

# OCTOBER 2021

## NEWSLETTER



### IN THIS ISSUE:

- October Birthdays
- Program Updates
- October Program Calendar
- Weekly Programs
- Other Programs & Supports
- Thanksgiving at Our Place
- Halloween Festivities
- Introducing Audrey and Olalekan
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- World Mental Health Day
- Holidays
- From the Kitchen of Our Place
- Mental Health Tip of the Month
- Writing Group Submissions
- Mandala



**OUR PLACE COMMUNITY OF HOPE**

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# October Birthdays

## Our Place Birthdays

Jeff G. – Oct. 13  
Caroline M. – Oct. 18  
Patty – Oct. 20  
Suzanne L.- Oct. 22  
Nancy L. – Oct. 30



## Famous October Birthdays

Jimmy Carter – Oct. 1, 1924  
Dakota Johnson – Oct. 4, 1989  
Hugh Jackson – Oct. 12, 1968  
Sasha Baron Cohen – Oct. 13, 1971  
Kamala Harris – Oct. 23, 1976  
Kim Kardashian – Oct. 21, 1980  
Ryan Reynolds – Oct. 23, 1976  
Katy Perry – Oct. 25, 1984  
Christopher Columbus – Oct. 31, 1451



\*If you want to celebrate your birthday with us, let us know!\*

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### AVAILABLE SERVICES:

As you may already know, the province's plan to safely and gradually lift public health measures based on ongoing progress of vaccination rates and improvements of key public health and health care indicators. As we are moving through the steps, you may see changes at Our Place weekly so we will try our best to keep you updated.

- **Outdoor Drop-in:** from 12:30pm to 3:30pm! As we are starting to feel the chilly weather, we will continue this until the end of October, as the weather permits.
- **Individual Appointments to use Computer/Phone/Wi-Fi :** Appointments will be available for you to come into the center to use the computer, Wi-Fi and/or phone. You can meet with a staff member for support. You can also book a time slot if you would like to join our online groups!
- **Referrals and Assistance:** If you need assistance filling out forms, requesting a shelter bed, finding housing, etc, call the office and we will to our best to help you.
- **Groups:** Check out our program calendar to find out which groups are held indoors, outdoor and virtual.

### Programs

The most recent program updates will be posted through our website and on our Facebook page. You may also call us or you may request our weekly calendar when you pick up your meal. ☺

### Meals

Meals to-go are served Monday-Friday between 2:00pm and 5:00pm.

#### *Reminders:*

- To make sure that everyone gets a meal, we are not able to give more than one meal per person. Seconds will only be given between 4:45pm and 5:00pm *if we have enough. They are not guaranteed.*
- We would like to ask you to bring your plastic bags if possible as we have limited quantities!
- If you are vegetarian or you can't eat pork for religious reasons, please let us know before 12pm on the day you are coming so that we can do our best to accommodate you.


#### **We are continuing to ask for your cooperation with the following:**

- \* Practice social distancing (maintain a 6ft distance from others) while waiting in line for your meal. We also strongly encourage you to wear a mask while waiting to protect yourself and those around you.
- \* Please do not approach the table until the person in front of you has left.
- \* *Masks are mandatory while picking up your meal.* Need a mask?? No problem! Just ask us for one.

### Weekly Check-Ins

Let us know if you are interested in receiving a weekly supportive phone call from staff to check in and see how you're doing. We are continuing to phone people who are not participating in our drop-in or programs.

