

# Healthy Choices

# Healthy You

*Caring for your overall wellness*

## VOX POPULI

### In pursuit of wellness, balance, joy

"I'm slowly starting to realize happiness is a journey and a choice. I think saying 'a state of happiness' diminishes all the work and appreciation it takes you to be truly happy. It's almost impossible to be happy all the time, and when you're experiencing disappointment, grief, and loss, it makes you appreciate moments of lightness and happiness that much more. Happiness, to me, is a collection of small moments, where you're truly present. In the ocean, diving or surfing, there is nothing else you can focus on but being in the moment. Out on a starry Saipan winter night, there's a significant feeling of contentment and happiness. To say one is happy all the time is unfair and not true, but collections of moments in the water and with friends are some of the times I'm happiest. As for purpose in my life, there are people who structure every moment of their day to achieve a feeling of sense and purpose. Unfortunately, I'm not one of those people. I am pretty terrible at creating small habits. You can ask my mom, she'll confirm. But I find purpose in engaging with others. I love interacting with students—teaching, mentoring, and coaching gives me so much joy (even when they are totally not listening), I absolutely love my role in the community here and love watching young adults take ownership and authority of their own lives and interests! Especially when it's intersectional with soccer or marine biology.

—Kelsey McClellan  
Marine biologist



McClellan

teenage son is now able to help out in a lot of ways, especially with his younger sibling. My children keep me going but, in times like these, one has to see what will help and what will work to keep yourself healthy physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.

—Nhorleen Lilles  
Graphic Artist

"In my free time, I enjoy going to my Zumba class and dancing away all my stress and worries from that day. Especially now with the pandemic, it is harder to make plans with friends, but my dance group is always there and we all have a fun time swaying through the night at the Minachom Atdao. Once in a while, I also like to drink a glass or two of wine after dinner to relax."

—Lolita Agulto  
Kannat Tabla, Saipan



Agulto



Calage

"Creating a compelling future is the key. My mission in life is to make sure I am mentally and physically in love with the things I do. As a mom with two kids, I focus on making sure my children are well taken care of, nurtured/protected for their future, and spending more quality time with them. Working as a sales associate at a car dealership, I admire building relationships with clients and providing the best customer service. And I focus on healthy habits such as drinking more water, eating more vegetables and fruits, and doing other activities like running, yoga, and meditation."

—Kimberly Calage

Car sales consultant

"Being a single parent to a preschooler and a teenager while my husband is away and having a full-time job in the time of a pandemic is tough. I can't begin to describe the everyday struggles of keeping things together and trying to fit all the things one needs to do in one day while trying to protect us from COVID-19 at the same time. All week seems like a long marathon toward the weekend where we could all finally sleep in and not rush to school and work. I'm in no way an expert but having a solid emotional support system is key to keeping one's mental and emotional health in check. When my husband left and got stuck off-island because of the pandemic, I knew it wasn't going to be easy, but my mantra was to take it one day at a time. I realize that to keep caring for your loved ones, you can't forget to take care of yourself too. I realize that it's okay if you're not able to finish everything on your to-do list for that day, that I am not a bad mother if I leave the dishes unwashed from time to time, that it's alright not to fold that mountain of clothes immediately, that chores will not go away and it's okay to sit down and take a deep breath or a lot of deep breaths for that matter. It's also important to take that much-needed walk to the park or frolic in the beach the whole day on weekends and not do anything but enjoy the sun in your face, the saltwater in your skin, and the laughter of your kids as they play on the pristine white sand. Personally, Netflix helps a lot for me too. Watching movies forces me to sit still for a couple of hours, which is a much-needed respite after a long day. Also, instead of focusing on my struggles, I pray, I count my blessings and I give thanks. I feel blessed that my



Lilles

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Hafa Adail  
**Saipan Tribune**  
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# Movement and flow of energy: Wellness at Aqua Resort Club



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Life seemed to have flashed through our eyes really quickly in recent years, with so many things to do and think about, coupled with the stressors of daily life. In this busy jungle, we often forget about ourselves. The next thing we know, we're already burned out.

Perhaps the turn of the year signals us to look inside, and love ourselves a little more so we can also better take care of everything else. This new year, give everyone you love—most importantly, including yourself—the gift of wellness.

