

ISSUE
18

FEB
2021

THE MONTHLY
JOURNAL OF
LIFE RECOVERY SERVICES

The Phoenix



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Tips for Managing Your Marriage in a Pandemic

Marriages require an effective balance of separateness and togetherness. The proper ratio varies from couple to couple. Too much time together can be as challenging as not enough. Divorce lawyers are reporting a huge increase in inquiries from unhappy people wanting a divorce. Luckily, there are steps anyone can take to decrease the odds of becoming one of those unhappy couples. Consider these tips to avoid allowing the pandemic to disrupt your marriage:

- **Have activities you do separately.** Odds are that you're spending plenty of time together. In your previous life, you might have struggled to find time to spend with your spouse. It's possible to have too much of a good thing, especially if you have a smaller home. Spend some time apart each day. This is simple to accomplish. One of you goes to the store while the other one stays home. When the shopper returns, the person that stayed home can go for a walk or mow the grass. There is a couple of hours of peace right there.
- **Avoid doing those things that you know irritate your spouse.** You know what your spouse doesn't like, and you might even do those things on purpose now and then just for spite. But, now isn't the time for passive-aggressive behavior.
 - Why poke the bear when you can't get away from the bear? Increasing the level of resentment is just foolish.
- **Put a stop to any criticism.** The same goes for criticism. It's understandable that you might be frustrated with each other, but why take it to another level when it isn't necessary? Have you ever received any personal criticism that strengthened your relationship with that person? Doubtful.
- **Stay busy.** Bored and annoyed is worse than comfortably busy and annoyed. Find something to do and put your attention on that task. It's a more productive and enjoyable way to coexist. Idle minds have a tendency to become agitated.
- **Argue outside of the home.** If you're going to fight, do it somewhere else. The kids will appreciate not having to be part of it. It also avoids emotionally contaminating the home. It's less comfortable in the home after an argument has occurred. Argue somewhere else and preserve the sanctity of your home.
- **Keep the house tidy.** A cluttered home is more stressful for everyone. Encourage everyone to pick up after themselves and there will be less tension in your home. Everyone in the house should have a couple of chores to do each day. A tidy home is a more peaceful home.
- **Communicate.** Communication is always important. It's more important now than ever. Try to have at least one meaningful conversation each day.
 - What makes a conversation meaningful? Both of you are glad you had the conversation. You can have a meaningful conversation about the weather or garbage cans, as long as you're both glad you had the conversation afterwards.
- **Establish some routines.** Keep a routine. It's going to be a different routine than before, but a routine is still important. Get everyone out of bed by a certain time. Have a dinner routine and a bedtime routine. Keep everyone on some semblance of a schedule.
- **Be kind.** Everyone knows how to be kind. Be especially kind during this challenging time.

Marriages are challenging even under great circumstances, and we're not living in great circumstances right now. A little prevention can go a long way toward preserving your marriage.

Be sure to give each other the alone time that you both need. Place a premium on communication. Be kind. This is good advice for any marriage under any circumstance, and even more so during troubling times. One way to show your gratitude every day is to remind yourself of the big picture when a negative thought arises. If a petty argument with your spouse makes you feel angry and heated, take a deep breath and think for a moment. Remember that the argument is not permanent and, instead, feel grateful for the gift of this relationship.

Administrative Office Hours

Mondays - Fridays
6:00am - 6:00pm

Saturdays
10:00am - Noon



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Ruby Red Pomegranate Bars

Ingredients

Dough:

- ½ cup vegan butter, cold
(can substitute unsalted butter)
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup all-purpose flour

Filling:

- 2½ cups pomegranate juice
- ½ cup lemon juice
- 6 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 cup cashew milk
- Confectioners' sugar



