

ROAD TO RECOVERY NEWSLETTER

Created by Dual Recovery at Warren Washington Association for Mental Health to support individuals in recovery



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A Woman in Recovery

BY ANITA KING

My mother used to tell people, “I always know when one of my children is in trouble – they get quiet. Except Anita, I never know with her, she is always quiet.” One day in history class we were told about Abraham Lincoln. When he was a young man, he was walking down the road and found a penny. Back in the day it was enough to buy a loaf of bread. He searched the whole countryside ‘til he found the one who lost it and was given the nickname, “Honest Abe”. I so enjoyed this history lesson that I went home and told my parents. One day I was sitting at the table coloring and my mother sat down next to me and gently said, “Anita, I would like a penny for your thoughts.” I understood that she wanted me to give her an honest account of what I had been up to. I can’t say I always told her when I was in trouble, however, I learned that she was someone who cared and wanted to share life with me. Over the years as I have grown I am continually reaching the awareness that I have to be honest with myself, God, and others. And when these three are in harmony and met with kindness, true communication and progress is made in life. As a person with a mental disorder and a substance use disorder (alcohol in my case), it was only when this triangular dynamic was in honest harmony and met with kindness that I was able to begin on my road to recovery. My life is not perfect, I have struggles, but since I started Dual Recovery my life is so worth living. I experience joy and am learning to have meaningful relationships again with the help of DBT skills. If you are on the road to recovery or would like to begin one, I know some people that would love to journey with you, if that is what you want. WWAMH and BHSN are here for you. They are here with me and are here for me. My mother? She has since passed, but her spirit remains with me. The lessons she taught me and her words stay true in my ear, and from time to time I hear her say, “Anita, a penny for your thoughts.” I love you, Mom.

**INTERESTED IN SHARING A PIECE OF YOUR RECOVERY STORY?
PLEASE CONTACT REBECCA RYAN AT RRYAN@WWAMH.ORG**



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HEALTH & WELLNESS

from the editor

REBECCA RYAN

Celebrating Mental Health

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being, and it influences how we think, feel, and act in our daily lives. Mental health is an integral and essential component of one's overall health and affects each of us in different ways based on many social, psychological, and biological factors. Because of this, it is important to consistently pay attention to how we're feeling, especially in the midst of our current reality. In an effort to raise awareness of mental health and all it encompasses, we asked around . . .

What does mental health mean to you?

"STATE OF MIND AND ITS EFFECT ON DAILY LIFE. I TAKE CARE OF MY MENTAL HEALTH BY DOING THINGS THAT I KNOW IMPROVE MY MINDSET."

"IT MEANS MENTAL WELLNESS. TAKING CARE OF MYSELF THE BEST I CAN AND RECOGNIZING WHEN I NEED A LITTLE EXTRA SUPPORT."

"MENTAL HEALTH TO ME IS MAKING SURE I'M NOT POURING FROM AN EMPTY CUP. THAT I HAVE RESPECT FOR MY BOUNDARIES AND THAT I KNOW WHEN TO SAY NO, TO ENSURE I DO NOT SPREAD MYSELF TOO THIN."

"PEACE OF MIND AND POSITIVE LIVING."

"MENTAL HEALTH MEANS TO ALWAYS CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF WHEN YOU WAKE UP AND THROUGHOUT THE DAY, I ASK MYSELF ABOUT 10 TIMES A DAY "HOW ARE YOU FEELING RIGHT NOW"? AND WORK ON IMPROVING HOW I FEEL NO MATTER WHAT THE FEELING IS."

"EVERYTHING."

"TO ME, IT'S BEING ABLE TO KEEP YOUR NEGATIVE THOUGHTS IN LINE AND FOCUS MORE ON POSITIVE THOUGHTS AND PRACTICING GRATITUDE TO KEEP YOURSELF EMOTIONALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY WELL."

"I TREAT MY MENTAL HEALTH THE SAME AS MY PHYSICAL HEALTH. I AM VERY IN TUNE TO MY MENTAL STABILITY, AND I PAY ATTENTION TO THE THINGS I NEED FOR IT; WHETHER IT NEEDS MORE ATTENTION OR NOT. THE MEDICATIONS I AM ON ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO MY MENTAL HEALTH BECAUSE THEY KEEP ME HEALTHY SO I CAN LIVE THE BEST LIFE. STAYING MENTALLY HEALTHY AND PHYSICALLY HEALTHY IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY LIFE I WILL LIVE."

"IF YOU DON'T HAVE MENTAL HEALTH, THEN YOU DON'T HAVE YOURSELF."