# OCTOBER 2021 PROGRAM CALENDAR FOR THIS WEEK

|  <b>OUR PLACE PROGRAMS</b><br><b>OCTOBER 4-8 2021</b>    |   |  |   |   |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| MONDAY   | TUESDAY   | WEDNESDAY  | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY  |
| <b>OUTDOOR DROP IN</b><br><b>12:30- 3:30</b><br><br><b>TO-GO MEALS 2-5</b><br><br><b>Trivia!</b><br><i>(Indoor Group)</i><br>12:30- 1:30<br><br><b>Name that Tune!</b><br><i>(Indoor Group)</i><br>2:30- 3:30<br>   | <b>OUTDOOR DROP IN</b><br><b>12:30- 3:30</b><br><br><b>TO-GO MEALS 2-5</b><br><br><b>Bingo</b><br><i>(Indoor Group)</i><br>2:30-3:30<br> | <b>OUTDOOR DROP IN</b><br><b>12:30- 3:30</b><br><br><b>TO-GO MEALS 2-5</b><br><br><b>Meditation (Virtual)</b><br>3:15-3:30<br><b>Peer Support (Virtual)</b><br>3:30-4:30<br> | <b>OUTDOOR DROP IN</b><br><b>12:30- 3:30</b><br><br><b>TO-GO MEALS 2-5</b><br><br><b>Art Group</b><br><i>(Indoor Group)</i><br>2:30-3:30<br><b>Anger Management</b><br><i>(Virtual)</i><br>Women: 2:30   Men: 3:30<br> | <b>OUTDOOR DROP IN</b><br><b>12:30- 3:30</b><br><br><b>THANKSGIVING MEALS 2-5</b><br><br><b>Writing Group w/Peter</b><br><i>(Virtual)</i><br>1:30- 2:30<br><br><b>Outdoor Drop-in Presents:</b><br><b>DJ IVAR</b><br>3:30- 4:30 |
| <b>To Go Meals</b><br>* Everyone welcome<br>* Free of charge!<br>* Seconds not served until after 4:45 & are Not quaranteed<br>* If you have a dietary restriction, call before 12pm and we will do our best to accommodate you<br>* Coffee served on <i>Thursdays</i> as we are able<br>* Please wear a mask<br> |   |  |   |   |
| <b>Programs Update &amp; Appointments to Use Computers/Phone/Wifi</b><br><b>Thanksgiving Dinner: Friday, October 8th</b><br>* Outdoor Drop-in Presents: Live Music with Kevin & Chas every <i>Fridays</i> . <i>Weather permitting.</i><br>* All programs are first come, first served!<br>* Book an Individual Appointments to use Computer/Phone/Wi-Fi are available!                             |   |  |   |   |

**NOTE:** *Programs and hours may change without notice in response to Public Health's COVID-19 safety recommendations.*

## Our Place Weekly Programs

**Trivia – Mondays at 12:30pm |**

**Name that Tune! - at 2:30pm**

There are prizes to be won!

**This group will be held indoors with a maximum of 10 people.**

**Bingo – Tuesdays at 2:30pm**

There are prizes to be won!

**This group will be held indoors with a maximum of 10 people.**

**Online Meditation - Wednesdays at 3:15**

**Online Peer Support Group at 3:30**

*Guided meditation* will begin by 3:20pm. No experience is needed. Come as you are.

*Peer support* meetings are a time to connect with others for support, encouragement, and hope. We'll learn from each other's experiences in conversations. We'll talk about relaxation, managing emotions, self-compassion, and self-acceptance. We'll look at positive steps that you could try towards having a better life.

Link to join Meditation and Peer Support: <https://zoom.us/j/94221242340>

Join by phone: **(647)374-4685**. When prompted, enter in the Meeting ID: 942 2124 2340

**Art Group – Thursdays at 2:30pm**

Art & Crafts is a time to explore your creative side and connect with others. It will include drawing and coloring, painting, sketching, collages and many more fun activities.

Suggestions are welcome! 😊

**This group will be held indoors with a maximum of 10 people.**

**Virtual Anger Management – Thursdays at 2:30 (Women's) and 3:30 (Men's)**

This virtual Anger Management course is for anyone who is interested in getting a handle on their anger and strong emotions.

The training utilizes Cognitive-Behavioural tools and techniques to help individuals navigate tough situations. With topics such as Communication, The Cycle of Violence, and Learning



from Mistakes, participants can dive deeper into the root of their anger and learn more about themselves in the process.

There are also many opportunities for individuals to connect the lessons with their past and/or current experiences, as open discussion is encouraged. This group operates from a trauma-informed perspective, and aims to provide a safe, open, and non-judgmental space for individuals to explore their emotions and find new ways to grow.

**To Sign Up:** Email [info@ourplacecommunityofhope.com](mailto:info@ourplacecommunityofhope.com) or call the Our Place office: (416) 598-2919. To complete your registration, Tia or Clarence will call you to introduce themselves and have a quick chat with you.

