

# BRAVERY

*Brave Women Project Monthly Newsletter*



## Our Purpose

Brave Women Project exists to develop opportunities for women of diverse backgrounds to move into brave action through conscious choice and intentionality within our spheres of influence. We use the 5 Es for Life - Engage, Encourage, Empower, Educate, Evolve - as a guide for women to promote equity through developing in four core areas: relationships, professional, impact, and wellness.

Keep up to date with everything we are doing with our monthly newsletter.

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# Message from the Board

We hope this newsletter finds you well and thriving as we transition into the beautiful month of April. As we continue our journey together, we wanted to take a moment to emphasize the importance of self-care and stress management in our lives.

Self-care is not a luxury; it's a necessity. It's about recognizing our worth and taking intentional actions to nurture our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It's about carving out time for ourselves amidst our busy schedules and prioritizing activities that recharge and rejuvenate us

Check out the membership section of our website for wellness videos from Brittany, and connect and engage in conversations on the forum. Social support is a powerful buffer against stress and can enhance your resilience in challenging times.

Remember that self-care looks different for everyone, so prioritize activities that resonate with you and bring you joy. By investing in your self-care and stress management practices, you're not only benefiting yourself but also creating a ripple effect of positivity and resilience in our community.

If you have any self-care tips, success stories, or resources that you'd like to share with our community, please reach out or share them in our community forum. Your contributions are invaluable and can inspire others on their journey.

Wishing you a month filled with self-care, resilience, and moments of joy.

Warm regards,  
**The BWP Board**

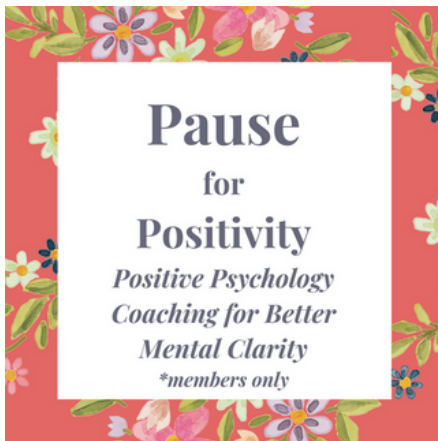
# Monthly Upcoming Events:

**Come As  
You Are  
Conversation**  
**empower**  
VIRTUAL  
12-1pm

## Come As You Are

Join us for our monthly come as you are conversation. Feel the support of other women as we discuss which "E" we are working on.

**Wednesday, April 17th, from 12:00 - 1:00 PM EST**



## Pause for Positivity

Join Coach Megan for a positive break. In these sessions, we work through the negative thoughts, take a moment for mindfulness and prepare ourselves for brave action.

**Tuesday, April 23rd, from 12:00 - 1:00 PM EST**



## Group Coaching with Coach Candid

Join Coach Candid for this introductory session - perfect for new members! We will discuss goal mapping, group coaching, and much more on this month's call. Start the year off right by mapping out your goals for 2024!

**Wednesday, April 24th from 12:00 - 1:00 PM EST**

## KEEP UP TO DATE!

*The BWP Board is working on some exciting upcoming special events.*

*Follow us on Social Media to stay up to date with the latest news and events.*

# Exciting Member News

## Women of Achievement

Cribs for Kids celebrates Women's History Month in March by hosting the annual Women of Achievement Awards. Pittsburgh-based honorees are nominated and selected based on excellence in their field, making a significant contribution to the betterment of their communities, or outstanding accomplishments for the advancement of women. BWP wants to congratulate two of our members who were honored with this achievement, Racquelle Pakutz and Sunnie Fenk.

## Welcome New Members

Nicole Nolle

Heather Cherry

Stefanie Kelly

Jennifer Thayer

## Major Congratulations to Kayla Komondor, Ph.D



BWP Board Member Kayla Komondor defended her Ph.D. thesis on March 8th in the Department of Biological Sciences with a concentration in Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology at the University of Pittsburgh. Her thesis defense was titled “Fertilization unconventionally activates phospholipase C during the fast block to polyspermy in the African clawed frog, *Xenopus laevis*.” She will be leaving Pittsburgh, but not our board, this fall to work as a postdoctoral fellow in the Bartolomei Lab at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, where she will be conducting research in reproduction and development.

