

Valentine's Mental Day & Health

Choosing Self-Love This Year

Valentine's Day is often framed as a celebration of romance. But for many people, it can also bring stress, comparison, loneliness, or pressure. If you're feeling anything less than excited about February 14th, you're not alone.

Seasonal stress, shorter days, ongoing recovery, relationship transitions, or caregiving responsibilities can already make winter challenging. A holiday centered on love can sometimes magnify what feels missing rather than what's present.

At NAMI CCNS, we believe Valentine's Day can be reframed as something broader: an opportunity to practice self-love and strengthen your mental well-being.

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4 STRATEGIES TO HELP PROTECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH THIS VALENTINES DAY

1. Practice Intentional Self-Love

Self-love is not indulgent. It is preventive care. If you are managing symptoms of a mental health condition, navigating recovery, or supporting a loved one, your nervous system may already be carrying more than usual. Add winter fatigue and social pressure, and it's understandable to feel depleted. Small acts of care signal safety to your brain and reduce stress responses.

Ask yourself:

- What helps my body feel calmer?
- What restores my energy?
- What makes me feel grounded?

Self-care can include:

- Taking a walk outside for sunlight and movement
 - Preparing a nourishing meal
 - Limiting social media comparison
 - Taking a warm bath
 - Attending a support group
 - Going to bed earlier
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2. Celebrate All Forms of Connection

Love is not limited to romantic relationships. Friendships, family bonds, chosen family, support groups, coworkers, and neighbors are all relationships that sustain us in powerful ways. Social connection is one of the strongest protective factors for mental health. Connection reduces isolation and reinforces belonging, two critical components of emotional wellness.

Consider:

- Sending a simple message of appreciation
- Scheduling a coffee or phone call
- Writing a short note of gratitude
- Thanking someone who has supported you





3. Do Something That Makes You Feel Good (& Maybe Helps Others Too)

Behavioral activation, engaging in meaningful activity even when you don't feel like it, is a powerful mental health tool. Doing something enjoyable boosts mood-regulating chemicals in the brain. Helping others adds an additional layer of fulfillment and purpose.

You might:

- Volunteer for a cause you care about
- Donate to an organization that matters to you
- Start a creative project
- Move your body in a way you enjoy
- Spend time with a pet



4. Let Go of the “Shoulds”

Valentine's Day can trigger unhelpful comparisons:

- “I should be in a relationship.”
- “I should be further along in my recovery.”
- “I should feel happier.”



These “should” statements create shame and amplify distress. A cognitive reframing strategy can help: **For every “should,” name two things you do have.**

For example:

- “I should be married” →
 - I have close friends who care about me.
 - I am actively working toward building healthy relationships.

Shifting from absence to abundance does not ignore pain, and it broadens perspective. Gratitude practices have been shown to improve mood, resilience, and overall life satisfaction over time.

Redefining Valentines Day

Valentine's Day does not measure your worth. It does not define your relationship status, your recovery, or your future.

Love can look like:

- Setting boundaries
- Attending therapy
- Taking medication consistently
- Asking for help
- Resting when you're overwhelmed
- Choosing compassion over criticism



This year, consider making February 14th about strengthening your relationship with yourself. And if this holiday is difficult for you, please remember: support is available. Whether through a NAMI support group, educational program, or community connection, you do not have to navigate hard days alone.