### **Online Writing Group – Fridays at 1:30pm**

Writing Group with Peter (a professional journalist!) is a time to connect with others, build friendships and get creative together.

Everyone is welcome to join in and no experience is necessary!

Link to join Writing Group via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/93536287038?pwd=RVpzR1pMSGcxQ01UQXZ6YVBHTlI0UT09>

Join by phone, dial: **647-374-4685**

When prompted, enter in the Meeting ID: **935 3628 7038**

### **Live Music w/ Kevin and Chas – Fridays at 3:30pm**

Join us as we welcome back Kevin and Chas! Every Friday, come listen and sing-a-long to all their greatest hits!

**Live Music will be held outdoors.**

## Other Programs & Supports

### Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Thinking of quitting smoking?? Talk to staff about how you can access support and free Nicotine Replacement Therapy with no wait.

### Progress Place Online Mental Health Programs

Progress Place Clubhouse is a mental health community centre dedicated to improving the lives of people living with mental illness. There are online groups and activities six days per week, and the schedule is shown below. The clubhouse is located at 576 Church Street.

| <b>Progress Place</b><br><b>VIRTUAL CLUBHOUSE SCHEDULE</b><br><small>meeting ID: 683 146 633</small>  |  |  |  |   |  |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| MONDAY  | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY  | THURSDAY   | FRIDAY  | SATURDAY   |
| <b>9:30:</b> Monday Morning House Meeting<br><br><b>11:00:</b> Employment Topics<br><br><b>1:00:</b> Spanish Conversation<br><br><b>4:00:</b> Games Night   | <b>9:30:</b> Yoga /Meditation<br><br><b>10:30:</b> Fun & Fitness<br><br><b>1:00:</b> UNIT MEETINGS<br><br><b>2:00:</b> Sewing Repair<br><br><b>3:00:</b> Young Adults Mtg<br><br><b>5:00:</b> Chess Club | <b>9:30:</b> French Group<br><br><b>11:00:</b> Education Group<br><br><b>11:00:</b> Sewing Repair<br><br><b>1:00:</b> Health & Wellness Discussion<br><br><b>2:00:</b> Double Recovery<br><small>MEETING ID: 758-283-292<br/>Open to all needing substance use support</small><br><br><b>4:00:</b> Games Night | <b>9:30:</b> Outreach Group Mtg<br><br><b>10:45:</b> Silver Stars Group<br><br><b>1:00:</b> Tech Talks<br><br><b>3:00:</b> Social Media Meeting<br><br><b>5:00:</b> Bingo! | <b>9:30:</b> Resource Meeting<br><br><b>11:00:</b> Yoga /Meditation<br><br><b>1:00:</b> RTNT Podcast Mtg<br><br><b>3:00:</b> Freedom from Smoking<br><br><b>2:00:</b> Double Recovery<br><small>MEETING ID: 758-283-292<br/>Open to all needing substance use support</small> | <b>11:00:</b> Writer's Group (with Toronto Writer's Collective)<br><br><b>SUNDAY</b><br><b>2:00:</b> Double Recovery<br><small>MEETING ID: 758-283-292<br/>Open to all needing substance use support</small> |
| <b>Questions about joining Progress Place's virtual programs? Call (416) 323-0223</b><br><b>Please note that the schedule is subject to change</b><br><b>All meetings marked in orange, green and blue are open to the community.</b><br><b>For more information, see the virtual community schedule</b><br><small>To call into meetings, dial 647-558-0588 and follow the instructions</small> |  |  |  |   |  |

### Mental Health Arts Festival

Between *October 28 to November 7* Workman Arts will be hosting the largest mental health festival in the world exploring mental health and addiction issues. The festival is titled "Rendezvous with Madness." This festival includes visual art, performance, music, theatre and dance in addition to its focus on media arts, panel discussions and in-conversation events.

For more information, visit <https://workmanarts.com/rendezvous-with-madness>



## THANKSGIVING AT OUR PLACE

This year has been difficult and unprecedented as we have all tried to navigate a path through the pandemic. Usually at this time, we would gather together and reflect on what we are grateful for. While Covid is preventing us from being together, it can't stop us from finding things to be thankful for.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness reports that people who practice gratitude...

