

DECEMBER WELLNESS DIGEST



Welcome to December!

It's hard to believe that 2021 is almost over! This month we'll see numerous holidays celebrated around the world, and we may see lots of hustle and bustle as folks travel to visit family and do their holiday shopping. We want to reiterate that both seeing family and not seeing family can be difficult. If you are struggling and in need of support, please visit our [resource](#) page to find help.

Please read through our newsletter for a **program spotlight** where we'll talk about the programs we offer serving older adults, share a **wellness tip**, and talk about our upcoming events!

PROGRAMS WITH OLDER ADULTS



About Programs with Older Adults

Healthy Minds Healthy Aging: When older adults in our community learn to address the challenges associated with aging in a mentally healthy way, their experience is more fulfilling for them and those who love them. Our Healthy Minds Healthy Aging program is uniquely designed for older adults and their specific life concerns. We identify those who may be at risk or already struggling with depression or cognitive decline to provide emotional support, practical coping tools, and connection to other resources, all free of charge. In addition, Healthy Minds Healthy Aging provides community education regarding dementia and depression to reduce stigma and encourage access to therapy

Bridging the Years: Our intergenerational program fosters social connection and companionship between teens and older adults, offering weekly one-on-one phone calls to help combat isolation, provide opportunities to discover new perspectives, keep family stories and history alive and give purpose and meaning to both age groups. Our program invigorates and energizes older adults while grounding and centering teenagers

Learn more by following us on [social media](#). We'll be sharing information about our programs with early adults all throughout this month!

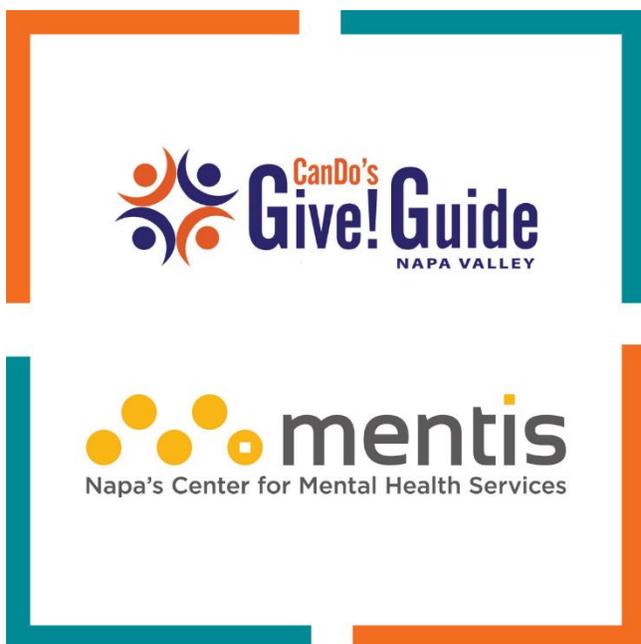
You may recognize Samira and Maren from our latest Impact Report! Samira and Maren developed a beautiful friendship when they participated in our newest program, Bridging the Years. Witnessing their friendship was so inspirational that we decided to share it with our supporters! You can read more about Samira and Maren in the Impact Report [on our website](#).





Try a breathing exercise! Breathing exercises can be helpful year-round, but you may find that they are especially important around holidays. We have more events to go to and plan for, stores are busy and crowded, and some folks may feel pressure to ensure their loved ones have a magical day. A breathing exercise can go a long way at bringing us back to the present. Try taking a few minutes to breathe through alternating nostrils, breathing from your belly, or try box breathing (exhale for 4, inhale for 4, hold for 4, exhale for 4, and repeat). If you need more structure to encourage or remind you, apps like *Calm*, *Headspace*, and *Mindfulness* on Apple Watch have guided breathing exercises.

Upcoming Events



Mentis is so grateful to be part of this year's Give!Guide! From November 30th to December 31st, you can visit [CanDoGiveGuide.Org](https://www.CanDoGiveGuide.Org) to donate to 55 local nonprofits!



Donors and supporters like you make it possible for our staff and clinicians to educate, support and inspire our community to take charge of their mental well-being.

But it's no secret that COVID-19 has caused lasting damage to our neighbors' mental wellness. Half of 11th graders in the Napa Valley Unified School District report feeling chronically sad or hopeless—that's a 25% increase compared to pre-COVID (California Healthy Kids

Survey 2020). In 2020, there was a 31% increase in mental health related visits to the emergency department for 12-17-year-olds (CDC 2020). These numbers show that we are in a mental health crisis that cannot be ignored.

Your support helps someone like Liam.

Liam is a popular and outgoing 11-year-old known for his friendly demeanor with his classmates. His life took a turn when his parents divorced and he began to live part-time with his abusive father. As a result of this custody arrangement, Liam experienced lots of instability and often took on the burden of taking care of his family members.

His teacher noticed a change in his behavior and suspected he was dealing with anxiety and depression, and Liam was referred to the free, on-site therapy at school provided by Mentis. He began therapy with Lisa, a Mentis therapist trained in working with children. Using mindfulness exercises and art therapies like making slime and painting, Lisa and Liam worked through the significant trauma he had experienced.

After two school years of working with Lisa, Liam felt he was ready to complete therapy. Thanks to our partnership with 20 schools from K through college, Liam knows that Mentis will be there for him throughout his education if he needs to check back in.

Today, Liam lives full time with his mom and has learned coping skills to help him when he's struggling. He's now in junior high and shows no symptoms of anxiety or depression. He has hobbies, many friends, and is thriving in school. Because Mentis works to educate young people on good mental health right from the start, Liam now has the lifelong skills he'll need to deal with life's ups and downs.

From all of us at Mentis, thank you!

Donate to Mentis



Every day, our staff and clinicians educate, support and inspire people to take charge of their mental well-being. With programs ranging from prevention to treatment, we're here to make sure our community's mental wellness flourishes.

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