



## Mental Health Resolutions for the New Year

The New Year is not just a ritual. It is the celebration of new hopes and dreams. It is an opportunity to start with a clean slate. Typically, New Year resolutions tend to focus on weight, general health and finances. But, what might the new year offer us if we used it as an opportunity to commit to improvements in our emotional and mental well-being. Below are seven positive mental health resolutions that you can borrow for your new year.

1. **“I will treat myself with respect and speak nicely about myself.”** Try taping a list of positive characteristics about yourself in various places throughout the house to remind you of these affirmations.
2. **“I will be physically active on a daily basis.”** Multiple studies show a link between exercise and improved mental health.
3. **“I will act and not react.”** Many times we feel like everyone is “pushing our buttons”. When this happens, we are caught up in a reaction cycle. If you know you’ll be around someone who says negative things, plan for this and have a list in your head of disarming statements. You might even consider modifying your plans to limit exposure to negative people.
4. **“I will learn to relax and enjoy.”** Many times we become so busy we forget how or even when to take care of ourselves. Find or “re-discover” an activity that is relaxing and enjoyable to you. Dedicate time to this daily or at a minimum, weekly.
5. **“I will be mindful.”** Being mindful is about staying in the moment. We cannot change yesterday and we cannot predict tomorrow. We do, however, have control over our attentiveness in the here and now. So, commit to being aware in the moment, and enjoy that moment.
6. **“I will work towards being the person I want to be.”** When we see life as a journey and a time to continue to be the person we desire to be, we find hope and fulfillment in our tomorrows.
7. **“I will resolve to be mentally healthy”.** There is still a stigma about seeing a mental health professional. However, it is truly one of the healthiest things we can do for ourselves. A therapist gives us an unbiased ear and can also help us to understand why we do the things we do ... think of seeing a therapist as a mental health oil change. If you need assistance finding a referral, give your AFA EAP a call. Your local AFA EAP committee members are listed at [www.afacwa.org/eap](http://www.afacwa.org/eap). We are just a phone call away.

These suggestions have been adapted from an email written by Chip Coffey, the Director of Outpatient Services at St. Luke’s Behavioral Health Center.