

Message from the Parish Nurses

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HYGGE YOUR WAY TO CALM COMFORT

The leaves are starting to change colors, the nights and days are getting cooler. We are now starting to prepare for winter. Whether you love it or hate it, there is something about hunkering down for winter that teaches the importance of self-care. Many of the activities associated with hygge are synonymous with hunkering down during a blizzard, so a lot of people view hygge as a winter term. However, it's a lifestyle that can be embraced in all seasons. Let's learn some lifestyle habits that can help you manage your stress and relish the present.

WHAT IS HYGGE?

Hygge, pronounced "hoo-ga" is Danish in nature.

Denmark is one of the four happiest nations in the world according to The World Happiness Report for 2018. The word doesn't have an exact English translation. Hygge is a mindset, a series of lifestyle changes, practicing deliberate moment of cozy comfort to improve your overall contentment and well-being. Another way of thinking about it: hygge is doing things that make you feel as happy as you do when you've just been warmly hugged by a loved one.

Some common examples of hygge are:

- Sitting by the fire, listening to relaxing music.
- Sipping a warm mug of cocoa, tea, or freshly brewed coffee.
- Burning candles as you have a delicious meal, and savoring it with a loved one.
- Wearing oh-so-comfortable clothing, like sweatpants and/or fuzzy warm socks.
- Watching a movie under a soft warm blanket and eat popcorn.
- Reading a good book indoors on a rainy or snowy day.
- Watching the birds come into the feeder to eat.
- Having a few close friends over dinner.
- Taking a long walk.
- Going for a run in the early hours of the morning.

There's no one right way to hygge, but you'll know you're doing it right when you feel relaxed, unhurried, cozy, and cared for. The point is to be gentle with yourself, and to engage in soothing, low-tech endeavors that make you feel good. It provides a sanctuary in the middle of real life. There's a peace that comes with

giving yourself permission to just be comfortable, quiet, and a bit of indulgent in a given moment.

HYGGE APPEALS TO ALL YOUR SENSES

It's easy to see why hygge is an appealing lifestyle adjustment. But what exactly gives it its signature coziness? Simply put, hygge caters to all of the five major senses, creating an all-over heartwarming experience. Here are some hygge approved ideas for tending to your whole self:

- **Sight:** To see hygge is to look at the natural phenomena, for example the dancing flames, the falling snow, raindrops dripping down the window, and a roaring fire in the fireplace. Other good visual options are reading a book, enjoying outdoor scenery, or watching a movie. Things you shouldn't feast your eyes upon when in hygge mode: Your phone, tablet, or laptop.
- **Sound:** The sound of hygge is the crackle of burning firewood, which shoots small sparks. Sounds only heard in silence; the sound of raindrops on the window or a tin roof, the rumble of wind, and the rustling trees. Other good sounds are background music, meaningful conversation, laughter among family and friends, and sounds of nature while on a walk.
- **Taste:** The taste of hygge is familiar, pleasant and soothing. If tea, then with honey, if cookies, then with a tasty glaze, if stew, then with the addition of wine or some favorite seasoning. Stuffing yourself full of junk, however, is not true to hygge lifestyle.
- **Touch:** The touch of hygge is a pleasant sensation that occurs when you touch a soft blanket, warm your hands on a hot ceramic mug, or move your fingers across the surface of an old wooden table. To cozy up your environment, add pillows encased in plush fabric, like velour or flannel. Start a new knitting/crochet project, or feeling the crunch of snow beneath your feet.
- **Smell:** The smell of hygge is the one that takes you back to a place where you felt very comfortable, cozy, joyous, and safe. Think comforting smells like, vanilla, baked goods, savory meals, Christmas trees, the night air and mother's perfume. Your sense of smell has more power to invoke memories than any of your other senses, so choose what fills the air of your cozy environment wisely.

By Barbara Mueller, RN, Faith Community Nurse

More information can be found at: www.askthescientists.com

Type In: Hygge Your Way to Calm Comfort: How to Find Daily Moments of Sanctuary – Scroll down to Health & Nutrition

Visit: www.StAgnesShepherdstown.org for **"How To Hygge In Summer."** Click on: Parish Health Newsletter

HOW TO HYGGE IN SUMMER

You can hygge at any time of the year and summer is the perfect time of year to make like a Scandinavian and get back in touch with nature. Hygge is really about a state of mind and enjoying the simpler things in life. Here are some ideas for adapting traditional hygge activities to the warm weather.

- **Have a backyard barbecue:** Gathering your nearest and dearest for easily prepped food and drinks is very hygge even if it runs late into the night. Enjoy your family and friends while breathing in the summer scents of melons and freshly cut grass, great conversations and maybe even some music.
- **Organize a picnic:** Similar to hosting a barbecue, but picnics can be held in a park, on the beach of a lake or ocean. Everyone contributes to a communal meal. Great places for family reunions to catch up on what happening in each other's life. Bliss!!!
- **Hit up a local festival or farmer's market:** You'll get to hear the sounds of great local tunes, fresh organic grown veggies and fruits, merchandise vendors, and mingling of like-minded folk – all hygge activities.
- **Buy fresh flowers for your home:** They have the ability to make any home feel cozier.
- **Take full advantage of the produce you grow:** Share your garden with neighbors. All of these endeavors will keep you blissfully present in the moment and reinforce the connection with yourself and those around you.
- **Get cozy:** Just because it's hot and humid outside doesn't mean you can't get comfortable. Swap wooly socks for bare feet or sandals, and knit sweaters for T-shirts and tank tops. Choose breathable linens and lightweight nylons. You can still light a candle or create a comfy place full of pillows.
- **Go Outside:** This is the best time of the year to enjoy the outdoors, so live it up and make the most of it. Have a bonfire on the beach with friends or take a hike in the woods, paddle a canoe on the lake, ride a bike on the boardwalk, soak up the sunshine and happy mood of everyone around you.
- **Burn a delicious-smelling candle:** According to Shaun Russell, an English entrepreneur who lives in Denmark, "Scandinavians are just as likely to light a candle at breakfast in the summer as they are at night; they use them morning, noon, and night, 365 days a year."
- **Pour yourself a glass of wine:** Miek Wiking, the CEO of The Happiness Institute in Copenhagen, wrote *The Little Book of Hygge: Danish Secrets to Happy Living*, which is pretty much the hygge bible. When asked if drinking wine is considered hygge, he said. "Hygge is about being kind to yourself and giving yourself a treat,

so, yes, this is hygge." For summer, swap it for Frosé, which you can make at home.

Frosé

45 ml (about 3 Tbs.) rosé

3-4 fresh strawberries

15 ml (1 Tb.) sugar syrup (1 part sugar to 1 part water boiled together)

1. Pour rosé into a plastic container and freeze overnight
2. Combine frozen rosé, strawberries and sugar syrup into a blender
3. Blend
4. Scoop or pour into a chilled martini glass
5. Enjoy

If you're looking for a new way to practice self-care, manage your stress, and create more mindful moments in your busy life, learn a lesson from the happiness expert: the Danes. Hygge may seem hard to pronounce, but it's very easy to implement into everyday life.

By Barbara Mueller

More information can be found in:

The Little Book of Hygge: Danish Secrets to Happy Living

By: Miek Wiking