Aegis Solutions Wellness Newsletter
October 2026

WELLBEING IN AUTUMN

Support for Your Wellbeing



Inside this issue...

Beat the Autumn/Winter Blues.....pp 1-3
Investing in You.....pp 3-4
Relationship Safety Wellness.....pp 4-5
Apple Pie Smoothie Recipe.....p 5

Beat the Autumn/Winter Blues:

Bright Ideas for a Happier Season!

By Mary Ann Bacchiocchi-Johnson

Baby, it's cold outside... but your mood doesn't have to be!

Autum and Winter is full of things we love—warm sweaters, hot cocoa, cozy blankets, and holiday memories. But let's be honest... when the days get shorter and the sun seems to disappear before dinner, it's easy to feel a little less like yourself.

If you've been feeling more tired, less motivated, or just a little "meh," you're not alone. In fact, many people experience what's commonly called the **winter blues**. For others, those feelings are more intense and may be a sign of **Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)**, a form of depression that occurs during certain times of the year, most often in the fall and winter.

Autumn/Winter Blues vs. SAD: What's the Difference?

The Autumn /Winter blues are common and usually involve temporary changes in mood or energy. You might notice you're sleeping a little more, craving comfort foods, or wishing you could hibernate until spring.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) goes beyond that. It's a medical condition that can significantly impact your daily life. Common symptoms include:

- ☐ Feeling sad or down most of the day
- ☐ Low energy or constant fatigue
- ☐ Difficulty concentrating
- ☐ Sleeping more than usual
- ☐ Changes in appetite, especially cravings for carbohydrates or sweets
- ☐ Loss of interest in activities you normally enjoy
- ☐ Feeling hopeless or withdrawn

Scientists believe SAD is linked to reduced sunlight during the Autumn/Winter months, which can affect your body's internal clock and the production of mood-regulating chemicals like serotonin and melatonin.

The good news? There are plenty of ways to fight back against the Autumn/Winter blues!

Brighten Your Day

Natural sunlight is one of the best mood boosters around. Open the blinds, sit near a window, or head outside during your lunch break—even 15 to 30 minutes of daylight can help improve your mood and energy.

Keep Moving

Exercise doesn't have to mean hours at the gym. Take a brisk walk, dance around the living room, stretch between meetings, or play outside with the kids. Physical activity releases endorphins—your body's natural "feel-good" chemicals.

Fuel Your Body

Autumn/Winter cravings are real! While an occasional treat is perfectly okay, try to balance comfort foods with fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and plenty of water. Nutritious foods can help keep your energy steady throughout the day.

Protect Your Sleep

It can be tempting to hibernate, but sticking to a regular sleep schedule helps your body maintain a healthy rhythm. Aim for consistent bedtimes and wake-up times—even on weekends.

Stay Connected

One of the easiest ways to beat the Autumn /Winter blues is by spending time with others. Grab coffee with a coworker, call a friend, plan a family game night, or simply check in with someone who might need a smile. Human connection is a powerful mood booster.

Make Time for Joy

Read a book, start a puzzle, bake something delicious, listen to your favorite playlist, learn a new hobby, or finally watch that series everyone's been talking about. Doing something you enjoy— even for just a few minutes each day—can help lift your spirits.

Have You Heard of Light Therapy?

For people with SAD, healthcare providers may recommend **light therapy**, which uses a special light box that mimics natural sunlight. It's a well-studied treatment that can help reduce symptoms for many people when used correctly. If you're wondering whether it's right for you, talk with your healthcare provider.

Know When to Ask for Help

Everyone has an off day, but if feelings of sadness, hopelessness, fatigue, or loss of interest last for more than two weeks or begin affecting your work, relationships, or daily activities, it's time to reach out to a healthcare provider or mental health professional. SAD is treatable, and help is available.

Autumn/Winter Wellness Challenge

This week, see if you can check off these five mood boosters:

- ☐ Spend 20 minutes outside during daylight
- ☐ Move your body for at least 30 minutes
- ☐ Reach out to a friend or coworker
- ☐ Drink plenty of water and eat one healthy meal
- ☐ Do one thing that makes you smile



Small steps can make a big difference….

Remember...



Autumn/Winter may be long, but it doesn't have to feel gloomy. By staying active, soaking up the sunshine when you can, connecting with others, and taking care of your mental health, you can help keep the Autumn/Winter blues from taking over.

Here's to a season filled with warmth, wellness, and brighter days ahead!

Investing in YOU…
The Aegis Wellness Committee

By Patricia McGee

At McGee Aegis Solutions, we believe that our greatest strength is our people. Every day, our employees dedicate themselves to supporting others in living meaningful, self-directed lives. Because of that commitment, we believe your health and well-being are just as important as the health and well-being of the individuals we support.

The **McGee Aegis Solutions Wellness Committee** was established to foster a culture where wellness is valued, encouraged, and integrated into our everyday lives. We recognize that when our team members are physically healthy, emotionally resilient, socially connected, and supported, they are better equipped to thrive both personally and professionally.

Our Mission

The McGee Aegis Solutions Wellness Committee strives to create a healthier community by supporting wellness and healthy living through person-centered engagement. We are dedicated to inspiring sustainable, positive change for our employees and the individuals we support.

Our Vision

Our vision is to cultivate an organization where health, wellness, and well-being are prioritized, creating an environment in which employees and the people we support can flourish together.

Our Purpose

The Wellness Committee exists to foster a culture of holistic health, compassionate interactions, inclusion, and respect for diversity. We are committed to promoting resources, education, and opportunities that support the physical, emotional, mental, social, and professional well-being of our team.

