

ROADS TO RECOVERY NEWSLETTER

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



A NEWSLETTER FOR YOU
AND ABOUT YOU

SPOTLIGHT TOPIC

Finding Your Guidance and Strength in Recovery

BY GINGER MILLER

There are so many pathways to recovery, every person's is specific to them but we all share some of the same basic aspects in our recovery. One common piece is figuring out where we each individually find our guidance and strength. When I first started my path in recovery there was a lot of talk about "Let go and Let God" and surrendering to my "Higher Power" in the 12-step program I attended. I had a lot of trouble with that, it actually made me angry when people talked about those things, mostly because my past experience and perception of God was a harsh one. Yet, I was being told I needed to recognize a higher power because it was part of surrendering my will, not having to have all the answers or always be in control, and that it was necessary in order to have a solid recovery. So, what about a person that is atheist or agnostic? How could they get solid recovery? I was told I could 'borrow' someone else's until I found one that worked for me. So... I started my journey by using the rooms of AA as my guidance and strength. **Good Orderly Direction (GOD)** and **Group Of Drunks (GOD)**. I reluctantly accepted that (after all they were still using that **God** word) and it made the people around me, my support network, happy. I started listening to what other people considered to be their higher power and where they got their strength from. I asked questions and read literature about it. Although the majority of people leaned on a 'God of your understanding', Jesus, angels or some other religious reference, I held out hope because some people found something else.

I talked with some people who felt a loved one that had passed away, such as a mother, father, grandmother, uncle, etc., had guided them and gave them strength. I even read an article where one person viewed the ceiling fan as their higher power because it was above them and had the power to move air. Another article I read, the person chose door handles to be their higher power because you can't get from one room to another that has a closed door between them without using the door knob - that's power of controlling where you can go. I found some people that referred to 'Mother Nature' as their higher power. After a couple years of looking, reading and 'borrowing' other peoples concept of a higher power, I came to the conclusion that, since water can carve stone, wind can knock over large trees, the sun can melt things, snow can freeze things, and I can learn from animals behaviors (as just a few examples), nature is a higher power for me. Whenever I go for walks in the woods or sit by a brook or at the beach, I have found that being in nature brings me peace and clarity. This is what gives me **MY** guidance and strength on my dual recovery path.



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Want to share who or what you have found to be your higher power?

Email us at gmill@wwamh.org!



UNDERSTANDING THE DIAGNOSIS

Bipolar Disorder

BY GINGER MILLER

Bipolar disorder is a mental health condition where a person experiences extreme changes in mood. A person with bipolar disorder will experience alternating episodes of mania and depression. Each episode can last for days or weeks. Emotions can be very intense during each phase and may be accompanied by changes in sleep patterns, activity levels, and behaviors. The episodes can be debilitating and often interfere with a person's day-to-day life.

While there are some similarities between the experiences people with bipolar disorder have, it is important to remember that the disorder can manifest differently in different people. Some people will experience all of the symptoms and some will experience only a few. The intensity of the experiences can also vary from person to person. Based on information from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), this article will describe the symptoms of bipolar disorder and what it feels like to be bipolar.

During the *manic phase*, a person may feel overjoyed, euphoric and full of life. They will generally have a lot of energy and feel like they can take on the world. Mania symptoms can vary greatly in type and intensity between people but tend to be characterized by a general feeling of positivity. Some people may also experience a sense of impending fear of mania subsiding and experiencing a depressive phase. What does mania feel like? Bipolar mania symptoms can include: increased energy, increased optimism, trouble concentrating, feelings of invincibility, increased sex drive, and increased impulsivity.

On the other end of the spectrum from mania is *depression*. The symptoms of bipolar depression can be similar to those of major depressive disorder, but it is important to be able to distinguish between the two so that a person can receive the proper treatment for their disorder. What does bipolar depression feel like? Bipolar depression symptoms include: lack of motivation, suicidal thoughts, difficulty making decisions, extreme fatigue, increased irritability, and feelings of despair.

