



Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

Issue 28
December 2024

Comments from Linda

This past fall semester was fun, busy, engaging; many worthwhile things went on. We have many new faces in our client population, and I am particularly pleased with how popular our group exercise sessions have become. I am proud to see everyone figuring out approaches for the circuits – everyone working to their own limits and abilities but still being together. Everyone seems to be finding their niche with the activities that work for them and that is greatly appreciated. Keep it up please!

We had our usual involvement with PT, nursing, community psychology, community nutrition, health science and gero majors with the addition of nutrition grad students this past semester. They completed some fun projects and have established a baseline for projects that can keep going in future semesters. There were 14 students that got course credit for efforts for the field service they completed with us and a whole host of other students who had observational experiences and can now carry things seen forward to future learning.

As our program continues to grow and as administrative things move along in the background to ensure our sustainability, I look forward to seeing a continuation of great things in 2025. Thanks for being a part of it!

Best wishes for a warm and wonderful holiday. I do hope to see you soon!

Linda

CWP Newsletter

This newsletter is created quarterly with a primary intent of reaching those we have not seen lately. If you would like to receive a hard copy in the mail, please let me know. Call and leave a message (916-278-4402) or send an email: csuscwvwellness@gmail.com

Included in this issue:

Program Coordinator Notes, Linda Paumer,
CWP Projects -- Linda Paume
Exercise Reminders, Linda Paumer, MA
Nursing Reminders – Sharon Myers, RN
Notes, Debbie Lucas, RD
Recipe Corner
Recipe Modification – Nutrition Grad Students
Universe in Rose Petal, Linda Larsen, RN
Holiday Puzzles -- back page



As this newsletter is being put together, our Medical Director, Radhika Nandur Bukkapatnam is away on a family trip to India. Happy Holidays!

CWP Projects *List compiled by Linda Paumer*



Likely you are aware of the excellent job we do fulfilling our mission of serving students. Everyone's involvement in student interactions is a cornerstone of our success.

Highlights of the Fall 2024 semester:

1) Gerontology. *Our participation in gero courses is one of our best accomplishments. Our program provides service learning for several students taking gero courses and now that I actually instruct one of these courses, that helps our viability immensely. This past semester we had Gero 101 students watching and interacting with us. This coming semester the course on "older adult services & strategies" will be called Gero 11 and it will be an online course. I will be seeking Zoom interactions for anyone interested to give the students exposure to concepts we face. Hopefully some of them will be able to come in person as well. Look for a schedule for that by the start of the next semester (mid-January).*

2) Matter of Balance class. *We ran our first course in this community-wide evidence-based fall prevention program during October/November. We were pleased with how it went and thought it was a fun, positive experience. We have a 2nd course scheduled to start January 24th; it is an 8-week course that will meet 11 am – 1 pm on Fridays. This course will also be an outreach endeavor and open to 'outsiders' if anyone is interested; please mention it to anyone you think might benefit – there is a sign-up sheet on our counter, and I will be sending email requests out in early January. The program addresses fear of falling as well as a mild exercise program.*

3) Balance activities. *Our Friday 2:30 pm class continues, initially set up by PT students. Jasmine will be the primary student running it in the spring and she hopes to bring in more of her classmates; Javier is off to finish up his clinical rotations. While the PT students are on break, of course I will be leading these sessions. They are a great continuation of things learned in the Matter of Balance class and generally good things to keep doing.*

4) Survey Projects. *We had several really good projects completed this past semester from a variety of students and in a variety of manners. Community psychology collected information about loneliness, stress and general advice to younger generations. Graduate students in community nutrition collected information on eating habits and presented guidance on recipe modifications. Research students collected information on sleep habits and hip flexibility. Some of these projects were in-person assessments and some were online Qualtrics surveys – that is a very helpful tool that enables those of you not coming in to help out and also gives the students good opportunities to learn data management. Any time you can help with these surveys, your efforts are greatly appreciated. We are not going to win Nobel Prizes for the things we learn but we do create a nice collection of the positive outcomes that come from participation in our program.*

5) Spring 2025 outlook. *Of course, new and continuing student activities are slated for the upcoming semester. Your continued involvement with them is still requested and greatly appreciated. Stay tuned!*

Exercise Reminders *from Linda Paumer*



We've had mindfulness, hopefulness, goal-oriented, change-dealing concepts bandied about lately. I thought this could easily carry over into thinking about your current exercise routines. Is this a good time to make an assessment of how your exercise routine is going? Is it working for you? Are you feeling good about the things you can do currently? Are you dealing okay with any changes you've had to make in your routine? Do you need help getting out of a slump?