## Be Brave and Boast a Bit!

We often overlook all the positive things we have going on. As women, we have learned not to "brag" or be "boastful." - Here at BWP, we want to brag about you and all the fantastic things you do!

If you have some new exciting news to celebrate, let us know and be featured in our newsletter. You are working hard and deserve a little recognition for what you do!



# Save the Date

## The 2024 Brave Women Project Pillar Awards Are Coming Back!

Excitement is building as we announce the much-anticipated 2024 Brave Women Project Pillar Awards! Mark your calendars and stay tuned to BWP for all the latest updates on this empowering event.

### Sponsorship Opportunities Available!

Are you passionate about supporting the incredible achievements of brave women? We have creative sponsorship options tailored just for you! Elevate your brand and be part of this inspiring celebration. Follow us for more details on sponsorship opportunities. If you want to contribute to our swag bags, contact Amy at [ahhacorp@gmail.com](mailto:ahhacorp@gmail.com).

### Join Us as a Judge!

Are you a seasoned professional with a passion for recognizing excellence? We're looking for judges to join our esteemed panel and play a crucial role in honoring the achievements of remarkable women. If you're interested, please apply by emailing a brief bio and expressing your interest to [kelli@k2creativellc.com](mailto:kelli@k2creativellc.com).

### Contact Us for More Information:

For all inquiries, sponsorship details, and judge applications, please contact Kelli at [kelli@k2creativellc.com](mailto:kelli@k2creativellc.com). We can't wait to make the 2024 Brave Women Project Pillar Awards an unforgettable celebration of courage, resilience, and empowerment!

**Stay tuned for updates, and get ready to be inspired!**



Mark your calendars with these important dates:

August 5 - Early bird tickets on sale

August 26 to September 27 - Nominations accepted

November 15 @ 11 am - Pillar Awards  
@ Sheraton Station Square

# April is Stress Awareness Month - Here is What You Can Do About It!

A 2023 survey conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA) found that women are stressed, misunderstood, and alone. The survey included a nationally representative sample of more than 3,000 adults. Women reported a higher average level of stress than men and were more likely to rate their stress levels between 8 out of 10.

But you didn't need to read a study to know that. For women, the pressures have become unsurmountable. From family to career to societal expectations (and let's not forget your social life), it can feel like you can't measure up.

The good news is that you're not alone in how you feel or have to manage.

Let's dive into understanding stress so we can better manage that stress without adding yet another to-do to your long list.

## **What is stress, and how does it impact my body?**

There are different types of stress, and defining the stress you're experiencing can help you decide how to manage it.

Acute stress is short-term, like a traffic jam or an argument. Experts suggest acute stress contributes to long-term health only when it is repeated and persistent. Managing acute stress might include taking a walk outside.

Chronic stress builds up from repeated exposure to stressful situations and can impact overall health. Long-lasting stress increases your risk of high blood pressure (hypertension), weight gain or loss, high cholesterol, hyperthyroidism, stomach ulcers, digestive issues, acne or skin issues, and type 2 diabetes. Managing chronic stress requires an ongoing effort with lifestyle changes, regular exercise, sleep hygiene, and mindset.

## **Symptoms of acute stress can include:**

- Aggression
- Anxiety
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Insomnia
- Irritability
- Mood Swings
- Nightmares

# April is Stress Awareness Month - Here is What You Can Do About It! - Con't

## Symptoms of chronic stress can include:

- Anxiety Disorders
- Depression
- Irritability or Anger
- Isolation

Not all stress is created equal. Some experts suggest that healthy stress (eustress) can lead to growth. Unlike **distress** (stress that negatively affects you), **eustress** feels challenging and manageable, with mostly positive effects.

For example, you may experience stress when faced with a challenge you feel confident in your ability to solve or cope with. On the contrary, you may feel distress when you feel unable to cope or out of your depth, such as when you have an unrealistic deadline without the proper resources or preparation.

Understanding your stress and how it impacts you is good, but what can you do about it? Here are some easy tips to get started.