Instructions

1. Heat oven to 325°F. Line a 9x9-inch square pan with parchment paper allowing for excess to hangover the edges. Spray lightly with cooking spray.
2. For the dough: In a food processor, add vegan butter, sugar, and salt; pulse until well combined. Add flour and pulse until just incorporated.
3. Dust hands with some flour to keep the dough from sticking; pat the dough into an even layer into the pan. Bake until lightly brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Set aside to cool.
4. For the filling: In a medium saucepan, whisk cornstarch with pomegranate juice and lemon juice. Add sugar, salt, and cashew milk. Cook, stirring constantly, over medium-high heat until it just begins to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook for one minute, filling will be thick. Remove from heat.
5. Pour filling over the crust in an even layer and let cool slightly. Cover the pan with plastic wrap and chill until set, 2 to 3 hours.
6. Run a knife along the edges of the pan and use the parchment flaps to lift out and onto a cutting board. Cut into 24 squares and dust with confectioners' sugar.
7. Dust with confectioners' sugar. Store any remaining bars airtight in the refrigerator for up to three days.

Service Spotlight



CONSULTATION



THE CONSULTATION PROCESS HAPPENS WHEN A COUNSELOR EITHER OBSERVES OR ACTS AS AN EXPERT TO PROVIDE ADVICE. CONSULTATION IS VOLUNTARILY PROVIDED TO ASSIST ANOTHER PROFESSIONAL, CLIENT, OR ORGANIZATION WITH A PROBLEM. CONSULTING TAKES PLACE TO EVALUATE MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE ABUSE, BEHAVIORS, OR ORGANIZATIONS.



Star Howell
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Have you missed a
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them.

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Wellness Checklist

Wellness is the active pursuit of activities, choices, and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health. There are two important aspects to this definition. First, wellness is not a passive or static state but rather an "active pursuit" that is associated with intentions, choices, and actions as we work toward an optimal state of health and wellbeing. Second, wellness is linked to holistic health—that is, it extends beyond physical health and incorporates many different dimensions that should work in harmony.

Wellness is an individual pursuit. We have self-responsibility for our own choices, behaviors, and lifestyles. It is significantly influenced by the physical, social, and cultural environments in which we live. Wellness is often confused with terms such as health, wellbeing, and happiness. While there are common elements among them, wellness is distinguished by not referring to a static state of being (i.e., being happy, in good health, or a state of wellbeing). Rather, wellness is associated with an active process of being aware and making choices that lead toward an outcome of optimal holistic health and wellbeing.

Wellness is about more than just physical health. Most models of wellness include at least six dimensions:

- **Physical:** Nourishing a healthy body through exercise, nutrition, sleep, etc.
- **Mental:** Engaging the world through learning, problem-solving, creativity, etc.
- **Emotional:** Being aware of, accepting and expressing our feelings, and understanding the feelings of others.
- **Spiritual:** Searching for meaning and higher purpose in human existence.
- **Social:** Connecting and engaging with others and our communities in meaningful ways.
- **Environmental:** Fostering positive interrelationships between planetary health and human actions, choices and wellbeing.

Daily rituals and positive habits can enhance your life and increase your success. Take a look at the following list and highlight any areas of need.

- ▽ You stretch or work out every day
- ▽ You stay focused on your goals each day
- ▽ Your routine is consistent and deliberate
- ▽ You find time within the day for yourself
- ▽ You find something to look forward to after work
- ▽ You under-promise in order to over-deliver for daily tasks
- ▽ You spend more time doing what you want rather than what others expect
- ▽ You take time to eat regular meals away from your desk
- ▽ You get enough sleep
- ▽ You go outside during the day to get some Vitamin D from the sunlight
- ▽ You connect with people you love daily

Staff Spotlight

Shelley Evans Outreach Coordinator

- Loves music from the 60s and 70s
- Graduated from the University of Central Oklahoma
- Has 2 adult children but her favorite is her furbaby Payton Manning
- Enjoys spending time in the New England area
- Has a special interest in scary stories & urban legends



Services Available

We currently offer individual, couples, family, and group sessions.

Our staff members provide trauma-informed services in the office, in various confidential settings within the community, and via tele-health.

We have staff who speak English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

We offer urine testing, pre-marital counseling, wedding officiating services, and the co-parenting course for those getting a divorce.

Please call the office to schedule an appointment or visit us on Tuesdays or Fridays for walk-ins.