HAPPY HEART MONTH FROM YOU TO YOU!

The American Heart Month is here!

February is known as American Heart Month. It is a time to focus on promoting and maintaining heart health. From all of us at the NCC Wellness Committee to all of you, we share some heart healthy love in the form of a mindful meditation exercise called **Rose, Thorn, Bud**. Studies show that mindful meditation helps manage negative thoughts and emotions [i].

This exercise can help you focus on hope and what is positive in your life, which leads to positive thoughts, positive feelings, and maybe even a smile.

Positive emotions are associated with increased happiness, self-esteem, good health, and connectedness to others. Recalling positive events or feelings is like adding interest to your bank account. The more positive emotions, the greater your ability to deal with future negative experiences and stress [ii].

Use your power of hope, gratitude, and reflection to bring heart healthy positive emotions to yourself today and every day!

Rose, Thorn, Bud

1. **Rose**: Think of a success, small win, or something positive (eg. something for which you are proud) that you experienced.
2. **Thorn**: Think of a challenge or obstacle you experienced or are experiencing (eg. something stressful or difficult) or something with which you can use help.
3. **Bud**: Think of something you look forward to experiencing, learn more about, or blossoming (eg. something you are or will be working on).
4. Give yourself up to a few minutes to sit silently and reflect on your rose, thorn, and bud. Then, write them down. Save them or dispose of them as you choose. You can benefit just by going through the exercise.

Try doing this exercise once or twice a week. Enjoy taking the time to be lovingly mindful. Your heart will thank you.

i. Wu R, Liu LL, Zhu H, et al. Brief Mindfulness Meditation Improves Emotion Processing. *Front Neurosci*. 2019;13:1074. doi:10.3389/fnins.2019.01074

ii. Fredrickson BL. The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *Philos Trans R Soc Lond B Biol Sci*. 2004;359(1449):1367-1378. doi:10.1098/rstb.2004.1512