to-back days. You should be performing between 10-15 repetitions. Now for the most crucial part in bone health - weight. The weight you choose should make you fatigued or fail after performing the aforementioned 10-15 repetitions.

For example, if you are doing bicep curls, you should be struggling to lift the weight in the 10-15 rep range, if you can do 16-20 reps then the weight is too light and should be increased. A final thought here for safety, is that if you are a true beginner ease yourself into heavy weight. So, the first few weeks working in the 20-rep range at a lighter weight is a good idea.

Remember, building back your bone health takes consistent effort over time, don't expect benefits unless you are committed for life. It can take a year or more to start seeing a difference in bone density through exercise, and once you stop your bones will deteriorate again. For the younger audience here, functional strength and bone health will decrease over time but resistance training will help keep you stronger longer, so start now!

If you need help building a resistance training program, reach out to Mike at browningmr@upmc.edu.

Healthy Aging

Maryland is the first state in the country to start a free, automated telephone service to check in on Maryland's older residents, all across the state.

How does it work?

Every day a telephone call will be placed to a participant 65 years of age or older at a regularly scheduled time.

These calls will take place between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. as close as possible to the one-hour time block pre-selected by the participant. If the participant does not answer their first call, they will be tried two more times. If those calls go unanswered, additional calls will be

made to notify an alternative person who is selected by the participant during program enrollment.

This could be an adult child, a neighbor, a loved one, or we will assign an alternate for you. The alternate will then be encouraged to check on the older adult program participant.

The failure of the participant and alternate to answer will result in a call to your local non-emergency service.



A **free** daily call to check on Maryland residents 65 and older!

• Landline • Cell Phone • 



Call toll-free 1 (866)-502-0560 or visit <https://aging.maryland.gov/Pages/senior-call-check-sign-up.aspx>



Celebrate a world of FLAVOR

In honor of National Nutrition Month, celebrate a world of flavors by building these bowls from around the world. Bowls are a fun, versatile, and easy way to build a balanced meal. Mix and match different flavor combinations to personalize your bowl to you! There are main components to build a nutritious bowl:

Grains- Whole grain pasta and brown rice are staples in a traditional bowl, but try adding some ancient grains for more diverse flavor profile and texture

such as quinoa, whole grain couscous, barley, and farro.

Protein- Chicken, pork, beef, eggs, salmon, and shrimp are great options. Don't be afraid to try something new such as tofu or tempeh to amplify the flavor of your bowl.

Vegetables and/or Fruit- There are so many varieties of springtime fruits and vegetables you can use in your bowl such as spinach, strawberries, broccoli, and pineapple. Get creative with how you cook them: raw, steamed, grilled, roasted, and pickled are great

options.

Toppings- Herbs and spices are a great way to add flavor. Consider adding dried chickpeas, nuts, seeds, or crushed tortilla chips for an extra crunch. Hummus, yogurt, avocado, and vinaigrettes are a great way to finish off your bowl.

Not sure where to start? Try these recipes featuring staples from different cultures to celebrate a world of flavors this spring.



Interested in working with a dietitian like Rachel Sproat? Call 240-964-8416 to schedule an appointment.



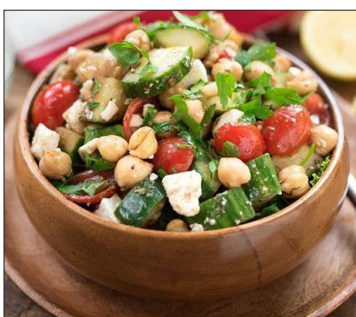
Mediterranean Power Bowl

Ingredients

4 oz. kale (or other salad greens), 2 cups cooked brown rice or quinoa, 1 cucumber, sliced or spiralized, 1 cup pitted kalamata olives, drained, 1 cup grape or cherry tomatoes, halved, ½ red onion, thinly sliced, 1 large avocado, pitted, peeled and sliced, 1 cup marinated artichoke hearts, drained, 1 (15 oz.) can garbanzo beans/chickpeas, drained and rinsed, 2 Tbsp. fresh chopped parsley, 2 Tbsp. fresh mint leaves

Instructions: Fill bowls or plates with kale. Top with brown rice, cucumber, olives, tomatoes, onion, avocado, artichoke hearts, beans, parsley and mint leaves. Serve with hummus, Tzatziki dressing, and pita chips or bread.