New years generally bring in new resolve to either make changes or stick with changes. I am encouraging you to all use that resolve to assess your currently exercise routine and create some new goals for it if you've determined that is needed right now.

Below are some AI generated ideas (greatly edited) for how you can boost motivation in your routine:

Set Goals -- Commit to a challenge, such as completing a certain task or mastering a new skill. Use the SMART goal concept when creating a goal (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound).

Specific: Do you have a specific task in mind (certain # of miles, # of days, # of minutes

Measurable: with the right task, there are clearly some units you can use to measure progress

Achievable: choose a goal that you know is realistic to your capabilities and limitations – maintaining what you've already got or expecting a modest, achievable amount of improvement

Relevant: the task you've chosen fits in your life and is something you really want to do; it has meaning for you

Time-bound: give yourself a time-limit for when you want to accomplish the goal you've set. If you leave it open-ended, you set yourself up to never get there. If you set a time limit (certain # days, weeks, months) that helps you be successful. At the end of your time limit you will have accomplished your goal or determined it wasn't really achievable, which then gives you then the opportunity to create a new goal where you can be more successful.

Sounds easy – please chat with one of us if you want some help making goals.

Find a Partner -- Exercising with a friend can make workouts more enjoyable and hold you accountable. I have enjoyed seeing the friendships that have developed in our community and you are encouraged to work together with each other to create more accountability partnerships. Maybe as pairs or in small groups you could make some goals together.

Switch It Up If you've been doing the same routine forever and ever, think about trying something different for a change. Could be a different activity, a machine you've never tried before, adding some stretching to your routine if you've been skipping that, adding some resistance training to your routine if you've been avoiding that. It could be adding some short, high-intensity bursts into your sustained cardio bout. Again, ask for help if you want ideas here.

Create a Routine -- If you haven't already adopted a consistent schedule for your exercise routine, that is a definite place for one of your SMART goals. Treating your exercise routine like a dose of medicine that you take at a consistent, repeated interval each week makes it a habit, even in the colder months, and hopefully adds to your accountability with your program.

Our program staff includes two exercise physiologists, myself and Sharon. Either one of us is happy to talk with you about your routine, your goals, and directions you hope to take. Please don't be bashful about asking for input.

Mattering

from Sharon Myers RN



When we feel that we matter, we believe that we add value to ourselves and others. “By feeling valued, we mean being appreciated, respected, and recognized. By adding value, we mean making a contribution and making a difference in the world.” (Psychology Today, 2024)

Research suggests that “people who feel like they matter experience more self-compassion, relationship satisfaction, and greater belief in their capacity to achieve their goals, while lack of mattering is associated with anxiety, and depression and increased risk of suicide.” (Flett, 2018)

A great example of “mattering” is exemplified in the movie “It’s a Wonderful Life.” The main character, George, is a man overwhelmed with despair for the way he perceives his life has turned out. In the movie he’s given a vision enabling him to see that many of the small things he’s done in his life, have made a difference in others’ lives. He comes to believe in himself and his own self-worth and value, and is able to embrace the joy in life again.

A Researcher, Gordon Flett, has written an insightful book entitled “The Psychology of Mattering.” He states, “wherever you are on the spectrum, mattering is malleable.” We can’t change the type of parenting we had, or whether we’ve experienced discrimination, bias, and unfair treatment — all of which can play a significant role in our feelings about whether we matter or not. But Flett believes there are steps we can take in the present moment, to change our current perception of how much we matter (Flett, 2018).

Identify your strengths

- Sit down in a quiet space; think of times in your life when you have been helpful or made a small difference to someone. Make a list of these things; allow yourself to really notice and feel these experiences.
- Ask a good friend or family member that you trust to share what they see as some of your strengths.

