

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple a Day Lake Region Health Care's Health and Wellness segment where we feature news and information that you can use to live a healthier life. This is Katie Johnson and joining me as my guests today are Karen Wulfekuhle from our Social Services Department and Chaplain Brad Skogen from the Lake Region Health Care Chaplaincy Department. Good morning.

Karen

Wulfekuhle:

Brad Skogen: Good morning. Thanks for having us.

Katie Johnson: Thanks for joining me. It is, of course, the holiday season and we're here to talk about some of the things happening around here related to the holidays. Karen, you're closely involved with the organization of Lake Region Health Care's Living Well series that kind of took a new format this year and kicked off in September. We've had some great sessions so far. Lots of great sessions planned for the rest of the series, and special celebration of Living Well planned for this month. Can you tell us a little bit more about the Living Well series?

Karen

Wulfekuhle:

Absolutely. We started ... We needed to have a little modification, so to speak, for our supportive series, and in September we featured concussions, which was actually a really informative session. In October it included things related to addiction and mental illness. November we highlighted sleep and heart health, now this month we're going to do this just a little bit differently. December's session is actually going to be an afternoon, more informal type session. Our Living Well series unfolds the third Monday evening of every month. December 19th from 2 to 4 we're going to have more of an educational type table set up in the clinic lobby. We'll be able to have some really neat things, maybe some great recipes. We have chair massages available from Molly Nelson who's a certified massage therapist and owner of Poppy Seed Massage. We're excited about that.

Also, some other features here, I think I'll have Brad Skogen visit about that, Mental Health for the Holidays. We're just excited about pulling together some takeaway resources. If you're running errands that day or maybe have some obligations here at Lake Region Health Care, swing through the clinic lobby on Monday from 2 to 4 and you can take some really great things home with you. We'll also have some nice giveaways as well.

Katie Johnson: I like that you mentioned this is really informal. That's what's different about it. Typically we have a set time with a speaker and you sit down for an education series or lecture, but this month we know everyone's busy enough the way that it is, that we're just going to make it a stop by when you can anytime between 2 and 4 and, like you said, pick up some of these resources. The whole idea behind the Living Well series is to focus on all aspects of wellness, all seven components. You mentioned some of those, from nutrition with healthy recipes, to the benefits of just a little me time by getting a chair massage while you're here.

Brad, we also want to talk about mental wellness. You've put together a little tool kit that you're going to offer to people who stop by that day.

Brad Skogen:

Yeah. Mental, emotional and spiritual wellness are crucial and this time of year in particular, as folks are celebrating holidays there also are some folks who feel challenged in celebrating, who may have had some bad news recently, a loss of a loved one. It's also important to recognize the wholeness of our lives that include some of those challenges, losses, difficult times, so we want to attend to folks in that way. One of the things we're offering up as part of this resource for mental health during the holidays is these five tips for those who may be in that kind of place during the holidays and what you might be able to do.

I'll just name them real quickly. One of them is volunteering, helping out others. That's just a proven way, it's been researched and demonstrated that helping others has extraordinary benefits to individuals. Another is making a donation, helping financially in honor and memory of someone. Linking value of a relationship or the memory of a loved one in something that they felt strongly about by supporting that during the holiday season.

One thing that I've encouraged folks to do at the holidays also is that holidays are a time of tradition and ritual and sometimes it's beneficial and helpful to create a new one. That can look like a number of different things. Sometimes if there's been, for example, a death of a loved one, maybe something that you can do with kids or with family is make a Christmas decoration that hangs on a tree or there are other activities like that that we can do that ritualize and create a new tradition that goes along with new experiences that we have.

Fourth idea is to be sure to be kind to yourself. There are lots of expectations we have of ourselves and other people may have of us around holiday times and having an expectation for yourself of being kind to yourself and cutting yourself slack. That is incredibly valuable.

A last piece of this is being able to ask for what you need. Communicating, asking for a little extra time or asking for help or asking for what you feel you need in your relationships in all of these events that are going on. Those are just five things that contribute to mental, emotional wellness.