- \* Are more generous and helpful
- \* Are more likely to offer emotional support
- \* Have improved immune function
- \* Have lowered risk for major depression, generalized anxiety disorder and substance dependence and abuse
- \* Demonstrate an improved ability to cope with stress
- \* Are more willing to forgive others

This fall, despite all of the hardships the year has brought, let's all challenge ourselves to sit down and come up with a few things that we have to be thankful for. We already have one thing on our list... we are thankful to know you!



### Our Place Thanksgiving Programs

- \* We will serve a Thanksgiving Dinner on Friday, October 8<sup>th</sup> between 2pm and 5pm. Please note that we can only give *one meal* per person.
- \* Write down what you are thankful for on a leaf (which we will work on during Art Group or after indoor group) and we will put it on *Our Place Gratitude Tree*! Ask staff all about it!
- \* The drop-in, meals and programs will be closed on Monday, October 11<sup>th</sup> but we will be back on Tuesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>.

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## HALLOWEEN FESTIVITIES

**Halloween Dance Contest** on October 29<sup>th</sup>. During Outdoor Drop-in at 3:00pm, we will be hosting a covid-friendly, socially-distanced, dance contest where individuals dance to the spooky music and freezes when the music stops! Last one standing wins a prize!

**Halloween Costume Party.** We will be giving out prizes for the Best Costume, Scariest Costume and the Most Original Costume. We will announce the winners after the Dance contest!

**Trick-or-Treat!** Ring the doorbell between 2:00pm and 5:00pm to get some Halloween candy.





## Introducing Audrey and Olalekan!

“Hi everyone! My name is Audrey and I’m a new placement student from Humber College’s Addictions and Mental Health postgraduate program. I’ve already met a few of you and it’s been so nice learning your names and getting to know you so far. I’m looking forward to meeting more of you and get to know you all better in the coming months. Please don’t hesitate to say hi or stop and chat with me anytime. My background consists of a lot of psychology research, peer support, and mental health administration. I’m especially interested in pursuing a career in addictions treatment after I complete school. Outside of that, I love to crochet, play video games, go for walks, and spend time with my roommate’s cat Boots!”

“Name is Olalekan, am a second-year Social Service Worker student at Humber College, I recently migrated from Nigeria to Canada. Growing up in an environment with little to no social support, acquiring multiple education in other to position myself in the society, made me develop an interest in Social Services, contributing to the community and the world at large to be a better place, advocating for the voiceless and less privilege in the society. I have over 10 years of experience in film and TV production as a host, Actor, Content Producer, and Director. I love to sing, cook and do some road trips. “

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## Breast Cancer Awareness Month



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a month to raise awareness about breast cancer and help support women in accessing services needed. Raising awareness can help uplift women by highlighting the importance of regular screening and discussing prevention, symptoms, and treatment. Regular breast screening is extremely important because breast cancer is more treatable the earlier it is detected. Alongside regular mammograms, breast self-examinations can be done to examine for possible lumps and swelling,

however it is important to still speak with professionals. Throughout the month, you can show your support by helping raise awareness, donating if possible and wearing pink to honor those who had breast cancer.

Virtual Breast Reconstruction Awareness (BRA) Day is back! On Wednesday, October 20, 2021, The Peter Gilgan Centre for Women’s Cancers in partnership with The Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) and the generous support from The Canadian Society of Plastic Surgeons are delivering this free three-hour event for women considering breast reconstruction.

BRA Day is intended to EDUCATE women on their breast reconstruction options, provide an opportunity to see possible outcomes of breast reconstruction surgery, EMPOWER women to make the choice that's right for them and CONNECT women with others who have been through it.