In between manic and depressive mood episodes, a person with bipolar disorder may feel relatively normal. They have a typical amount of energy and do not have symptoms of depression or mania. They can go about their day-to-day life without excessive worry or straining over every detail. This phenomenon is referred to as "stable bipolar". Many times, however, people with bipolar disorder live in fear of when the next episode will happen and what they will experience. They may avoid certain activities or situations that could trigger an episode. The goal of treatment for a person with bipolar disorder is to achieve a stable bipolar state for as much time as possible.

Bipolar disorder is treated and managed in several ways:

- Psychotherapy, such as cognitive behavioral therapy and family-focused therapy.
- Medications, such as mood stabilizers, antipsychotic medications and, to a lesser extent, antidepressants.
- Self-management strategies, like education and recognition of an episode's early symptoms.
- Complementary health approaches, such as aerobic exercise meditation, faith and prayer can support, but not replace, treatment.

People with bipolar disorder can also experience:

- Anxiety
- Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Substance use disorders/dual diagnosis



Please note, the above article was derived from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

For more information, please visit: www.nami.org



Good Habits

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Creating Healthy Habits

BY GINGER MILLER

We know that making healthy choices can help us feel better and live longer. Maybe you've already tried to eat better, get more exercise or sleep, quit smoking, or reduce stress. It's not easy, but research shows how you can boost your ability to create and sustain a healthy lifestyle.

"It's frustrating to experience setbacks when you're trying to make healthy changes and reach a goal," says NIH behavior change expert Dr. Susan Czajkowski. "The good news is that decades of research show that change is possible, and there are proven strategies you can use to set yourself up for success."

Lots of things you do impact your health and quality of life, now and in the future. You can reduce your risk for the most common, costly, and preventable health problems—such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, type 2 diabetes, and obesity—by making healthy choices.

Know Your Habits

Regular things you do—from brushing your teeth to having a few drinks every night—can become habits. Repetitive behaviors that make you feel good can affect your brain in ways that create habits that may be hard to change. Habits often become automatic—they happen without much thought.

"The first step to changing your behavior is to create an awareness around what you do regularly," explains Dr. Lisa Marsch, an expert in behavior change at Dartmouth College. "Look for patterns in your behavior and what triggers the unhealthy habits you want to change."

Maybe you eat too much while watching TV or join a friend on smoke breaks even when you don't want a cigarette. "You can develop ways to disrupt those patterns and create new ones," Marsch says. For instance, eat meals with the TV off or join friends for healthy activities, like walk breaks.

Make A Plan

Make a plan that includes small, reasonable goals and specific actions you'll take to move toward them.

"If you walk by the vending machine at work and buy junk food every afternoon, try walking a different way to eliminate that decision and bring healthy snacks from home," Czajkowski says. "Whenever possible, make the healthy choice the easy choice."

Consider what you think you'll need to be successful. How can you change things around you to support your goals? You might need to stock up on healthy foods, remove temptations, or find a special spot to relax.

Get friends and loved ones involved. Research shows that people's health behaviors tend to mirror those of their family and friends. Invite them to join you, support you, and help you stay on track.

It's also important to plan for obstacles. Think about what might derail your best efforts to live healthier. How can you still make healthy choices during unexpected situations, in stressful times, or when tempted by old habits?

Stay on Track

Doing positive things for yourself can feel exciting and rewarding. But there will also be times when you wonder if you can stick with it. "Identify negative thoughts and turn them into realistic, productive ones," Marsch advises.

Keeping a record can help. You can use a paper journal, computer program, or mobile app to note things like your diet, exercise, stress levels, or sleep patterns. A study of people who lost at least 30 pounds and kept the weight off for at least a year found that they often tracked their progress closely.

"Even when you think you're about to 'fall off the wagon,' hold on," Czajkowski says. "Continue to track your behavior. Sometimes when you feel like you're failing, you can learn the most."