Katie Johnson:

Like we mentioned, we're going to have those for you on a handy little take away along with plenty of other resources as well. Karen, let's make sure we emphasize again the date and the time for this celebrating living well special event.

Karen
Wulfekuhel:

December 19th from 2 to 4. December 19th from 2 to 4. You don't have to RSVP for this session either, again, highlighting the informal nature of this, and I just want to run back to ... Just was thinking about something that Chaplain Brad said, and sometimes it could be it's hard for us to be able to ask for what we need. Again, we provide some of these resources, and yet oftentimes if you're at home or if you're rethinking some of this stuff, always know that there's a number of resources here

at Lake Region Health Care. You don't necessarily have to be actively in the hospital or a patient of ours right now, however it may be difficult for you to ask your family member what you need, but you may find it more easy to go ahead and put a call into the Chaplaincy office, or maybe touch base with us in social services and say, "I heard about this on the radio," or "I wonder about where I could find X or Y," again, just always wanting to make sure listeners in our community understand that we could be a valuable resource for them.

Again, December 19th, 2 to 4. Join us. Actually we'll have some nice treats and we'll have some excellent resources.

Katie Johnson: That's a really great point, and just to make it extra easy, how do people do that? Certainly they can top by that day, but if they said, "I do want to call and reach out to Chaplaincy or to social services." What phone number should they call, who should they ask for?

Karen Wulfekuhle: I would suggest calling the main hospital number, 736-8000, and just being able to say, "Can I talk to someone in social services," or "Could I talk to someone ...". We have two chaplains here, Deb and Brad, they can ask for me, Karen, and I certainly get them pointed in the right direction, and just really wanting to be a valuable resource to our community. Again, there's just a lot of good help here.

Katie Johnson: There is and that's exactly what this Living Well series is all about, is really highlighting all of the different ways that we can hopefully be partners with others in the community, and together offer all of the resources that anyone could possibly need to live an optimally well life, regardless of where that may fall in the continuum.

Another example of this great partnership, Brad, that I want to make sure that we talk about today, is an event happening the same week, December 21st, in which the chaplaincy department is partnering with area churches to offer a blue Christmas service again this year. Can you give us the details of that?

Brad Skogen: Sure. This is something we've done for a number of years and it's really been beneficial and appreciated by folks. The Blue Christmas service is going to be at the Federated Church here in town at 7 PM on December 21st. It's something we've done really, again, to connect with folks who are balancing different emotions during the holidays. Missing loved ones who live far away, or families who have someone in the military who can't be home for the holidays, families who have experienced death or loss, who want to celebrate and yet there is that other part of them that is hurting or sad. There'll be flyers about this available on the 19th, but this year in particular we're appreciative that our speaker person who will be sharing part of her story is Heather Rundquist who will be reflecting on her experience and sharing her story as part of that service where there'll be music and there'll be prayer and there'll be quiet time. It's a collaboration of several congregations from several denominations in the community that come together around this.

In the midst of all of the celebrating that's going on it's also a way of celebrating and recognizing this part of our lives.

Katie Johnson: You said, again, that's at the Federated Church which is right in downtown Fergus Falls.

Brad Skogen: That's correct, at Federated Church December 21st at 7:00.

Katie Johnson: Great. Two really specific invitations to our listeners this morning, the first for the Living Well series open house on Monday, December 19th in the main clinic. Stop by, see the beautiful Christmas tree, enjoy some treats, maybe a chair massage, register for some prizes, take home some recipes, some mental wellness tips, all kinds of great resources. Also for December 21st, the Blue Christmas service at Federated Church at 7 PM, again, open to the public and with Heather Rundquist sharing her stories. Sure to be a meaningful service for anyone who attends.

Karen Wulfekuhle, Social Services, Brad Skogen, Chaplaincy, and Katie Johnson here at Lake Region Health Care on Apple a Day, reminding you there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.