“When I think of wellness I think of it terms of living a higher quality of life,” Kerri Bauer said. “Wellness affects our physical, emotional and spiritual health and directly affects our actions and emotions to everyday life. Wellness is more all-encompassing and a lifestyle and not a diet or lifestyle change just for a few months. There is no end goal as we are all constantly striving to adopt overall wellness.”

Bauer facilitates the Rise & Flow beach yoga at the Aqua Resort Club, teaching vinyasa on Mondays and Fridays at 8:30am. She explains vinyasa as a style of yoga that is all about movement and the flow of energy as one syncs the body and the mind together through motion and breath.

“Aqua is committed to helping the community find wellness,” she said. “Most other hotels offer their spa as their wellness but Aqua is offering yoga and also has a full healthy menu in their snack shop. Aqua offers the yoga class beachside with shade. You can't get any closer to the ocean without being in it and it makes you really relax and appreciate the breathtaking scenery we have at our fingertips.”

For those who are curious and want to try yoga for the first time, everyone is encouraged to “come as you are,” with Bauer even thoughtfully adding that everyone had a first class.

“Yoga's a combination of breathing, meditation and movement and creates an overall sense of well-being. In fact, studies show yoga has a greater impact on enhancing mood and reducing

anxiety than other forms of exercise,” she said.

The class is mostly for adults at \$7 for drop ins or \$50 for 10 classes with a class pass—but people sometimes bring their children to play in the sand while a class is happening. Bauer is also a certified Kids Yoga instructor and has taught kids yoga classes in the past at some local schools and gyms, which she hopes to do again.

“I have been teaching group fitness for 15 years. I love all kinds of movement, from running and cycling to Zumba and strength training. I started getting more into yoga over the past few years as I saw what an amazing all-around mental and physical workout it is. It challenges your mind and your body, encourages you to connect with your thoughts and increase flexibility,” she said.

As a wellness buff, Bauer is encouraging everyone to find some time every single day to get outside and do some sort of movement—be it walking in the park (Saipan has a lot! American Memorial Park, Sugar King Park, Inos Peace Park, Killili Beach Park, among others), playing ball in the yard with your kids, or joining her for some yoga.

“Drink at least half your body weight in ounces in water every single day and aim for 10,000 steps,” she added.

“Being outside and moving our bodies is so good for our mental and emotional health. If you are intimidated to try yoga, I encourage you to come join us for class and see what we're all about. At the very least, come enjoy some peaceful music, quiet meditation, beachside with a group of like-minded individuals who are also striving for their own personal health and wellness journey.”

This year, get your balance right with yoga with Kerri. Rise & Flow Beach Yoga is held every Monday and Friday, at 8:30am, \$7 per class or \$50 for 10 classes.

To start your yoga journey, contact Bauer at (670) 484-3848. For more information on Aqua Resort Club's wellness programs, call (670) 322-1234. *(Iva Maurin)*

# Fostering wellness with Grace Christian Academy

By IVA MAURIN  
ivamaurin@gmail.com  
CORRESPONDENT

When people talk about wellness, physical health usually immediately comes to mind: How many miles can one run, how balanced one's meals are, how rarely one gets checked up at the hospital. But of course there's so much more to wellness than just that.

Wellness is all about creating balance in the many dimensions of how we live. More than just the physical, it also means nurturing the emotional, spiritual, intellectual, environmental, financial, occupational, and social aspects of our lives.

For a child, perhaps one of the best things we can do is help harness their intellectual wellness. This means, among others, recognizing and stimulating their creativity and problem-solving abilities.

"Wellness is holistic in nature and involves the development of various dimensions including physical, emotional, social/interpersonal, intellectual, and spiritual wellness. Realizing the importance of all aspects of wellness helps achieve a more balanced life," said Grace Christian Academy



principal Beth A. Nunez.

Elevating holistic wellness inclusive of intellectual wellness is part of Grace Christian Academy's mission. Nunez explained that keeping their minds, bodies, and spirit well aims to produce "vibrant, confident, and loving students" where the interaction of all parts toward the development of a well-balanced life cannot be more emphasized.

"This holistic approach is crucial as each dimension interacts with the other and not apart from each other. What affects our hearts (emotions) affects our minds (intellect), bodies (physical), interactions and behaviors, and spirit," she said.

## Minds need continuous inspiration

Keep the brain active. Improving intellectual wellness involves broadening perspectives through edu-

cation, conversations with others, developing personal interests, and exercising the mind.

