Bring Light into the Darkness
By Barbara J. Green, Ph.D.; YHC Medical Director

We are in the darkest time of year. I am struck by how often I hear comments lamenting about the shortened days and the feelings so many get as darkness descends. Yes, it is true that we thrive with sunshine and natural Vitamin D. But, I do think it is possible to embrace the natural rhythm of the ebb and flow as we move through the days and the calendar. I find myself remarking repeatedly that after December 23rd we are on the upswing once again, so try and focus on that positive note.

Additionally, it is beneficial to consider how to adapt to longer hours of darkness. The darkest time of year coincides with the December holiday season, bringing us together with family and friends to celebrate. I think it is an opportunity to be with those we love and who celebrate life with us. Consider the following suggestions:

- Keep things simple and not overwhelming. You will

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Tip for Better Living:
“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”
John F. Kennedy
1917-1963
35th President of the United States
Bring Light into the Darkness (continued)
By Barbara J. Green, Ph.D.; YHC Medical Director

give yourself the gift of less stress and greater emphasis on connection.

- Keep yourself fueled with healthy choices of exercise, good nutrition, good sleep
- Use your tools of mindset reset remembering to breathe, think realistically and positively, believe in gratitude and count your blessings
- Remember that one of the things we give is a helping hand to others. You will feel better for doing so

From darkness comes light again, and another new year.

From my desk to you:
Breathe and Believe
Believe and Breathe
Breathe in the Here and Now…. ■

Surviving Winter Break for College Students
By Anna Bregoli, YHC Intern, Curry College ‘17

You have just returned back to campus after your long weekend at home for Thanksgiving break. The next couple weeks are going to be filled with challenges as the semester comes to an end with finals and research papers. Although it may feel like all of your textbooks are crashing down on you at once, it will soon be over.

You can then return home with the sense of accomplishment and freedom. But – keep in mind that there is a different type of freedom back at home. Your family will understand that you need to refresh your body and mind by taking a bit of a breather, but it is important that you do not take advantage of that. The first few weeks of the holiday break will most likely fly by with holiday parties and catching up with hometown friends again.

Here are some things you can do during break to keep you busy and prevent conflict at home:

- **Ask what you can do to help around the house.** Or, simply complete the chores you may have performed previously, such as: unloading the dishwasher, taking out the trash, or starting a load of laundry.
- **Take an inter-session course.** Many colleges offer intensive courses that begin after New Year’s Day and end right before the beginning of the spring semester. Most will grant you the same number of credits that you would earn during the fall or spring semester. This is a great idea for students who want to be ahead of schedule and plan on graduating early, or if you prefer to take a lighter class load during the regular semester.
- **Work!** It may not be easy to find a job locally that will be willing to hire someone new for a month or so. If you have had a summer job, try calling your boss to see if you can pick up a few hours here and there. If not, see if any local families need a babysitter or someone to shovel out their driveway if it snows. As a college student I know you could use some extra cash in your pocket!

For more tips on how to survive winter break, visit:
http://bit.ly/1Nxquz4

For more information about winter intersession courses, visit:
Typical or Troubled? ®
By Anna Bregoli, YHC Intern, Curry College ‘17

Adolescence can be a challenging time for most students. At this age, it may be hard for an adult, such as teachers or parents, to determine whether or not their teen is facing typical “teen problems” or a serious mental health issue.

The American Psychiatric Association Foundation has created the Typical or Troubled?® Mental Health Education Program. By educating adults in our community about mental health related problems, they are able to step in when it comes to recognition and intervention. These actions may go as far as saving a teen’s life, if resources and appropriate care are provided.

Please join us for a free session of Typical or Troubled? ® presented by Youth Health Connection Medical Director, Barbara J. Green, Ph.D.

When: January 9th, 2017 @ 3:30-5:30
Where: 30 Reservoir Park Dr. Rockland, MA

To register for this event, contact Jean at: jean_kelly@sshosp.org
Learn more about Typical or Troubled? ® at: http://bit.ly/1p6HJ1S

Human Rights Month
By Anna Bregoli, YHC Intern, Curry College ‘17

December is a month full of appreciation, reflection, and anticipation for the new-year. A holiday that is not as largely focused on, although I believe to be just as important, is the observation of Universal Human Rights Month.

Universal Human Rights Month stems from the moment on December 10, 1948, when the United Nations wrote a document called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

There are a number of holidays that are celebrated year-round based on our differences, so why not take this joyful time to try to understand our neighbors and why people are, the way they are? Despite our differences in race, culture, religion, sex, gender, socio-economic class, and everything else that sets us apart – we are all humans, with equal rights.

Universal Human Rights Month can be observed by acknowledging our differences, educating others, and accepting one another.

To learn more, visit: http://bit.ly/2ekvKxx

Indoor Activities

Before your children start bouncing off the walls with energy due to the cold weather; it is a good idea to consider some fun indoor activities that do not involve the screens.

- Arts & Crafts: With the holidays coming up, who doesn’t love a meaningful, homemade gift from a family member?
- Freeze Dance: Get their bodies moving with a high-energy session of dancing and stopping, and more dancing.
- Cook together: Whether it is dinner, or your favorite treat, getting the kids involved can be a fun learning experience.

For more tips, visit: http://bit.ly/1p6HJ1S
Youth Health Commission

By Kara DeBlois, Program Director, LICSW

The Adolescent Partial Hospitalization Program (APHP) at Pembroke Hospital is a voluntary, short-term, intensive, mental health program for teenagers aged 13-18. The goal of the program is to teach clients and their families skills they can utilize to cope with life stressors while also improving mood, changing maladaptive patterns, and promoting overall health and wellness. The APHP is generally one to two weeks and is a group-based program with a primary emphasis on learning skills to help clients manage their life stressors.

Dialectical Behavioral Therapy skills are introduced as a way to promote increased regulation. Clients also have the ability to meet with a psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse practitioner for a medication consultation. Family meetings are also offered in an attempt to promote healthy communication and psychoeducation.

The APHP now offers short Reiki sessions as an integrative treatment offered to further promote wellness and stress reduction. Clients often remark that they feel supported while at the program by both the staff and their peers and realize that they are not alone with the challenges they face.

To learn about Dialectical Behavioral Therapy skills, visit: http://bit.ly/2eGeKmp

Understanding Reiki: http://bit.ly/1le8HLX

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Program Director, Kara DeBlois, LICSW at:
Telephone: 781-829-7140
Email: kara.deblois@uhsinc.com

To make a referral to the program, please call 1-800-222-2237 #2

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Youth Health Connection is a community benefits program of South Shore Hospital dedicated to the positive mental health and physical well-being of youth. Our programs collaborate with schools, community health providers, law enforcement officers, state agencies, religious leaders, parents and peer leaders to help young people deal with the various challenges they face and the decisions they must make as they grow and mature. By combining efforts, we can ensure that local youth have access to the health-related knowledge, skills and resources they need to make healthy decisions throughout their lifetime.

To subscribe please visit: southshorehospital.org/yhcppublications

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