<https://fruitsandveggies.org/stories/insiders-view-point-bring-bowls/>



Steak Fajita Bowl

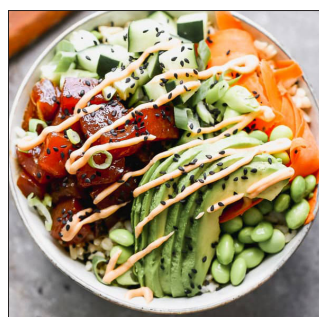
Ingredients

1 cup chimichurri sauce, Fajita spice rub (1 tsp chili powder, 1 tsp smoked paprika, 1/2 tsp garlic powder, 1 tsp cumin, 1/2 tsp dried oregano, 1 tsp sea salt, 1/2 tsp fresh ground pepper), 1 pound thinly sliced sirloin steak cut in chunks or strips, 10 ounces colorful bell peppers cut in strips, 1/2 red onion thinly sliced
1 or 2 jalapeño or Serrano peppers sliced (optional)
cilantro leaves, 1 lime cut in quarters, 4 cups cooked Jasmine rice hot (Quinoa, Brown Rice, or Black Beans would work well too)

Instructions

Toss the spice mix together and rub it into the sliced steak. You can use the meat immediately, or marinate for an hour in the refrigerator...put in a zip lock baggie, or wrap in plastic. Heat a grill pan, griddle, or cast-iron skillet on high until very hot. Stir fry the steak for a couple of minutes until it gets some nice charring. Do this in 2 batches if your pan is small. Remove to a plate. Add enough olive oil to lightly coat the pan and add the onions. Stir fry until they just start to soften, about 2-3 minutes, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Remove to the same plate with the meat. Add the peppers to the pan and stir fry just until they start to soften, stirring almost constantly. Add the meat and onions back to the pan and heat everything through. I like them as is, but if you want a little sauce, hit the hot pan with a splash of water and stir well. Divide the rice between 4 bowls and top with some of the chimichurri sauce. Spoon the fajitas onto the rice and drizzle with more sauce. Serve garnished with fresh cilantro, and lime wedges.

<https://theviewfromgreatisland.com/steak-fajita-bowls-with-chimichurri-sauce/>



Poke Bowl

Ingredients

1 lb. sushi-grade ahi tuna, 2 tbsp soy sauce, 1 tbsp sesame oil, 1 tbsp rice vinegar, 1 tsp honey, ¼ cup light mayo
1 tsp sriracha, 4 cups cooked brown rice, 1 cup diced cucumber, ½ cup shredded carrots, ½ cup shelled edamame
2 large avocados, peeled and sliced, 1 tbsp black sesame seeds, 1 tsp green onion

Instructions

Use a sharp knife to cut tuna into a dice. Add tuna, soy sauce, sesame oil, rice vinegar, and honey to a medium bowl. Toss to combine. Let the tuna sit while you prepare the rest of the ingredients. Add mayo and sriracha to a bowl. Stir to combine. Season with salt and pepper. Spoon into a zip lock bag. Cut the tip off. Divide cooked rice between four bowls. Spoon tuna on one part of the rice. Surround with a pile of the cucumber, edamame, and carrot. Spread half of an avocado on top of the bowl. Drizzle the spicy mayo over the bowl. Sprinkle with green onion and sesame seeds.

Note: Consuming raw and undercooked meats, poultry, seafood, shellfish, or eggs may increase your risk of foodborne illness, especially if you have certain medical conditions.

<https://therecipecritic.com/poke-bowl-recipe/>

Safety with Sue

Spring can bring big weather surprises!

Spring marks a notable increase in severe weather events, with the added bonus of potential late season snow and ice storms.



Sue Lee

One of the most important steps you can take to survive any weather challenge is to stay weather aware. Weather reports from your trusted news source, as well as a NOAA weather radio, are great ways to stay weather informed. Many weather apps are available for download on your devices; we also have an excellent local option, available through Allegany County Government, via their website <https://alleganygov.org>.

On the home page, select the “How Do I ...” section on the right side of the screen. When that section opens, scroll down the left side of the screen and select “Alerts for public safety and transit.” A very brief form pops up where you may include your choice of cell phone number, home phone number, and/or your email address, plus the zip code of your location. Once your form is submitted and verified, you will start receiving weather alerts for your identified zip code.

Emergency preparedness for severe spring weather includes the following:

- **Maintain non-perishable food and water supplies for you and your family members, including pets.**
- **Keep your electronic devices charged (texting during an emergency is preferable due to high communications volume during an emergency).**
- **Identify the safest place in your home to ride out a severe storm, such as an interior room with no windows on the lowest level.**
- **Secure loose objects outside that may become airborne, or bring them inside.**
- **Wind storms often bring down power lines. Stay clear of the area and report a downed power line to First Energy by calling 1-888-544-4877.**

For more information on emergency preparedness steps you can take, please visit Ready.gov, at <https://www.ready.gov/be-informed>.



Chair yoga with Christina

A lifetime practice

The body was made to move, and when we embrace the opportunity to stretch and flex and move it, it will react positively. Yoga is an activity that can be practiced for a lifetime. My clients range in age from 4 to 94, and I must confess that as I age myself, I truly enjoy working with elder clients who can quickly realize the benefits that regular gentle yoga practice has to offer by experiencing increased energy, a better sense of balance and wellbeing, flexibility, range of motion, and decreased pain in their joints.