Habits Cont.

Marsch and others are working on digital technologies, like mobile apps, that could support you in a moment of weakness. Her team is also using technology to learn more about how to measure and increase the ability to monitor and control our behavior.

“The more you practice self-control, the better you become at it,” says Dr. Leonard Epstein, who studies behavior change and decision-making at the University at Buffalo. “You develop the capacity to act and react another way.”

Think About the Future

Epstein has found that some people have a harder time than others resisting their impulses. He calls this “delay discounting,” where you discount, or undervalue, the larger benefits of waiting in favor of smaller immediate rewards. This can lead to things like overeating, substance use, drinking or shopping too much, or risky sexual behavior.

“You can learn to postpone immediate gratification through episodic future thinking, or vividly imagining future positive experiences or rewards,” he explains. “It’s a great way to strengthen your ability to make decisions that are better for you in the long run.”

Epstein is now studying how to use this technique to help people who are at risk for type 2 diabetes prevent the disease.

Focusing on how a change might heal your body and enhance your life can help. When you stop smoking, your risk of a heart attack drops within 24 hours. Reducing stress can lead to better relationships. Even small improvements in your nutrition and physical activity can reduce your health risks and lengthen your life.



Be Patient

Sometimes when you’re trying to adopt healthier habits, other health issues can get in the way.

“When you’re really struggling with these behaviors, ask yourself if more is going on,” Czajkowski says.

“For example, mental health conditions like depression and anxiety can be tied to unhealthy behaviors.”

A health professional can work with you to address any underlying issues to make change feel easier and to help you be more successful.

You’re never too out of shape, too overweight, or too old to make healthy changes. Try different strategies until you find what works best for you.

“Things may not go as planned, and that’s okay,” Czajkowski says. “Change is a process. What’s most important is to keep moving forward.”



Recap on: *Wise Choices Build Healthy Habits*

- Plan. Identify unhealthy patterns and triggers. Set realistic goals. Write down steps to help you achieve them.
- Change your surroundings. Find ways to make healthier choices easy choices. Remove temptations. Work for changes in your community, like safe places to walk.
- Ask for support. Find friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, or groups for support or ask people to join you.
- Fill your time with healthy activities. Try exercise, a favorite hobby, or spending time with family and friends.
- Track your progress. Record how things are going to help you stay focused and catch slip-ups.
- Imagine the future. Think about future benefits to stay on track.
- Reward yourself. Give yourself a healthy reward when you’ve achieved a small goal or milestone, like a massage or personal time.
- Be patient. Improvement takes time, and setbacks happen. Focus on progress, not perfection.

Please note, the above article was derived from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

For more information, please visit: [newsinhealth.nih.gov](https://www.newsinhealth.nih.gov)



INSPIRATION & MOTIVATION

Running Away From Your Problems Is A Race You'll Never Win



Stop Looking For Happiness In The Same Place You Lost It.



FORGET the mistake REMEMBER THE LESSON

You are your INSPIRATION You are your SOLUTION You are your MOTIVATION



A LITTLE PROGRESS EACH DAY ADDS UP TO BIG RESULTS

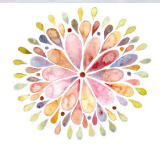


Do it Now SOMETIMES Later SOMETIMES NEVER

LIMITS EXIST ONLY IN THE MIND



"DON'T WAIT FOR THE PERFECT MOMENT, TAKE THE MOMENT AND MAKE IT PERFECT!"



THE AUGUST CHALLENGE

We challenge you to make wiser choices and take a step toward building healthier habits. Email us and let us know: Did you identify an unhealthy pattern then set a goal of how to change it? Or have you changed your surroundings to remove temptations to make it easier for you to make healthier choices easier, if so what did you change? Did you ask for specific support from family, friends, or others, if so what did you ask them to support you with? Or perhaps you found some healthy activities to help fill your time such as exercising or a new hobby, if you did what are you filling your time with now? Did you find a healthy way to reward yourself for achieving a small accomplishment or goal, if so what is that new healthy reward?

