



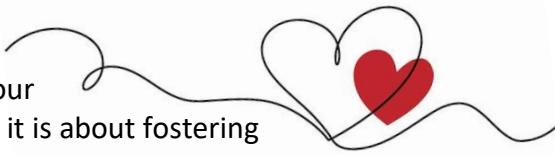
It's that time of year! The holiday season is over and a new year begins to take shape. We find ourselves reflecting, making resolutions, and planning for the changes we want to see in the months ahead. Amid all of this, there is one thing that is often overlooked: our mental health.

Picture this! Walking into the new year with mental clarity and confidence to achieve any of the changes you would like to make in 2026. A mental health tune-up can do just that!

So let's check in, recalibrate, and prepare yourself emotionally for the year that lies ahead.

What is a Mental Health Tune-Up?

Think of a mental health tune-up as a preventative checkup for your emotional well-being. It's more than just addressing how we feel, it is about fostering resilience, growth, and self-compassion. When you take time to self reflect on what is truly important to you and those you love, it helps set the stage for a new year feeling strong, centered, and confident.



What Does a Mental Health Tune-Up Look Like?

Let's start with what a mental health tune-up does NOT look like. It's definitely not a one-size fits all approach. It does not ask you to ignore your feelings, avoid self-care, or to blame yourself. A mental health tune-up does not judge; it is about small consistent habits and awareness that help you to align with your best self, to prevent burnout, and boost your overall well-being.

Take a Joy Break!

When we experience moments of happiness, no matter how small or fleeting, we become more grounded in the present, recharge our reserve of positive emotions, and strengthen our social connections. Seeking or experiencing joy is never a selfish waste of time. In fact, it's the opposite: In difficult times, those moments are essential.



You may want to consider scheduling "joy breaks" each week—time in a park, a game with a friend, playing with a pet, or pursuing a creative hobby.



Practice Gratitude

Including gratitude in your life is just one way for creating a positive outlook on your life. More than that, it has tangible benefits for your mental health, including reducing stress, lessening depression symptoms and boosting your mood.

Gratitude is a simple concept. This year, take time for self-reflection and share your gratitude with the people around you. If you like to journal, regularly write down a list of things you are grateful for.



Don't Be So Hard on Yourself!

Many of us are much harder on ourselves than we are on others. We hold ourselves to impossible standards, replay past mistakes in our minds, and so often struggle to recognize our achievements. The first step to self-kindness is awareness. Pay attention to how you talk to yourself. Many of us set impossibly high standards for ourselves, leading to frustration and burnout.

Life is not perfect all the time and neither are people. By letting go of perfectionism, you become more aware of just who you are and believe that you are enough, "just the way you are".

Build a Healthy Support Network

Building healthy relationships is crucial for your mental health. Research consistently shows that a healthy support network can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, lower stress, and even improve physical health like blood pressure and immune response. A healthy support network often includes a diverse group of people and resources such as spiritual communities, co-workers or mentors, neighbors or community members.

Part of building a healthy support network is learning to discern between healthy and unhealthy connections. A supportive person should listen without judgement, respect your boundaries, and be trustworthy and safe. A healthy support network is built on reciprocity. Offer your time, empathy, and understanding to those who support you.



Ask for Help

As simple as this sounds, it is often very difficult for many people to seek help, especially for our mental health. Humans are social creatures, and we benefit from living in social groups, supporting each other, and relying on one another's strengths. Reaching out for help is a big step, and one that shows significant courage. If you or someone you love needs help, ask for it!

The Employee Family Assistance Program offered through Homewood Health, provides assistance to eligible UofR employees and their eligible dependents – 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year.

For more information about the EFAP Program and how to seek help, logon to UR Source [here](#).