## HOW TO COPE WITH ANXIETY & BREAST CANCER

1. You may be experiencing a wide range of emotions. Take the time to identify them and take a moment to tune into your body and notice how you are feeling. Often accepting the distress is the quickest way to feel calmer.
2. Focus on what is within your control, such as exercising, eating well, seeking and offering support. It may be helpful to create a list.
3. Practice tolerating the uncertainty. When we experience anxiety, it is usually related to a lack of control. Remind yourself that uncertainty is a part of life, but it will pass.
4. Challenge any negative automatic thoughts. Distinguish fact from fear.
5. Create a philosophy for how you are going to approach your breast cancer trajectory. For example, creating a mantra can help with frame of mind.
6. Build structure into your everyday routine. Include a combination of tasks and pleasures as both can provide a sense of purpose and a feeling of mastery.
7. Develop a Self-Care Plan. For example, document all of the activities that give you joy such as listening to music, journaling, taking a bath, etc.
8. If you are feeling low and do not feel like doing anything, try the opposite approach. Don't think--just do. Go outside for a walk.
9. Start a daily gratitude practice that focuses on what went well in the day. What are you grateful for? At the same time, start a daily breathing practice to help you relax.
10. Get all the information you can about your breast cancer. This might mean reaching out to your healthcare team and reading information from reputable and credible sites like the Canadian Cancer Society.

For more information about The Peter Gilgan Centre for Women's Cancers, visit [www.womenscollegehospital.ca/PeterGilganCentre](http://www.womenscollegehospital.ca/PeterGilganCentre)

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## World Mental Health Day – Mental Health in an Unequal World

World Mental Health Day is on *Sunday, October 10<sup>th</sup>* this year. This year's theme is Mental Health in an Unequal World. The World Health Organization describes the overall objective of World Mental Health day is to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilize efforts in support of mental health to talk about their experiences, work, and what more needs to be done to make mental health care better for people worldwide.

Every year one adults in four, along with one child in ten, will have a mental health issue. These conditions profoundly affect millions of lives, affecting the capability of these individuals to make it through the day, sustain relationships and to maintain work. The best way to deal with stigma is through facts and a better understanding of mental health problems. From identifying the causes, pinpointing solutions and ultimately recognizing that we are really dealing with medical issues.



**In honor of World Mental Health Day, here are a couple tips to take care of your mental health:**

1. Stay active - getting out of your apartment daily and going for a short walk or even just sitting on a bench can really improve your mental health
2. Talk to someone - calling someone up on the phone or sending a text can brighten your mood!
3. Do something to relax - picking up a book from a library or watching your favorite movie is a great day to relax and keep your mind occupied
4. Eat healthy to support strong mental health
5. Don't skimp on sleep - keep a consistent sleep routine! Going to bed and waking up at the same time everyday

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## From the Our Place Kitchen

### Jessica's Perogies Recipe

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 teaspoon butter
- 1 large onion sliced
- 2 bags frozen perogies (14 perogies each)
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup milk
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cooked ham, diced
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cheddar cheese, shredded



#### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9x13 inch pan.
2. Saute onion slices with butter until soft.
3. Combine the mushroom soup and milk until smooth. Set aside.
4. Cover the bottom of pan with frozen perogies. Top with cooked onion and diced ham.
5. Pour the mushroom soup mixture over the entire pan, covering evenly. Sprinkle with shredded cheese.
6. Bake for 1 hour.

## Alanna's Chocolate Chip Pumpkin Bread

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 and 3/4 cups (219g) all-purpose flour (spoon & leveled)
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg\*
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves\*
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger\*
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1/2 cup (100g) granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup (150g) packed light or dark brown sugar
- 1 and 1/2 cups (340g) pumpkin puree (canned or fresh)
- 1/2 cup (120ml) vegetable oil, canola oil, or melted coconut oil
- 1/4 cup (60ml) orange juice
- 2/3 cup (120g) semi-sweet chocolate chips

\*nutmeg, cloves, and ginger can be substituted for 1 tsp of pumpkin pie spice



### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Adjust the oven rack to the lower third position and preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C) degrees. Lowering the oven rack prevents the top of your bread from browning too much too soon. Spray a 9x5-inch loaf pan with non-stick spray. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl, whisk the flour, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, ginger, and salt together until combined. In a medium bowl, whisk the eggs, granulated sugar, and brown sugar together until combined. Whisk in the pumpkin, oil, and orange juice. Pour these wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and gently mix together using a rubber spatula or a wooden spoon. There will be a few lumps. Do not overmix. Gently fold in the chocolate chips.
3. Pour the batter into the prepared loaf pan. Bake for 60-65 minutes, making sure to loosely cover the bread with aluminum foil halfway through to prevent the top from getting too brown. The bread is done when a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean with only a few small moist crumbs. This may be before or after 60-65 minutes depending on your oven, so begin checking every 5 minutes at the 55-minute mark or so.
4. Allow the bread to cool completely in the pan on a wire rack before removing and slicing. Cover and store leftover bread at room temperature for up to 3-4 days or in the refrigerator for up to about 10 days.