"Intellectual wellness... encourages creative, stimu-

*'Grace Christian Academy exists to partner with the home to produce vibrant, confident, and loving students who excel in their academic pursuits in commitment to Jesus Christ.'*

lating mental activities, and the filling of our minds with healthy influences/information. Our minds need to be continually inspired and exercised just as our bodies do. People with high levels of intellectual wellness have an active mind and continue to learn by expanding their knowledge base and learning new skills," Nunez said.

She emphasized, though, that it is crucial to be selective and intentional about what we fill our minds with.



This means being selective about what we read, watch, and listen to—for these impact our minds.

"Aligned with intellectual wellness, again as a com-

lenging puzzles, respectfully debating issues with others who have opposing viewpoints, learning a new language or musical instrument, trying a new hobby or sport, discussing and analyzing current events, or teaching and tutoring others are just some ways to maintain or improve intellectual wellness," Nunez added.

These strategies, and more, are conducted not just in the classrooms but in extracurricular activities at Grace Christian Academy.

## Filling our minds with positive truths

Maintaining wellness is crucial, most especially in times of crises, such as the pandemic we all are facing today.




"Because crises affect the person, family, and community as a whole, overall wellness is crucial to be able to not only survive the crisis but thrive through it. In

this pandemic, for example, the situation can produce feelings and thoughts of hopelessness and despair. Filling our minds with positive truths of hope, resiliency, strength, endurance, etc. remains essential as a daily exercise through such crises," she said.

Nunez added that intellectual wellness development will contribute to and function interactively with how we address other aspects of wellness.

And for the community, Nunez has this to share: "[Take] care of your mind, heart, body, and spirit in order to keep positive, hopeful, healthy, and well at every stage of life, in every journey, and through each crisis. In so doing, it is vital to remember that we do not need to rely on our own strength and wisdom. The Bible states in Isaiah 41:10, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." May we all remember that God is the source of all we need."

Grace Christian Academy is located on Navy Hill, Saipan. For more information, call [670] 322-3320 or visit <https://gca-nmi.com>.









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GCA IS ALSO A PART OF THE U.S. STUDENT & VISITOR EXCHANGE PROGRAM AND ACCEPTS FOREIGN STUDENTS.



Grace Christian Academy is located on Upper Navy Hill. For more information, please call 322-3320/3850 or set up an appointment to visit the school

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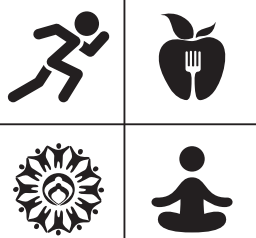
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**Ernest Aquino**

Wellness Team Lead-TakeCare Wellness Center

*Ernest is the Wellness Team Lead at TakeCare, specializing in the wellness, fitness and health education. He is also a certified lifestyle coach and facilitates the group prevention programs which includes the Prevent T2 Diabetes Prevention Program and the Balanced Lifestyle Kickstart Program.*



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**Jonei Delgado, RDN**

FHP Health Center & TakeCare Wellness Center

*Jonei is a Registered Dietitian at TakeCare, specializing in the dietary needs and quality nutritional care of patients with chronic kidney disease. She is a proud member of Eat Right Pro/Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Renal Dietitian Practice Group and Oncology Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group.*

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# THE CNMI OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

## WHO WE ARE:

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is a federally funded government agency that assists individuals with disabilities to obtain skills and resources needed to get a job, keep a job, and develop a career. Under the Office of Honorable Governor, OVR assists a broad range of disabilities, which includes mental, physical, or psychological disabilities.

## WHAT WE DO:

Our services include vocational counseling and guidance, job search and/or placement, vocational trainings, assistive rehabilitation technology services or devices, occupational equipment, and any services or goods deemed necessary to achieve an employment outcome.

## OUR CORE PROGRAMS

### Basic Support/Supported Employment (BS/SE)

The Basic Support/Supported Employment (BS/SE) is a service to qualifying individuals with disabilities which is tailored based on their unique circumstance. Comparable services and benefits are a federal mandate and must be fully explored and applied to the maximum extent possible.

This program branch also includes the Work Experience Training (WET) Program as well as the On-the Job Training (OJT) Program for individuals that need to gain the necessary experience and skills needed in order to succeed in a competitive, integrated work environment based on the individual's vocational goal.

### Pre-Employment Transition Services (PRE-ETS)

The Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Program is provided to students with disabilities who are between the ages of 16-21 years and are receiving Special Education services or a 504 plan in order to help students prepare to become career and/or college ready after high school.