Why We Share a Quarterly Wellness Newsletter

Each quarter, the Wellness Committee publishes a newsletter to support, educate, and encourage our employees on their wellness journey. Our quarterly newsletter is one of the many ways McGee Aegis Solutions invests in the people who make our mission possible.



Each edition will focus on topics that promote overall well-being, including:

- ☐ Physical health and preventive care
- ☐ Mental health and emotional wellness
- ☐ Nutrition and healthy recipes
- ☐ Financial wellness
- ☐ Fitness and movement
- ☐ Work-life balance
- ☐ Stress management and resilience
- ☐ Community resources
- ☐ Seasonal health and safety
- ☐ Employee wellness activities, challenges, and success stories

WELLNESS SPOTLIGHT



Our goal is not to overwhelm you with information, but to provide meaningful, practical resources that can be incorporated into everyday life. We hope each newsletter offers ideas, encouragement, and opportunities to support your overall health while strengthening our workplace community.

At McGee Aegis Solutions, wellness is more than an initiative—it reflects our commitment to caring for the whole person. Just as we strive to provide compassionate, person-centered services to those we support, we are equally committed to fostering a workplace where our employees feel valued, supported, and empowered to thrive.

Thank you for the compassion, professionalism, and dedication you bring each day. We hope our quarterly Wellness Newsletter serves as a reminder that your well-being matters. By caring for ourselves and one another, we build a healthier workforce, a stronger organization, and better outcomes for the individuals and communities we serve.

Relationship Safety Wellness

Compiled By Becki Fahs

Safety in relationships means feeling secure, respected, and free to be yourself without fear of judgment, harm, dismissal, or coercion.

Emotional Safety

Emotional safety is the foundation of a healthy relationship. It allows you to express your thoughts, feelings, needs, frustrations, vulnerabilities, and long-term goals without fear of rejection or punishment. In an emotionally safe relationship, your partner responds with empathy, care, and respect.

Emotional safety does not mean conflict never happens. Instead, it means disagreements can be handled constructively, misunderstandings can be repaired, and the relationship itself does not feel threatened when difficult conversations arise.

Signs of Emotional Safety

- ☐ Feeling seen, heard, and valued
- ☐ Being able to express strong emotions without fear of dismissal
- ☐ Trusting your partner to listen and respond thoughtfully
- ☐ Not feeling the need to walk on eggshells or constantly monitor reactions

Physical Safety

Physical safety is equally essential. A safe relationship is free from physical harm, coercion, intimidation, and abuse. If abuse is present, it is important to seek support from trusted friends, family members, therapists, or domestic violence hotlines.

Building Safety in Relationships

Safety develops through intentional choices, mutual respect, and consistent care. The following practices can help strengthen trust and security:

Set and respect boundaries: Clearly communicate your physical, emotional, sexual, and financial limits, and honor your partner's boundaries as well.

Practice active listening: Focus on understanding your partner's perspective without judgment, interruption, or defensiveness.

Use supportive nonverbal communication: Be mindful of body language, tone, and facial expressions, which can communicate safety, openness, and empathy.

Share vulnerability gradually: Openly sharing feelings and experiences can deepen trust and connection when both partners respond with care.

Offer consistent reassurance: Small acts of support, reliability, and empathy reinforce a sense of security over time.

Benefits of Safety

When safety is present, relationships are more likely to thrive. Partners can communicate openly, repair conflict, and remain connected even during stressful moments.

- ☐ Stronger trust and intimacy
- ☐ Reduced anxiety and stress
- ☐ Greater ability to resolve conflict constructively
- ☐ More emotional stability and space for healing from past trauma
- ☐ Freedom to be authentic, present, and fully engaged

Key Takeaway

Safety in relationships includes both emotional and physical security. It is built through trust, respect, clear boundaries, honest communication, and consistent care. When safety is prioritized, both partners are better able to be vulnerable, communicate openly, and build a stronger, healthier connection over time.

Apple Pie Smoothie Recipe

Healthy Apple Pie Fall Smoothie - Ahead of Thyme

Healthy Apple Pie Fall Smoothie is quick and easy to make in minutes, delicious and nutritious, and tastes like apple pie — without the calories.



Nutrition Facts

Calories Per Serving: 191

Total Fat 5.5g

Cholesterol 9.3mg

Sodium 120.1mg

Total Carbohydrate 30.6g

Sugars 21.8g

Protein 7.8g

Ingredients (Serves 2)

- ☐ 2 medium **apples**, *cored*
- ☐ 1 cup **milk**, *dairy or non-dairy*
- ☐ 1/2 cup **plain Greek yogurt**
- ☐ 1 teaspoon **ground cinnamon**
- ☐ 1/4 teaspoon **ground nutmeg**
- ☐ Pinch of **ground cardamom**
- ☐ **Honey or maple syrup** (optional, to sweeten)

Instructions

- ☐ Throw all ingredients into a **blender** and blend until smooth and to your desired consistency.
- ☐ Taste and add some honey if you want to sweeten.
- ☐ Pour into tall glasses, sprinkle with some cinnamon, and enjoy!

Notes

How to store: Apple pie smoothies are best served immediately. If you have leftovers, store it an **airtight container** in the refrigerator for up to 1 day. Give it a stir before eating.

How to freeze: Another way to store this fall smoothie is to freeze it. Transfer the leftover smoothie to an **airtight container** and freeze for up to 3 months. When ready to eat, take it out of the freezer and allow it to defrost slightly on the counter for about 10-15 minutes.