"SAFE SPACES TO BE HONEST."

"BALANCED LIFE."

"TALKING ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND SPEAKING UP FOR YOURSELF BECOMES MORE NORMALIZED AND TALKING ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL WILL ONLY GET EASIER. MENTAL HEALTH DAYS ARE ALSO VERY IMPORTANT WHEN YOU ARE WORKING, YOU SHOULD USE THAT TIME TO RECUPERATE."

"ONE MAJOR LIFE EVENT CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING."

"MAINTAINING A HEALTHY ROUTINE."

"MENTAL HEALTH IS A BALANCE; YOU NEED TO TREAT YOUR WHOLE BODY WELL TO BE AT YOUR BEST. FOR ME, I KNOW MY MENTAL HEALTH SUFFERS WHEN I DO NOT LISTEN TO WHAT I NEED/WANT. I TEND TO DO A LOT FOR OTHERS AND BEND AND THEN I BECOME GRUMPY, UNHAPPY, AND ANGRY. I REALIZE WHEN I GIVE TOO MUCH IT IS NOT GOOD AND I NEED TO REMEMBER TO GIVE MYSELF SPACE, LOVE, AND TIME TO DO THE THINGS THAT MAKE ME HAPPY."



What does mental health mean to you? (continued)

"MENTAL HEALTH MEANS A LOT TO ME. BEING ABLE TO SPEAK UP AND SAY, "I'M NOT OKAY AND I NEED HELP", TAKES COURAGE AND SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED. AS A FORMER ATHLETE WE ARE TAUGHT TO BE THE STRONGEST YOU CAN BE ON AND OFF THE FIELD. WHEN YOU STEP UP AND ASK FOR HELP, THAT IS WHEN YOU ARE THE STRONGEST. IT IS OKAY TO SEE A THERAPIST AND IT IS OKAY TO TAKE MEDICINE TO HELP WITH YOUR MENTAL STABILITY. NO ONE SHOULD JUDGE YOU FOR TAKING CARE OF WHAT IS GOING ON INSIDE."

"IT MEANS TAKING CARE OF MY OWN MENTAL WELL-BEING SO I CAN HELP OTHERS ON THEIR PATH TO RECOVERY AND USING MY LIFE EXPERIENCES TO HELP THEM RELATE TO ME."

"ALONE TIME."
"IT MEANS GETTING WELL."

"I THINK IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO DO SELF-CARE AND THEN EVERYTHING ELSE FALLS INTO PLACE. I ONCE READ, "EATING HEALTHY IS THE ULTIMATE ACT OF SELF-CARE", AND I WHOLEHEARTEDLY BELIEVE THIS."

"I FEEL LIKE FOR ME I AM A WORD OF AFFIRMATION TYPE OF PERSON. TALKING WITH PEOPLE AND BEING OPEN ABOUT HOW I AM FEELING IS BENEFICIAL FOR MY MENTAL HEALTH. WHEN I AM NOT AROUND PEOPLE OR DOING THINGS, I NOTICE MY MENTAL HEALTH IS DROPPING AND I FEEL MORE DOWN MORE OFTEN. I ALSO LIKE TO LISTEN TO GOOD MOOD MUSIC AND DO THINGS THAT BRING UP MY MOOD. I KNOW WHEN I FIND SOME GOOD JAMS I ALWAYS FEEL BETTER LISTENING TO THOSE SONGS, EVEN IF THE DAY WAS NOT TERRIBLE TO BEGIN WITH."

"THERE ISN'T A DAY THAT GOES BY THAT I DON'T THINK ABOUT MY MENTAL HEALTH. IN ORDER FOR ME TO TAKE CARE OF MY FAMILY, I NEED TO FEEL MENTALLY STABLE ON MY OWN."

"TO ME MENTAL HEALTH MEANS BEING ABLE TO TAKE TIME FOR MYSELF. KNOWING AND RECOGNIZING THE LIMITS TO WHAT MY MIND AND BODY CAN HANDLE BEFORE IT BECOMES TOO MUCH. IT MEANS TAKING A STEP BACK AND BREATHING, DOING THINGS THAT MAKE ME HAPPY, SPENDING TIME WITH PEOPLE WHO LIFT ME UP RATHER THAN PUT ME DOWN. I LIKE TO READ A BOOK OR LISTEN TO MUSIC WHEN THINGS GET TOO STRESSFUL, OR I LIKE TO GO FOR LONG CAR RIDES. MENTAL HEALTH IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS PHYSICAL HEALTH, AND IT SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES."

"MAKING SURE I HAVE ME TIME OUTSIDE OF WORK AND MOM LIFE."