Adjust your relationships

- It’s hard to feel a sense of mattering in isolation. We learn and grow through relationships. If you did not have wonderful parents or early life experiences, then it is important in your adult life to surround yourself with friends, and others who can reflect back positively to you and who really “see” you and appreciate you.
- It is also important to show others that you value them. . In “How People Matter,” a book written by Isaac and Ora Prilleltensky, they suggest telling people why and how much you appreciate them. It is important to be specific, such as “It meant a lot to me that you helped me find my keys. I appreciate that you saw how frustrated I was and tried to help me.” It feels good to feel like you matter to someone, and they in turn may begin to model that behavior back to you. You can also add value in relationships by asking your loved ones at least one open-ended question every time you see them. Doing so helps you better understand their perspectives, and it communicates that you value them. And when you have a deeper conversation with those you care about, you in turn feel that you are valued.

Assess your work life or volunteer your time

Do something you care about. Actively seeking out opportunities to make a positive impact, whether big or small, in the lives of others is a way to remind us that our existence and actions have value and importance.

Practice self-compassion

- Recognize your own worth and value.
- Be kind to yourself and acknowledge your efforts even when things don’t come out perfectly.
- Practice mindfulness. This allows you to value the present moment and not spend so much time worrying what “may” happen in the future, or stewing over things you wish you had done differently in the past.
- Practice gratitude for what you have.

Remember that you matter in this life and that you have made a difference to someone. By doing small acts of kindness you can continue to have a positive influence in people’s lives.

Enjoy the Holidays with Mindful Eating

From Debbie Lucas, RD

During the holidays, it can feel like the most important thing is the food. Because of that, it is easy to get caught up in all the delicious food around us. If you have changed your lifestyle to be more plant-based and heart healthy, the holidays might mean finding new ways to enjoy traditional meals. Mindful eating can help make the holiday season more enjoyable while staying true to your new lifestyle.



Mindful eating means paying attention to what you eat, how you eat, and why you eat. Instead of rushing through meals or eating because you're bored, mindful eating helps you focus on the food and how it makes you feel. You can use this practice to enjoy each bite of your plant-based holiday meals and feel more satisfied. We talked at our class this week about the power of our fork: the food on your fork can be PRO-heart disease (or pro-cancer or pro-diabetes) or it can be ANTI-heart disease (or cancer or diabetes). Depending on your 'why' (the reason we see you at the Cardiovascular Wellness Program and why you are making lifestyle changes), I suspect you'd rather be choosing anti-chronic disease foods for your fork and for your family.

Here are some tips for mindful eating:

1. Have a holiday eating plan in mind. Will you try everything but only in small amounts? Will you only eat your favorite special foods and not waste time on things you could have every day? Will you check out the array of food before you start dishing up? Will you modify some of your traditional recipes to make them more heart healthy and guilt-free? Will you fill half (or more) of your plate with veggies?
2. Think about your food choices. Do you know what ingredients are in them? Are they the type of foods that will help you reach your 'why'?
3. Try to slow down; take small bites. Focus on the bite in your mouth, not the bite that is next.
4. Chew your food carefully and notice the different flavors and textures.
5. Put your fork or eating utensil down between each bite. This will help you enjoy the food more and make you feel satisfied, even if you eat less. It also helps you avoid overeating, which is easy to do during the holidays when there are so many treats around.
6. Listen to your body. If you're satisfied, stop eating even if there's still food on your plate. If you don't want to waste food, then start with smaller portions.
7. Don't forget to enjoy the company around you. The holidays are about spending time with family and friends, and eating together is just one part of the celebration. You could try to walk around the neighborhood to see the lights, go to one of the many ice skating rinks, go caroling!

If you are interested in modifying some of your favorite recipes, look at the article in this newsletter by Melinda Gong – she gives some tips for recipe substitutions. If you would rather not change your traditions, then follow the tips above – eating mindfully can help you to not overdo on those favorites.

Mindful eating can help you make better food choices year-round, not just during the holidays. It has also been shown to help with weight loss. By focusing on what you're eating, slowing down, putting your utensil down, etc., you will generally be satisfied with less food.

I wish you a fun-filled, healthy and happy holiday for both you and your family. I'm including a link to the plant-based entrée I'll be making for our family this year: Hasselback Squash with herby Tahini Dressing. It is beautiful, tasty and will help us to feel good about the food we choose to eat during the holidays.