We want to hear from you!!!

Email us at: gmler@wwamh.org by July 25 if you are interested in contributing to our August newsletter.



THE FUN SPOT

National "Fun Days"

- 1st - Friendship
- 2nd - Coloring Book
- 3rd - Watermelon
- 6th - Water Balloon
- 10th - S'Mores
- 14th - Code Talkers
- 15th - Honey Bee
- 16th - Tell a Joke
- 17th - I Love My Feet
- 19th - Soft Ice Cream
- 20th - Radio
- 21st - Senior Citizen's
- 24th - Waffle
- 25th - Banana Split
- 26th - Dog
- 30th - Toasted Marshmallow
- 30th - Beach
- 31st - Trail Mix

Another Challenge For You

Take a look at the list on National "Fun Days" listed. Choose at least one that you will participate in; for example - the 6th is water balloon day so have a water balloon fight, or the 16th is "Tell a Joke" day so tell 10 jokes and see which one was laughed at the loudest, or on the 26th take your (or your friends) dog for a walk. Then email us and tell us which day(s) you had fun with and what you did: gmler@wwamh.org.

Famous Birthdays

- 3rd - Tom Brady (Quarterback)
- 4th - Meghan Markle (Actress/Princess)
- 5th - Neil Armstrong (Astronaut)
- 6th - Lucille Ball (Actress)
- 9th - Melanie Griffith (Actress)
- 9th - Whitney Houston (Singer)
- 11th - Hulk Hogan (Wrestler)
- 13th - Alfred Hitchcock (Film Director)
- 13th - Annie Oakley (Sharpshooter)
- 14th - Steve Martin (Actor)
- 15th - Ben Affleck (Actor)
- 16th - Madonna (Singer)
- 17th - Robert DeNiro (Actor)
- 18th - Patrick Swayze (Actor)
- 19th - Matthew Perry (Actor)
- 21st - Kenny Rogers (Singer)
- 23rd - Kobe Bryant (Basketball)
- 25th - Sean Connery (Actor)
- 26th - Macaulay Culkin (Actor)
- 27th - Mother Teresa (Saint)
- 28th - LeAnn Rimes (Singer)
- 29th - Michael Jackson (Singer)
- 30th - Cameron Diaz (Actress)
- 31st - Richard Gere (Actor)

Answer key for July's word scramble on feelings



- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. CRANKY | 11. MISCHIEVOUS | 21. ANGRY |
| 2. PEACEFUL | 12. ABANDONED | 22. ZEALOUS |
| 3. TRANQUIL | 13. COMPULSIVE | 23. JUDGED |
| 4. OPTIMISTIC | 14. PANICKED | 24. CONFIDENT |
| 5. IRRITABLE | 15. COMPULSIVE | 25. GRATEFUL |
| 6. ANNOYED | 16. PANICKED | 26. EMBARRASSED |
| 7. EXHAUSTED | 17. RELUCTANT | 27. RESTLESS |
| 8. QUIRKY | 18. SKEPTICAL | 28. DISCONTENT |
| 9. GUILTY | 19. UNDECIDED | 29. UNCOMFORTABLE |
| 10. VICTIMIZED | 20. JEALOUS | 30. FRIGHTENED |

YOUR VOICE

Response's from July's "Spice & Herb Challenge"

"I added a little dill to my potato salad. I liked it! Not too strong but a nice change!" - Erin



"I put a couple of slices of fresh Ginger root in my hot tea and let it steep for about 7 minutes. It tasted good and it settled my stomach." -Mary

"I put some Paprika on top of my deviled eggs. I didn't really taste a difference but they looked prettier." -Chris



"I tried putting cilantro in some salsa. I didn't like it. It tasted like soap, yuck!" - Michael