"MENTAL HEALTH MEANS LIVING LIFE DAY BY DAY AND ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGES PRESENTED TO ME. "

"BEING SELF-AWARE AND LETTING GO OF THE THINGS I CAN'T CONTROL."

"IT MEANS STRENGTH."

"FOR ME, MENTAL HEALTH SOMETIMES MEANS YOU DON'T WANT TO GET OUT OF BED OR DO ANY OF YOUR FAVORITE THINGS. YOU FEEL LIKE SLEEPING ALL DAY. TAKING A SHOWER IS A CHORE, OR YOU DON'T EVEN TAKE ONE FOR DAYS. SOMETIMES YOU DON'T TALK TO ANYONE FOR A PERIOD OF TIME. IN THESE TIMES, I TRY TO REMEMBER WHAT MAKES ME SMILE AND DO WHAT I CAN TO MAKE MYSELF SMILE. "

"I FEEL LIKE MENTAL HEALTH FOR ME IS A BALANCE OF PHYSICAL HEATH. IF YOUR BODY IS NOT GETTING WHAT IT NEEDS, THEN YOUR MIND HAS A HARD TIME FUNCTIONING PROPERLY TOO. WHEN I WAS ON THE OVERNIGHT SHIFT, I WAS NOT GETTING PROPER SLEEP AND I WAS MORE ANXIOUS AND GOT MORE BOTHERED BY THINGS I NORMALLY DID NOT CARE ABOUT. AS SOON AS I CHANGED TO THE DAY SHIFT, ALL THAT EXTRA ANXIETY WENT AWAY. I ALSO NOTICED I AM HAPPIER ON DAYS I GET SOME SORT OF ACTIVITY IN, WHETHER THAT IS SNOWBOARDING, HIKING, OR JUST GOING FOR A RUN. SAME GOES FOR FOOD, I AM USUALLY IN A BETTER MOOD WHEN I AM EATING RIGHT."



What does mental health mean to you? (continued)

"MENTAL HEALTH TO ME MEANS HIGH EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING. EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING IS OVERALL LIFE SATISFACTION, AND THE 4 COMPONENTS OF THAT ARE: HEALTH, WORK, RELATIONSHIP, AND LEISURE. WHEN YOU'RE SATISFIED IN THOSE, YOU ARE FLOURISHING AND HAVE MENTAL HEALTH."

"I WOULD SAY GOOD MENTAL HEALTH IS ESSENTIAL AND IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS PHYSICAL HEALTH."

"MENTAL HEALTH TO ME IS HAVING MIXED EMOTIONS. HAVING A DIFFERENT WELL-BEING."

"RIGHT NOW, IT MEANS THE FRUSTRATION OF MISINFORMATION AND IMPROPER STEREOTYPES PROMOTED BY MEDIA INCLUDING NEWS AND MOVIES. AND REINFORCED BY IGNORANCE ACROSS ALL SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS."

"MAKING TIME FOR THE THINGS I ENJOY."

"MENTAL HEALTH MEANS A WAY OF COPING WITH MY ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION EACH DAY. I HAVE ANXIETY WITH THE PUBLIC AND BEING STRESSED TOO MUCH. MY DEPRESSION PLAYS A BIG ROLE ON HOW I COME WATCH DAYS WITHOUT CRYING. TALKING WITH SOMEONE HELPS AT THE TIME BUT AFTER THE TALK MY DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY CAN ACT UP AGAIN. DEALING WITH MY ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IS DIFFICULT AT TIMES AND HARD. I TRY TO KEEP BUSY WHEN DEPRESSED. WHEN EXPERIENCING ANXIETY, I HAVE TO TAKE A BREAK FROM WHAT I'M DOING OR SLOW DOWN AND TAKE MY MEDICATION. ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION PLAY A BIG ROLE IN MY LIFE. HAVING ANXIETY IS VERY SCARY AT TIMES AND OVERWHELMING. DEPRESSION IS VERY SAD AND YOU CAN CRY A LOT. HAVING BOTH IS THE WORST FEELING OF ALL. TRYING TO MANAGE THEM BOTH IS DIFFICULT. MEDICATION AND THERAPY ONLY HELP SO MUCH. LIVING WITH ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO FUNCTION SOME DAYS. MENTAL HEALTH IS A WAY OF HOW YOU LEARN TO COPE WITH EVERYDAY LIFE FOR ME."

"MENTAL HEALTH IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS PHYSICAL HEALTH. IF SOMETHING IS WRONG, FIX IT WITH MEDICINE OR THERAPY."

