



National Alliance on Mental Illness Help Line
1-800-950-6264 <https://www.nami.org/help>
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800.273.TALK
Translifeline 877.565.8860
Veteran's Crisis Line 800.273.8255 *press 1*
Pastoral Care—Pastor Jim Alexander 623.792.5295
<https://thepalms.org/Tools2Thrive>

Welcome to January 2022!! As we begin a new year of possibilities and opportunities, it is a great idea to get organized and shed the clutter of 2021. While it is true that we are still smack-dab in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic with all of its stresses — sadness, lethargy and a veritable rollercoaster of emotions — there are ways to help alleviate them. We may not have control over the pandemic, but we can focus on what we DO have control over.

Gain Control of Your Environment: Because you are most likely spending a great deal of time in enclosed spaces, it is important to organize and clean your space. Get rid of the clutter that is in the way. Cleaning and organizing are strongly associated with decreasing stress and anxiety. A cluttered or messy area can be associated with “unfinished business” and make you feel as if you are stuck in the same space and time...not making progress. The process of wiping down the countertops, desktops, and other work areas, dusting shelves, vacuuming, changing the bedsheets and blankets, and other hands-on cleaning-related activities can lead to a meditative and blissful state. Once you have cleaned and organized, you may even choose to light a scented candle or incense to fill your space with a tranquil aroma.

Uplift Your Mood: Once you have cleaned and organized your space, you may feel like everything is once again “new,” and this adds a sense of excitement. Going through the process can also lead to a great level of satisfaction and feeling the positive energy associated with being productive. A feeling of peace may wash over you, as once you declutter your physical area, you declutter your mind. Studies have proven that clutter can make it significantly more difficult to focus on a particular task, especially if it overwhelms your visual field. Decluttering and organizing can directly lead to improving your attention span and focus: a refreshed mental space.

Find Inspiration: Upon cleaning, you may find lost or old items that you previously cherished. Allow time to reflect on these findings and enjoy them. You may find yourself feeling inspired to pick up an old hobby or start a project. Cleaning and organizing can spark your creativity, and upon embracing this, the possibilities of where it will take you are endless.

Excerpts taken from Nadia Ghaffari—Mental Health Advocate, UC Berkley