



OFFICE OF COUNSELING SERVICES

INDIANA UNIVERSITY NORTHWEST

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Happy New Year and happy spring semester!! 😊 The beginning of a New Year can be the time to find inspiration, make changes, and discover what brings JOY to your life.

What is “Joy”? Joy can be described as a feeling or emotion that is different from happiness. Joy is found in moments and experiences, whereas happiness is more long-term. But more joyful moments can lead to longer-term happiness! Take a moment and think about what brings joy into your life? Perhaps it’s a warm cup of coffee or tea in the morning, reading a good book, or feeling warm and cozy snuggled under a blanket. Think about how people and animals bring joy into your life. A young child’s new experience? Your spouse or significant other? Your dog or cat? Joy can be a protective factor in maintaining positive mental health.

Want to increase JOY in your life? Here are 6 recommendations:

- 1) **Practice gratitude.** Regular gratitude practice helps with processing and reflection of positive “feel good” moments and experiences that we’re thankful and grateful for. Using a gratitude journal can also be helpful with this practice!
- 2) **Regularly engage in simple pleasures, activities, and hobbies that you enjoy.** What do you find pleasurable? Are there any old hobbies that you like to renew? Are the new opportunities that you can try out?
- 3) **Spend time with people who make you feel good and supported.** A healthy social support network and positive relationships will increase instances of joy. Unfortunately, time spent in unhealthy and negative relationships can decrease instances of joy.
- 4) **Engage in mindful meditation.** The Office of Counseling Services (OOCs) has various guided mindful meditations: <https://northwest.iu.edu/counseling-services/resources/guided-audio.html>

The OOCs also offers students weekly in-person and virtual mindful meditations. *These mindful sessions will start on Monday January 22nd and will be offered through finals week.* For more information on mindful sessions please refer to the Daily Redhawk or contact the OOCs (info below).

- 5) **Identify how you can make a difference in others’ lives and engage in acts of kindness.** Giving to others can help produce joyful moments. What are small or large ways that you can give to others?
- 6) **Spend daily mindful moments in nature.** Engage your senses while spending moments on a walk or outside in nature. What sounds do you hear? How does the wind/air feel on your skin? Is there sunlight to enjoy? Allowing yourself these present and intentional moments encourages peace and contentment.

IUN Counseling Services offers free and confidential services to all IUN students who are enrolled on at least a part-time basis. The IUN Counseling Office has licensed clinical professional social workers and clinical counselors who are trained to meet the specific needs of college students! We are located in Hawthorn Hall #201. Our office phone number is 219-980-6741. Office email is @ iunoocs@iun.edu Please visit our website for more information: <https://www.iun.edu/counseling-services/index.htm> *Email is not to be used for urgent or emergency messages and is not considered the most secure form of communication