## Tips for Managing Stress

**Consume sugar and caffeine in moderation.** Caffeine, a common substance people rely on for energy, works by blocking a chemical that calms the brain. Excessive amounts of caffeine impact your hormones, specifically cortisol (stress hormone). Eating sugar can cause a stress response in your body, both when it rises and falls. This blood sugar roller coaster leads to feelings of anxiety, depression, insomnia, lack of focus, low energy, memory issues, and inflammation.

Practice mindfulness. Mindfulness eases intense stress responses and reduces feelings of anxiety—especially if your stress is exacerbated by constantly thinking about what's next. I am guilty of this and often remind myself, "You can't do what's next now." This mantra diverts my mind back to what I am doing at the moment—whether it's working, eating, or exercising—instead of letting my mind wonder and anxiety escalate.

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Set healthy (and realistic) boundaries. Establishing and maintaining boundaries is crucial to lowering stress and increasing overall satisfaction with life—particularly with tasks in your personal and work life. Anxiety and stress increase when you take responsibility for others' emotions, behaviors, and thoughts. Define your limits (what supports vs. what detracts from your well-being) and openly communicate them. Remind people, if needed, and do not be afraid to say "no" to things that don't serve you.

Stay connected. Joining a group like Brave Women Project gives you the opportunity to surround yourself with people who have similar purposes and goals. Groups that align with your purposes and goals reduce feelings of loneliness, isolation, distress, depression, anxiety, and fatigue.

These are just a few ideas for stress management. Of course, how you think and react to stress is as unique as your genetic composition. Find what works for your lifestyle, and remember that not every stress management tool works the same for everyone. Observe Stress Awareness Month this April by testing some new techniques and noting how they make you feel.

**This article was written by Heather Cherry, a copywriter, journalist, and health coach. She creates strategic, conversational content for brands and helps people overcome barriers. She is the author of Market Your A\$\$ Off.**



<https://www.heathercherry.com>

<https://www.heathercherrycoach.com>

## **Resources**


<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2023/collective-trauma-recovery>

<https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/body#:~:text=Repeated%20acute%20stress%20and%20persistent,stress%20can%20affect%20cholesterol%20levels>.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9823716/>

<https://www.verywellmind.com/setting-boundaries-for-stress-management-3144985>





# LOW CARB BANANA & STRAWBERRY CAKE



Serves: 16  
Prep: 10 mins  
Cook: 60 mins



Nutrition per serving:  
104 kcal  
5g Fats  
16g Carbs  
2g Protein



DF

LC

MP

V

## WHAT YOU NEED

- 4 small ripe bananas
- 1 cup (130g) wheat flour
- ½ cup (60g) buckwheat flour
- ¼ cup (60ml) coconut oil
- 2 tbsp. stevia/xylitol
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 10 strawberries, halved

## WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

*Pre-heat oven to 350°F (180°C).*

*Peel the bananas and place them in a food processor or high-speed blender. Blitz until smooth.*

*Add in the egg, oil and xylitol, then mix again. Next, add in the flours and baking powder, and blitz until a smooth batter is formed.*

*Transfer the batter into a greased or silicon cake tray. Place the halved strawberries on top and bake for around 60 minutes, until the cake is golden brown and cooked through.*



# HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT BWP!

## HELP US GROW!

1. Time - Volunteer Role - We need women to step into compassionate, mission-led leadership roles for 2-3 hours a month for BWP.
2. Financial - Corporate Sponsors - we are looking for corporate matching and corporate sponsors as we look at the second half of the year. We are very interested in talking with people about this!
3. Create - Bring us informational articles for our newsletter or ideas for fun events for our members.

All ideas can go to [bravewomenproject@gmail.com](mailto:bravewomenproject@gmail.com) or connect to Holly on LinkedIn.

**DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN GIVE A MEMBERSHIP AS A GIFT?  
SHARE THIS EXPERIENCE WITH A BRAVE WOMAN.**

**SUBMIT A MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AT - [HTTPS://WWW.BWP.LIFE/SIGNUP](https://www.bwp.life/signup)**