### Independent Living for the Older Blind (ILOB)

The Independent Living for the Older Blind (ILOB) Program Services is provided to individuals with a visual impairment (corrected vision in the better eye is 20/70 or worse), age 55 years and older to assist them in maintain their independence at home and in their communities.

**TOGETHER WE CAN  
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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

(670) 322-6537/38

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Feeling stressed, depressed, lonely, or just needing someone to talk to? Whatever you are going through, you are not alone. Here are some programs in the community that can help and guide us all:

### CHCC Community Guidance Center

The main provider of mental health services for all in the CNMI, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s Community Guidance Center offers outreach, prevention and education services, sup-

port services to families, and referral assistance to other resources in the community. Mental health treatment services offered are: 1] The Transitional Living Center, which provides Day Treatment Program; case management; outreach, family, and educational services; illness management and recovery training; medication management; and anger management; 2] The Victims of Crime Advocacy Program, which provides support and counseling services to all victims of crime in the CNMI, including secondary trauma, domestic violence, depression, panic

disorders, suicide ideation, sexual abuse, and drug abuse; and 3] Psychiatric outpatient services. For assistance or additional information, contact (670) 234-8950 Ext. 3311.

### Hali' Inaguaiya – Systems of Care

Systems of Care is a network of community-based programs to serve and

support children and youth with serious mental health needs, and their families. Services and support provided are built on the strengths of the individuals, to address each person's cultural and linguistic needs, in order for them—and their families—to function better wherever they are, and throughout their lives. Programs and ser-

vices that System of Care offer include the Natural Helpers Program; mental health first aid certification; family and youth mental health workshops; behavioral counseling and therapy; wraparound process; and Healthy Family, Healthy Communities. For assistance or more information, contact (670) 664-4604. Office hours are from 7:30am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday.

### CNMI PSS: Project HALIGI AWARE

The CNMI Public School System prioritizes students and faculty's mental wellness through Project Healthy, Affirming, Locally-Inclusive Grant Initiative for Advancing Awareness and Resilience in Education, or HALIGI AWARE. HALIGI AWARE also extends mental health awareness at the community level, and follows this three-tier system: 1) Universal approach, where a safe environment is created to promote healthy and successful students; 2) Targeted approach, where at-risk students and staff are placed in small groups of specialized mental health program led by a mental health professional; and 3) Intensive support, provided specifically to the individual's need and referred to community health partners for additional support. For assistance and more information, contact (670) 664-3822. Office hours are from 7:30am to 4:30pm, Monday through Friday.

### CNMI PSS: Project TASA

The CNMI Public School System's Project Trauma Advised Student Advocacy, or TASA, also follows a multi-tiered approach to school-based behavioral health and crisis response, as it supports and increases student resilience, to mitigate the impact of disaster-based trauma and crisis, such as the trauma caused by Typhoon Mangkut, Super Typhoon Yutu, and now, COVID-19. Project TASA seeks to improve PSS staff preparedness to recognize and respond to trauma and crisis, increase access to school-based and related mental health services, and connect family, schools, and community to address student mental health and well-being concerns. Through

the Office of Student & Support Services, webinars are held under Project TASA (and HALIGI AWARE), which included Table Talks: Overcoming Anxiety about School, among others.

### Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc.

NMPASI is a local non-profit that administers grant programs from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Center for Mental Health/Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, among others. They run programs such as the Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness, and the Protection & Advocacy for Individual Rights, providing legally-based advocacy services for and on behalf of anyone who has been discriminated against because of a mental illness. For assistance, or for more information, call (670) 235-7273/4 or visit [www.nmpasi.org](http://www.nmpasi.org).

### Commonwealth Ports Authority

Employees of the Commonwealth Ports Authority are able to take a day off per quarter under CPA's self-care leave policy, approved by its board last September 2021. The self-care leave is intended to promote employee well-being, where there is more employee satisfaction and engagement, by managing work-related stress. The leave is also separate from, and is in addition to other CPA employee benefits such as annual or sick leaves.

### Marianas Visitors Authority

The Marianas Visitors Authority also has a self-care leave policy in place, approved by its board in October 2021, to provide for its employees a chance to take at least a day off to recharge. MVA staff work day in and out, especially during large community events, according to MVA managing director Priscilla Iakopo in an earlier interview, and the self-care leave policy allows them to be able to rest mentally and physically, and come back refreshed.