"CAN WE NORMALIZE GOING TO THERAPY? WE ALL HAVE THINGS TO WORK ON TO BECOME THE BEST VERSION OF OURSELVES THAT WE CAN BE. MAINTAINING OUR MENTAL HEALTH INVOLVES TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES AND WORKING ON OURSELVES, ALWAYS, AND SETTING GOALS THAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE."

"HAVING THE COURAGE TO ASK FOR HELP."

"IF I DIDN'T START FOCUSING ON MY MENTAL HEALTH, I DON'T THINK I WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO OVERCOME MY DRUG ADDICTION."

"A POSITIVE SUPPORT SYSTEM."

"MENTAL HEALTH MEANS SOCIALIZING WITH PEOPLE AND GETTING ALONG."

"I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD DO WITHOUT MY THERAPIST. SHE SAVED MY LIFE."

WHAT ARE YOU DOING *to celebrate* MENTAL HEALTH MONTH?



LIFESTYLES

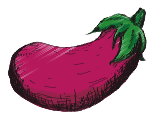
The World Needs More Gardeners

BY ANITA KING

The Covid pandemic created a sobering combination of unprecedented personal isolation and food shortages. A movement is on the way to create more school and community gardens to get more families gardening together but I am afraid that our heritage of seed-to-table growing and the skills of food preservation is in danger of being lost as our younger generation depend on commercial growers and retailers to provide for them – important as they are. The independent means of survival that gardening brings not only secures our food sources, but it preserves this heritage I would so love to see maintained.

Having been raised with a family garden, I can understand the many values that come with this. Gardening nourishes the body and it's good for the soul. Fruits and vegetables are essential for good health, providing us with many important vitamins and minerals. Fresh air and sunshine as you are called outdoors to tend to your plants and the exercise you get from it are valuable sources of vitamin D and endorphins, the happy chemicals in the brain. Gardening elevates our spirit and provides opportunities for connection. Community and family gardens cultivate connection as we work together with schoolmates, neighbors, friends, and family; pleasant times are spent and good memories are made. Gardening also helps build community in supporting local greenhouses, garden centers, and lumber companies as we create our own gardens and share the profits of our labors with one another. Gardens bring hope, relaxation, and peace of mind as we nourish the body and spirit in an effort to help ourselves and each other.

Recently, we held a small “planting party” at our WWAMH garden (see pictures below), where we accomplished the initial planting in the high tunnel and raised beds of our cooler weather crops. Staff, members, and Master Gardeners got together to teach and learn from one another about the rich heritage of gardening that all starts with one small seed. A fun day was spent by all and I am looking forward to another enjoyable 2021 garden year.





COMMUNITY UPDATES & RESOURCES

CELEBRATE AND LEARN WITH WWAMH

Join us for our virtual mental health event, "Covid-19 and Burnout: Keep Your Fire Going" on May 3rd from 11am-12pm. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted all of us and has led to a high degree of burnout and compassion fatigue. Josh Gray, Director of Support Services, will help you recognize the signs and take action. There are strategies that you can use to keep your personal flame going and stay mentally well. We will also be using this time to recognize and celebrate several individuals and groups who have made an impact on mental health in our community. You can get free tickets to the event by clicking [here](#).



PANEL DISCUSSION ON ADDICTION AND MENTAL ILLNESS

In celebration of Mental Health Month, NAMI Orange County presents a panel discussion on addiction and mental illness featuring young adults sharing their personal stories. This will be streamed via Zoom on May 11th from 7-8pm with the meeting ID: 891 3788 8547 and passcode: 631488.

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH RESOURCES/EVENTS

Mental Health America (MHA): mhanational.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): www.nami.org

Mental Health Association in New York State (MHANYS): mhanys.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): samhsa.gov

LOCAL RECOVERY RESOURCES

Hope & Healing Center, Hudson Falls | Website: www.facebook.com/HopeAndHealingRCOC/ | Peer Support: 518-812-5813

Healing Springs, Saratoga | Website: www.sararecovery.org/healing-springs/ | Peer Support: 518-306-3048

AA Meeting Schedule: www.district13.aahmbny.org/ | AA Hotline: 518-793-1113

NA Meeting Schedule: www.abcdrna.org/ | NA Hotline: 888-399-5519

DUAL RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUPS

EVERY TUESDAY FROM 4:00-5:00 PM AT THE

HOPE & HEALING RECOVERY CENTER - 2 MAPLE STREET, HUDSON FALLS

ATTEND IN PERSON OR VIRTUALLY - ZOOM MEETING ID: 844-2214-0148

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