I invite you to join me at regularly scheduled yoga practices or to contact me if you have a group that would benefit from scheduling sessions.

Chair Yoga is offered every Monday at 2:30 p.m. at the C. William Gilchrist Museum of the Arts, 104 Washington Street, Cumberland. You must register to attend these classes in person by emailing me at the address below.

This class is also offered at the same time via Zoom so that you can attend from the comfort of your own space.



Join Chair Yoga Zoom Meetings at this 2022 Spring-Summer-Autumn link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82874339529>
Meeting ID: 828 7433 9529
Passcode: 867013

Chair Yoga is also offered at the Allegany County HRDC Senior Centers. You may check with them for specific dates.

Cumberland Senior Center
125 Virginia Avenue, Cumberland, MD 21502
301-783-1722
Frostburg Senior Center
27 South Water Street, Frostburg, MD 21532
301-689-5510

Christina Collins-Smith Nicolas
UPMC Western Maryland Health Coach
Email: collinssmithcd@upmc.edu
Message/Text: 410-967-9112



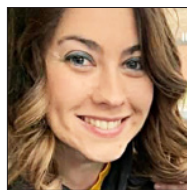
Brittany's COZY SPOT KIDS

Children need a way to relax and unwind, especially after having heightened emotions or experiencing stressful situations.

One way to help children learn to calm down is by encouraging children to make their own calm space, or cozy spot. Having a calm space can help with a place to go to relax, to breathe, and to calm the mind and body. It can help them learn to process their emotions and have a safe space that is all their own when they may need a moment of peace and quiet. It can also double as a great reading area or drawing space. Here's how to help your child create their own "cozy spot":

Help your child find a space in your home where they can practice their calm. It should be some space that is quiet and secluded. It may be a corner in their room, or even in the closet.

Let them make it their own. Let them name their spot (i.e. Shelly's Special Spot, Carter's Cozy Corner, Zeke's Zen Den). Have them color a poster to hang to designate their



Brittany Friend

spot. They can hang up posters of things that are calming, tips to relax, play peaceful music, or create a comfy reading spot with lots of pillows.

Provide them with their own journal and drawing/writing materials.

Give them a way to play calming music to relax their mind and body.

Teach them special breathing exercises, such as shape or animal breathing.

Provide them with a yoga mat or soft surface where they could practice some kid-friendly yoga moves.

Ask THEM what they need to make their cozy spot their own. What are the things that make them feel the most calm and relaxed? Their favorite stuffed animal or blanket? Pictures of their friends and family? Fun lights? Let them use this space whenever they feel stressed, may just need peace and quiet to do their homework, or need a place

to retreat when experiencing big emotions. Why is this important other than to help create a calm environment?

This type of environment helps to teach children self-regulation. When younger brains get overwhelmed, the part of the brain responsible for reasoning and thinking turns off. Therefore, the ability to think clearly and express emotions rationally becomes harder for children.

This space allows a child to regain control of their brain and begin to think clearly again. They may be able to better express their feelings to you when they have had a chance to relax their mind and feel safe.

These cozy spots have been proven to help children with impulsive behavior, improve their ability to communicate, and how to cope with their own big emotions in a positive manner.

ALSO, it is important to note that this NOT be a punishment spot or a place for discipline. This should be the space that a child WANTS to go and chooses to go to by themselves. If it is used for things such as a

time-out, the child will not associate this space with calm and safety.

However, many children, especially if they are younger, will need help recognizing that they should try to calm down. If you notice your child seems overwhelmed, suggest to them, "you seem like you may be upset, would you like to go to your cozy spot and relax for a little bit? Remember your journal is there and you can draw."

Also, your child may want you to stay with them. If they ask you to stay, sit with them and ask them what they would like to do in their space.

Eventually, your child will be able to retreat to this space by themselves and find their calm because they have practiced and they know they are safe.

For more ideas, posters to hang, and information on how to help your child create their cozy spot, you can visit:
<http://fit.sanfordhealth.org/blog/how-to-create-a-cozy-spot-for-kids-anywhere>

About prediabetes and type 2 diabetes

There are 96 million American adults who have prediabetes – that's 1 in 3 adults! Of those 96 million, more than 8 in 10 of them don't even know they have it. Without taking action, many people with prediabetes could develop type 2 diabetes within 5 years.

With numbers like that, it's important to learn about prediabetes and take action.

Take the online test at the link below to find out if you are at risk for prediabetes and type 2 diabetes. Call 240-964-8424 to learn more about the Diabetes Prevention Program and the Diabetes Self-Management Program.

https://www.cdc.gov/prediabetes/risktest/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fdiabetes%2Frisktest%2Findex.html