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1 (800) 273-8255, which provides counseling and support 24 hours a day.

# Health, well-being programs at work & in the community

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## Financial Wellness with SSI

First of all, what is SSI? SSI is a federal income supplement program funded by general tax revenues. It is designed to help aged, blind, and disabled people who have little or no income, and it provides cash to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. In the CNMI an individual with a disability and no income may receive up to \$790. Now with that in mind, some people might ask how is that even possible? I believe if you can work with what you have and the resources, you will be able to achieve financial wellness. According to <https://www.standardbank.co.za/southafrica/personal/learn/how-to-improve-your-financial-wellbeing> here are 5 tips to improve your financial well-being.

### 1. Take stock of your finances

Know where you stand financially and determine what adjustments need to be made. Assess how much you earn and spend, how much money goes towards paying debt, where you are falling short and what you can cut down on to free up cash flow.

### 2. Create a budget and stick to it

Approach budgeting as a tool to prioritize spending and help you determine where your money is going instead of wondering to where it disappeared. Creating a budget helps you develop smart money habits that put you in control of your money and empower your financial goals.

### 3. Decrease your debt

If most of your budget goes towards debt, meeting your financial goals can be difficult. As it also affects your credit score. Consider a debt management solution to help deal with it. What you're spending on interest could be better used towards savings or covering other expenses.

### 4. Plan ahead

Create an emergency fund by setting money aside that you can access if an unplanned expense or financial situation occurs.

### 5. Protect what's important

Get the right coverage for you, your family and your assets so that if something unexpected happens, you don't have to bear the financial impact. An insurance payout could reduce your expenses in the long run and help you maintain your and your family's financial security.

Following these tips may help you achieve your financial wellness. Here at NMPASI we are the state designated P&A for people with a disability. Within one of our programs, we assist by providing Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (also known as the PABSS program).

If you would like more information about financial wellness and the PABSS program, please contact us at 670-235-7273/4 or you can visit our website at [www.nmpasi.org](http://www.nmpasi.org).

## Shifting Perspectives on Disabilities and Physical Health

By Shaniah Alvarez

What do you think about when you hear "disability and health/wellness?" or "disability and health/working out?" Does it make you worried or uncomfortable? If it does, challenge yourself to shift your mindset and perspective. According to an article by Dr. Sarah Wallace, persons with disabilities can be at a higher risk of poor general health and wellbeing and may face greater barriers to accessing health services than people without disabilities – read more on [www.futurelearn.com](http://www.futurelearn.com). People with disabilities (PWD) already face great barriers when it comes to their overall health. It is important to remove the negative stigma around people with disabilities and working out to better their physical health, and it is important to think of accommodations that could benefit them when working on their physical health. An interesting account that focuses on people with disabilities and physical health is an Instagram page @disabledgirlswholift – this page empowers people within the disability community to focus on their mental health, well-being, and physical health. This page also promotes their podcast where they address important topics like ableism, depression, doing important research, and more, then ties these topics into physical health and well-being.

People with disabilities are just as capable of managing their physical health. Did you know that there is Olympics for people with disabilities? It is called the Paralympic Games. This is another great way of researching and being more open-minded when thinking about people with disabilities and physical health. There are many success stories in the Paralympics and this just goes to show how capable the disability community is. For example, here in the CNMI, we had the Disability Sports Fest in 2018. This event allowed people with disabilities to showcase their skills and capabilities in multiple sports and physical health.

So in lieu of feeling uncomfortable, worried, or scared that they will get hurt when a person with a disability enters the gym or some other facility or event where you are, challenge yourself to be more encouraging and empowering towards that person. Greet them, tell them what a great job they are doing, and how enlightening it is to see them push themselves in accomplishing and overcoming society's negative stigmas and barriers. For more information on disability-related topics and important conversations, follow @disabledgirlswholift and click their link tree to connect to their podcasts, YouTube, and more!

If you or anyone you know needs our services at NMPASI, please call our office at 235-7273!

## Occupational Wellness for Individuals with Disabilities in a Workplace

By: Tiava To'omata, Program Aide

It is not uncommon to often forget that we all need to discover ways to find joy and relaxation in our everyday lives. One place that we find ourselves lacking this needed and deserved peace is more than likely at our jobs. At the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc. (NMPASI), one of our services include advocating on behalf of our clients, who are individuals with disabilities, to receive reasonable accommodations in their workplaces. This also can lead to ensuring that their workplace is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that serves to protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination.