Hasselback Squash with Herby Tahini



Ingredients

- 1 medium butternut squash
- 2 garlic cloves
- Olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ½ cup
couscous/quinoa/buckwheat
- 2 handfuls salad leaves
- 4 Tbs pomegranate arils
- 5 Tbs vegan feta cheese



Herby Tahini:

- 5 Tbs tahini
- 1 Tbs fresh mint leaves
- 1 Tbs lemon juice
- 1 small garlic clove, peeled
- 2-3 Tbs water

Directions

servings 2

Preheat the oven to 400°F and line a large baking tray with parchment paper.

Peel the squash and then slice in half lengthways. Score into the back of the squash, leaving 1-cm gap at the bottom to hold the squash together. Repeat all along the back of both of the squash pieces every ½-cm.

Peel and thinly slice the garlic cloves and nestle in the scores of the squash. Rub with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper and roast for 45-60 minutes until tender and golden on top.

Meanwhile, cook the grains and leave to one side.

Make the herby tahini by adding all the ingredients to a small blender and blitz until smooth, seasoning to taste with salt and pepper.

Once cooked, lay the squash over the cooked grains and salad leaves. Drizzle over the herby tahini, sprinkle over the pomegranate arils and crumble the vegan feta cheese.

Eat straight away or keep the squash and grains (not the salad leaves, pomegranate or feta, add these just before serving) in an airtight container in the fridge for 2-3 days.

<https://nourishingamy.com/2021/03/29/hasselback-squash-with-herby-tahini-vegan-gf/>

Recipe Makeovers

By Andrew Buenrostro, Alex Demers, and
Melinda Gong RD; CSUS Graduate Students

Eating plant-based does not mean you have to give up your traditional recipes you have enjoyed throughout your life. You can take those recipes and make some simple swaps to increase the plant-based ingredients and gain some heart protective benefits.



Simple Substitutions

- **Milk:** You can use a plant based milk such as oat, soy, or almond. Using plain and unsweetened plant milk will give you the best results.
- **Eggs:** Try mashed fruit purees such as applesauce or prunes when making a baked item. For savory dishes, silken tofu makes a great alternative. 1 egg = ¼ cup of puree or tofu. Flax eggs are also a great substitution. Mix 1 tablespoon flaxseed meal with 3 tablespoons water, and let sit for about 5 minutes. The flaxseed eggs work as a great binding agent in baking and for veggie burgers or meatballs.
- **Butter:** Swap with oil. You can replace 1 part butter with 1 part oil in most recipes. Mashed fruit puree (such as applesauce) can also replace butter in most baked recipes. You can replace 1 part butter with 1 part mashed fruit.
- **Ground Meats:** Texturized vegetable protein soaks up the flavor and can give a very similar texture to ground meats.
- **All purpose flour:** Swap it with whole wheat flour. Yes, both of these are plant-based products, but the whole wheat flour has more fiber.

It can feel overwhelming to makeover a recipe so here are some simple tips to get started. Make one substitution at a time. When making multiple substitutions at once, you may not quite enjoy the results but aren't exactly sure why. By trying one substitution at a time, you may realize you don't even notice a difference. It's also very important to use ingredients you already enjoy. If you don't particularly like the taste of tofu, it's best to use another alternative when trying to makeover a recipe. Try the same recipe with different substitutions. Experimenting can lead to a delicious new version of your favorite recipe you never knew existed!

For more ideas, check out this website of plant-based recipe substitutions.

(<https://www.kitchenaid.com/pinch-of-help/major-appliances/vegan-meat-milk-butter-substitutes.html>)

Happy Cooking!



Mindfulness and Hope

By Linda M, Larsen, RN-BC, RYT

At the end of the year, we frequently take some time to mindfully contemplate (ideally non-judgmentally): the state of our health, relationships, work, the world, and more. My wish for you all whether you do this or not, is that you have hope. Hope is defined by Merriam-Webster as: “to want something to happen or be true; or someone or something on which hopes are centered.” According to William Miller, professor emeritus at the University of New Mexico, “The essence of hope is envisioned betterment, and it serves us well. It comes hardwired in human nature to dream a better future, helping us to carry on and survive.”



“Paying attention to our present moment experiences with openness and curiosity and a willingness to be with what is,” my often-cited definition of mindfulness by Diana Winston, is seemingly the opposite of hope.

Although mindfulness is about focusing attention on the present moment and hopefulness suggests projecting into the future, mindfulness and hopefulness can coexist. When your stress levels are low, alternate being hopeful and mindful at various times throughout the day. Any time you are feeling hopeless, recent research shows that hopeful thoughts will ultimately be more beneficial than dwelling on the here and now.