## OCTOBER: SPECIAL DAYS

### THANKSGIVING

This year, Thanksgiving Monday (the holiday) falls on Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>. Thanksgiving is a time to get together with friends and/or family, take part in fall activities such as raking leaves, having meals together, going for walks, and enjoying fall and the changing of the leaves.

Where did this tradition come from?

The first Thanksgiving was held way back in 1621 by pilgrims at the Plymouth Plantation in Massachusetts, U.S. They held the first 'giving of thanks' period to mark the end of a drought and a bountiful harvest.

It's important to note role of Indigenous peoples in Thanksgiving. Without the help of the Wampanoag peoples, who shared planting, hunting, and fishing knowledge and techniques, many pilgrims and European settlers who were new to Canada would have died, according to [canadashistory.ca](http://canadashistory.ca).

Thanksgiving in Canada has its own history in which traditions of Thanksgiving pre-date the arrival of European pilgrims. Indigenous people across Canada had traditions of giving thanks for surviving the winter and for their crops. [Canada's History](http://Canada's History) says such traditions include large meals; prayer; dance; and other ceremonies, depending on the peoples who were giving thanks.

**How do you like to celebrate Thanksgiving?**

TIP: If you are having a walk or meal with friends and/or family this Thanksgiving, talk about what you consider to be your blessings or what you are grateful for. You can also write down these items in a journal.

Source: Canada's History website

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### HALLOWEEN

The tradition of Halloween (celebrated on October 31) originated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, according to history.com. Celebrating Samhain, people lit bonfires and wore costumes to ward off ghosts.

In the 8th century, Pope Gregory III designated November 1 as All Saints Day, a day to honor saints. History.com says All Saints Day included some of the traditions of the ancient Celtic celebration of Samhain. The night before Halloween (Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>) became known as All Hallows Eve, and later Halloween.

The word, hallow, means "to honour as holy" or "to make holy and sacred" and hallows is "a saint or a holy person", according to various web searches on the meanings on these terms.

Over centuries, Halloween evolved into a day of activities like trick-or-treating, carving jack-o-lanterns, festive gatherings, wearing costumes and eating treats.

**How do you like to celebrate Halloween?**



## The Day of the Dead

Many people are familiar with the Day of the Dead, which is celebrated in Mexico, and see similarities to this celebration and Halloween. The Day of the Dead is actually two days: November 1 and 2. The days are believed to be a time when the spirit world is open to the real world and individuals may communicate with loss loved ones. It is usually a colourful and festive short period.

Sources: [history.com](https://www.history.com) – [Halloween](#) and [Day of the Dead](#)



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## MENTAL HEALTH TIP OF THE MONTH:

### Night-time routines

By Kathryn

In peer support group—and in past issues of this newsletter—we’ve discussed the mental health benefits of a morning routine. Health experts encourage us to create some sort of evening routine as well. Calming activities during the evening can help you avoid feelings of stress, anxiety, and over stimulating your mind and body, which may make it difficult to fall asleep, according to [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com). And good sleep is essential to good mental health.

I like the book “Atomic Habits” by James Clear. The author explains that when habits, or rituals, are repeated over time, they cue—or tell—our brain to expect an certain outcome; an outcome that we want, such as falling asleep.

Here’s an example: taking a warm bath each night and then getting into bed will eventually tell your brain, ‘it’s time to wind down and fall asleep’ after the bath. Clear says habits and rituals are most effective when we “stack” them on top of each other, or cluster them together in a consistent order. For example, if an individual turns off all the lights in their home (one habit), lights a candle (a second habit), and then says prayers or does a short meditation (a third habit), blows out the candle (forth and important safety habit) then gets into bed (fifth habit), the brain knows what to expect after this series of habits: sleep.

I researched some of the things we can all do to create a healthy night-time routine. I encourage you to try them out and discover what works best for you.

**Journaling.** I know many people who have a short practice of gratitude journaling at bedtime and find it is a peaceful way to fall asleep. Research shows that bedtime journaling can help reduce stress and anxiety. You can keep a journal by your bed and write down your blessings, or what you are grateful for. You can also journal about the best parts of your day, or if you are worried about forgetting tasks for tomorrow, write them in your journal the night before.