Occupational Wellness is key to a safe and enjoyable space. How to accomplish these goals, especially for one who has a disability, is to brainstorm and try different components that are associated with healthy and effective occupational wellness. This can include having team meetings to voice out concerns that aim to find ways to efficiently support each other. It has been proven a number of times that building trust and comradery within any organization is beneficial to the overall environment and productivity. Allowing employees to utilize the popular The Mandt System's slogan: "With these people and in this place, I feel safe" will allow all employees, with and without disabilities, to advocate for themselves and for each other. Having this sense of security with one another can add to a beneficial relationship with occupational wellness.

A final tip that everyone who feels overwhelmed with work should practice is self-care. Exploring the various self-care methods that one can practice in their workplace can improve their occupational wellness. The simple tips that can be incorporated in your everyday work life are: stepping away to get some air and sunlight, or just to walk around the building to take a break, saying mini-meditations and reading daily affirmations to ground yourself, or even decorating your workspace and adding a touch of personality to it. One of these tips might suit you and if not, be creative! Be expressive with your workplace needs and find a middle ground with your employer. We often forget too that our bosses, managers and supervisors all go through the same workplace stress we do. Finding rational compromises is not an easy road, but it is a path worth taking to accomplish a successful occupational wellness with our workplace. For more information about protections for people with disabilities in the workplace, please contact NMPASI at 235-7273/4 or visit us online at [www.nmpasi.org](http://www.nmpasi.org).

## To Be Honest (TBH): Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI)

I love the term "New Year, New Me." I like the idea of fresh starts and New Year's Resolutions for overall health. As we close out the first month of 2022, whether you're hitting your goals or struggling to stay consistent, let's not forget to keep ourselves safe while we stay active because TBH, we don't think about TBIs enough. A TBI, or Traumatic Brain Injury, is an injury to the brain from an external force like a bump to the head such as a concussion. TBIs can disrupt the way the brain works, affecting memory, balance and coordination, or even speech. A TBI can have long-term effects or be a permanent disability.

Here in the CNMI, we are lucky enough to live in a tropical climate where the weather is warm and the waters are clear. This means we are able to do all these great outdoor activities almost all year long. Whether you rev it up with the motorcross or Harley enthusiasts or go ATV-ing through the mud, don't forget to protect your head by wearing a helmet. I know, I know... a helmet isn't the most appealing thing. They're bulky and sometimes awkward. TBH, my head sweats when I wear one. Nonetheless, we gotta do what we gotta do.

Even if you're not living the extreme sport life – if you do a slow stroll on your bicycle along Beach Road, go fishing, swimming or even spend a day on the farm – always be aware of your surroundings. Our brain controls our body and our mind holds our most precious memories. Let's do what we can to protect them. As we move forward this year, stay healthy and happy and remember to protect your head. As my old teacher used to say, "use your noggin, not your dagan" (use your head, not your butt).

If you or someone you know needs assistance with a Traumatic Brain Injury, please contact the Protection & Advocacy for Traumatic Brain Injury (PATBI) program at the Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI) at 670-235-7273/4 or visit us on the web at [www.nmpasi.org](http://www.nmpasi.org), [www.facebook.com/NMPASI](http://www.facebook.com/NMPASI), and follow us on Instagram @nmpasi670.

Sharleen Sablan  
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## "Socializing for People with Disabilities" By: John Cabrera

People with physical or mental disabilities are more often socially isolated, with less chances to be productive in the community. Loneliness, social support, social isolation between employed adults with or without a disability, in some cases, may lead to depression. So, the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) plays an important role when it comes to socializing for people with disabilities. Just getting out of the house is a challenge. So, when I attend public events, I depend extremely on the ADA Act. to guide/and or allow me to socialize with able bodies independently. With the ADA Act. I am confident to go out into the community events or places knowing accessibility won't be an issue.

But that is not always the case. Once in a while I will attend social events or go places that are inaccessible. When I come across these places with barriers it sometimes affects me mentally! I'll often feel bad when I go to an event, or establishment thinking the ADA is enforced. For most of the time, the issues are architectural design of the establishment. Most of the establishments on island do not meet the ADA requirements or guidelines when it comes to accessibility. I challenge DPW/and Zoning to enforce the ADA architectural design/Law.