So, how do you add more hope to your life? Brain research shows the hardest thing for the brain to do is to let go of negative thoughts – think of Velcro for negative thoughts and Teflon for positive thoughts. As soon as you begin to pay attention to your inner experience, notice if you try to prolong pleasant thoughts, feelings, and situations or similarly, try to avoid and protect yourself from unpleasant thoughts, feelings, situations because they’re painful. Science has shown adding positive emotions and experiences to life helps to balance negativity. Here are three ways to add positivity:

1. **Use micro-goals.** Set goals that let you achieve results within 20 or 30 minutes—or even up to 2 hours. (e.g., replying to 3 emails or weeding in the garden for the next 20 minutes.) Micro-goals provide satisfaction and joy as a result of accomplishing a goal.
2. **Practice Gratitude.** Gratitude is a feeling that you can sense in your body and is deeply nourishing. Gratitude doesn’t have to be a major thing; it can be something as simple as reflecting on the breath that you take, sunlight, and special people. Gratitude shines a flashlight on what is already there but you hadn’t noticed. Gratitude practices help re-wire our brains to be more positive and resilient. Robert A. Emmons, Professor at UC Davis and leading scientific expert on the science of gratitude says; “The practice of gratitude can have dramatic and lasting effects in a person’s life”
3. **Be kind.** Being kind is part of a feedback loop that is triggered by positive emotions and helps well-being. Be kind to others *and* remember to be kind to yourself. Kindness is a component of Mindful Self-Compassion.

I’m personally very grateful to Sharon Myers, whose talk on Dealing with Cancer has many great suggestions on nurturing hope and was a catalyst to my micro-goal of finishing this newsletter in a timely manner which helps decrease my stress level! May you find hope as you make your way through the end of 2024, and welcome in the new year!

More on Mindfulness & Hope

“I began to realize that hope can only arrive
when you recognize that there are real options and that you have genuine choices.”

- Dr Jerome Groopman,

For more in depth on Mindfulness and Hope:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-healing-crowd/202207/the-new-science-hope>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-athletes-way/202409/does-hopefulness-outshine-mindfulness-new-study-says-yes>

<https://cardiovascularwellnessprogram.org/sharon-myers> - in Presentations: Dealing with Cancer (pdf)

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/eight_ways_you_can_feel_more_hopeful_even_in_dark_times

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/flourish-and-thrive/202107/what-do-you-hope-for>

<https://www.mindful.org/a-12-minute-meditation-for-healing-through-hope/>



“Cut back on the Ho-Ho’s.”

Cryptogram Answers

Quotation

Unless we make Christmas an occasion to share our blessings, all the snow in Alaska won't make it 'white.' Bing Crosby

Fictional Characters

1. SCROOGE
2. RUDOLPH
3. MRS. CLAUS
4. TINY TIM
5. THREE FRENCH HENS
6. THE GRINCH
7. CHARLIE BROWN
8. GEORGE BAILEY
9. DASHER
10. FROSTY THE SNOWMAN



**“My goal is to start exercising by the
1st of Someday and lose ten pounds
by the day after Eternity.”**

Christmas Cryptograms

Cryptogram Basics: In any type of standard cryptogram puzzle, one letter of the alphabet is substituted with another letter. The same substitution is used throughout a single puzzle. When you're solving cryptograms, remember that if $A = Z$, it will always equal Z in that puzzle. But you should not assume that $Z = A$. It probably does not. Each of these puzzles uses a different code.

Christmas Quotation A well-known Christmas song (Linda's least variety, truth be told) is the inspiration for this interesting quotation.

BOXYCC DY AGHY TZFNCWAGC GO
 LTTGCNLO WL CZGFY LBF PXYCCNOJC, GXX
 WZY COLD NO GXGCHG DLO'W AGHY
 NW 'DZNWY.' ---PNOU TFLCPM (1904-1977)



Fictional Christmas Characters

1. LXAGGYD
2. AQMGBVE
3. UAL. XBKQL
4. SNOW SNU
5. SEADD TADOXE EDOL
6. SED YANOXE
7. XEKABND HAGJO
8. YDGAYD HKNBDW
9. MKLEDA
10. TAGLSW SED LOGJUKO