**Meditation.** A regular meditation practice can help you both physically and mentally relax. Toban has talked about how beneficial he finds it to meditate at night. Remember that you can start very slowly and build on this practice if you find it helpful. Start with five minutes and focus on your breath and the sensation of breath coming in and out of your body. **TIP:** Toban starts peer support

group on Wednesday afternoons with a 15-minute meditation. You can participate and experience the impact of meditation on calming your mind and body.

**Exercise—walking and gentle yoga.** Avoid exercise that is too activating and, instead, try calm activities such as going for a short, slow walk if you feel safe doing so in your neighbourhood. You can also do some gentle yoga. I love the [YouTube channel, Yoga with Adriene](#). It's free and you can search bedtime yoga and try out the variety of short and longer videos.

**Calming scents.** It's well-known that certain scents, notably lavender, help us to relax. I purchased some rosemary and mint body cream and keep it on my bedside table. I try to remember to put it on my hands and arms at night. The smell is soothing and helps reduce any anxiety I may be experiencing.

**Happy night-time!**

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## Journaling and Creative Writing

By Kathryn

Journaling is a type of writing that may help develop your comfort with creative writing. Journaling itself can be considered a type of creative writing. I am currently taking a course through the City of Toronto on creative journaling. Here are a few things that I have learned.

1. There is no right or wrong way to begin creative writing or journaling. Try not to judge yourself.
2. If you are sitting down with a blank page and don't know where to start, just start writing anything down. It can be a list of your favourite books, movies, or foods. Again, there is no right or wrong way to journal or engage in creative writing.
3. Your brain will trick you. Very often the rational (non-creative) part of our mind will tell us that writing is a waste of time. Don't listen to that voice. Write!
4. Here are a few very common reasons why people often do not write or journal: they lack confidence; they find excuses; they worry about what other people will say about their work. You can overcome these challenges by writing down anything and reminding yourself that journaling and creative writing have health benefits, and the more often you do it, the better you get at it. Also, you don't have to share your writing with anyone.
5. When it comes to a creative writing practice, consistency is better than quantity. When you write, you are building a muscle in your creative brain and mind. Set a time each day and write for a few minutes. You can build on the time (add a minute or two each week) as well as what you write if you enjoy it.
6. Create a ritual around writing. For example, you can put a pen and paper out and light a candle or make your favourite cup of coffee or tea and journal or creative write while enjoying the candle light or warm drink. Make the ritual something pleasant and it will help encourage you to write.
7. Have fun! There are no rules, or 'rights' or 'wrongs'. You can add drawings, sketches, even stickers to your writing if that makes it more fun for you.

Five famous people who journaled and wrote regularly:

- Inventor Thomas Edison
- Inventor and genius Albert Einstein
- Inventor and artist Leonardo da Vinci
- Artist Frida Kahlo
- Writer Mark Twain

**WRITING PROMPT:** Starting with A and ending with Z, challenge yourself to write down all the things that you are grateful for ... Apples, Bears, Cakes ... in invention of X-rays, the colour Yellow, Zebras. This may easily become an interesting piece of creative writing, or spark other ideas.

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### Writing Group Submissions

All I Can Say

By **Helena Lopes** (2013-Present)

At some distance I remember to call... but then I forget. And so on I go on this destiny, then I hear that same voice. But it's closer, and whoa is all I can say?



## The Twelve Rules by Jacob Bird

Hello, hello, do you know the 12 rules by Jordan blah blah blah? Well here are the 12 rules by Jacob bird. Number one, breathe. Number two, ground yourself. Number 3, stretch. Number four, balance. Number 5, play chess. Number 6, make music. Number 7, strengthen. Number 8, sweat. Number 9, sun and water. Number 10, play ping pong. Number 11, ride. Number 12, write!

Stay tuned for the next 12 rules.

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***\* A big thank you to Writing Group volunteer, Kathryn for her help with the newsletter this month and to everyone who contributed! \****

***If you would like to contribute to the Our Place newsletter, please email [info@ourplacecommunityofhope.com](mailto:info@ourplacecommunityofhope.com). We would love to hear from you!***