For more information contact NMPASI at (670) 235-7273/4 or visit us on the web at [www.nmpasi.org](http://www.nmpasi.org), [www.facebook.com/NMPASI](http://www.facebook.com/NMPASI), and follow us on Instagram @nmpasi670.

For anything further, please feel free to contact the NMPASI Office at (670) 235-7273/4 [tel.] / 235-7275 [fax] / 287-0652 [text message] or contact us on-line at [www.nmpasi.org](http://www.nmpasi.org).

\*NMPASI, a local non-profit organization, administers grant funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)/Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS)/Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD), and the Human Resources Services Administration (HRSA), the U.S. Department of Education (DOE)/Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and the Social Security Administration (SSA).

Wellness is not only about one's physical well-being. Your wellness includes your physical, emotional, social, environmental, occupational, financial, spiritual, and intellectual health. All dimensions of wellness need our attentiveness as that is how we will flourish in the new year. Learning the definitions of each wellness and its importance will hopefully start you on your journey to better your health. Making your wellness plan is only the first step; we must commit and grow to become the healthier "you."



Toward  
a  
healthier  
'you'

01



**Physical Wellness** encompasses your overall body health. It refers to your exercise, nutrition, sleep, and your ability to seek help when you show any signs of illness and getting the help. Physical wellness is important because our bodies need to be healthy in order to meet the daily demands of life. To improve your physical wellness, get your 7-9 hours of sleep, exercise for at least 30 minutes a day, have a healthy balanced diet, and schedule your annual medical checkups.

02



**Emotional Wellness** involves acknowledging, expressing, and coping with your feelings. To improve this aspect of your wellness, you can take part in self-care and stress reducing activities such as yoga or going for a walk on the beach, etc. Building on your emotional wellness can help you handle stressful situations and boost your confidence in your decision-making skills. Emotional wellness plays a big role in how you handle life's obstacles. It is about resilience. Grit. Once you are emotionally healthy, you are able to bounce right back from setbacks.

03



**Social Wellness** deals with your ability to grow your relationships with others in a positive way. A person who is socially well is able to respect and give mutual trust. This element of wellness is vital to humans as it plays a key part of our mental health. Essentially, in order for us to survive, we need social contact. Having good communication skills and creating a supportive network are crucial for interpersonal wellness. Research shows that having good relationships lead to better health as they can reduce stress. Joining organizations or clubs that are related to your interests could be one of many ways to enhance your social wellness.

04



**Environmental Wellness** is defined as having a connection with your surroundings and understanding the need to take care of it. To put it simply, your personal health depends on the health of our planet. We need to actively preserve and protect it by keeping our environment clean and safe. We could reduce our pollution, waste, and recycle whenever we can. Having a clean environment contributes to your overall physical and mental health.

05



**Occupational Wellness** refers to your level of enjoyment and fulfillment in doing your work. Your attitude toward your job has a big influence to your performance. If you love what you do, you will continue to do better. This dimension of wellness is important because work will most likely take up most of your time during the week, so the way you feel about your job plays a role to your overall wellbeing. Cultivate your occupational wellness by doing what you enjoy, set a realistic goal to accomplish, and create connections with your co-workers.

06



**Financial Wellness** implies that you are able to meet current and future financial expenses. This refers to living within your means, avoiding unnecessary debt, but also making choices that let you enjoy life. Generating a budget, investing, and saving for your retirement are things you can do in order to start becoming more financially responsible. Balancing this with other dimensions of wellness is important because it will all come back to how you are doing money-wise. Seek guidance from a financial adviser or take a look at your expenses and remove nonessential items.

07



**Spiritual Wellness** gives our lives a sense of purpose and meaning. More than just one's religious beliefs, it also includes your values, ethics, and morals. A spiritually well person is able to take their life experiences, whether good or bad, and reflect on their meaning. Have a positive outlook, be more forgiving toward others, and have a better feeling of self-worth. It offers peace of mind and harmony with all other dimensions of wellness. We can boost our spiritual wellbeing by volunteering for a cause, spending time outside, and even just speaking to someone about how you have been feeling in your life.

08



**Intellectual Wellness** refers to challenging our minds and to continue growing in knowledge. Healthy habits you could include in your everyday life are being open to new ideas, reading a piece of writing, or playing puzzles. Just as you do with exercising and keeping your body strong, improving your intellectual health helps with a strong mind. Working on yourself intellectually is a vital tool you can use to improve your current skills and knowledge, develop new abilities, become more creative, and work on your critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

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