"I tried wasabi. Wow! It's kind of hot and spicy." -Jill



RECOVERY

Resources

WEBSITES

Al-Anon and Ala-teen Groups – Hope and help for families and friends of alcoholics: al-anon.org

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) - Local group schedule and information: district13.aahmbny.org

Celebrate Recovery (CR) – Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered, 12-Step recovery program for anyone struggling with hurt, pain or addiction of any kind: celebraterecovery.com

Debtors Anonymous - Debtors Anonymous offers hope for people whose use of unsecured debt causes problems and suffering in their lives and the lives of others: debtorsanonymous.org

Digital Recovery Support -Online recovery support groups are available daily. They are open to anyone who is dealing with substance use, mental health conditions, and any other quality of life concerns. Meetings are led by peer recovery support specialists who have firsthand experience and understand what you're going through: www.recoveryanswers.org

Gamblers Anonymous (GA) – Online services for anyone struggling with a gambling addiction: gasteps.org

Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP) – For those who have lost someone to substance use or addiction: grasphep.org

In the rooms - A global online recovery community who share their strength and experience with one another daily through live meetings, discussion groups, and other tools in the rooms: intherooms.com

My Recovery – Online 12-step meetings: myrecovery.com

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) - local group schedule and information: narcotics.com

Overeaters Anonymous (OA) – Online support groups for anyone who wants to stop eating compulsively: oarecovery.com

The Phoenix – Recovery community organization offering daily live stream cross-fit, yoga and meditation every two hours through the COVID Crisis: thephoenix.org

PHONE NUMBERS

The Trevor Project - Support for youth in crisis: thetrevorproject.org/hotline: 866-488-7386

International Bipolar Association Crisis Line: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders Helpline: 630-577-1330

National Center for PTSD Helpline: 1-800-273-8255

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): Hotline staff are prepared to answer any mental health questions you may have. You can also text NAMI to 741741 for free support. (800) 950-NAMI (6264)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): Available 24/7, 365 days a year: (800) 662-HELP (4357). The professionals on the phone can provide treatment information and referrals in English and Spanish.

MentalHealth.gov: Available 8am to 8pm EST to provide mental health information and treatment referrals: (877) 726-4727

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): Available 8:30am to 5pm EST: (866) 615-6464 or (866) 415-8051 (TTY). Professionals can answer any mental health related questions in English or Spanish.

Boys Town: Specially trained counselors are available 24/7, 365 days a year to provide crisis support specifically for children and their families: (800) 448-3000

PODCASTS

This Naked Mind - Some of the episodes discuss alcohol withdrawals, the link between drinking and binge eating, how to deal with loneliness, and more.

Recovery Rocks - Our varied paths show listeners that there are a myriad paths to recovery and countless songs to rock out to along the way.

Mental Health - Hope and Recovery - They share inspirational true stories and a host of recovery skills. You'll learn about treatment options, coping skills, goal setting, relationships, and mindfulness.

Mental Illness Happy Hour - Weekly interviews with comedians, artists, friends, and the occasional doctor.; exploring mental illness, trauma, addiction and negative thinking.

APPS

Addiction Apps: Twenty-Four Hours A Day (Free), Quit That! Habit Tracker (Free), NoMo (Free)

Counseling Apps: TalkSpace (\$\$) BetterHelp (\$\$) Larkr (\$\$) ReGain (\$\$) TeenCounseling (\$\$)

Suicide Prevention Apps: MY3 (Free) notOK (Free)

General Mental Health Apps: What's Up (CBT; Free) Mood Kit (CBT; \$)

Anxiety Apps: MindShift (Free), Self-Help Anxiety Management – SAM (Free), CBT Thought Record Diary (Free)

Bipolar Disorder Apps: IMoodJournal (\$), EMoods (Free)

Depression Apps: Talk Space Online Therapy (\$\$), Happify (Free), MoodTools (CBT; Free)

Eating Disorder Apps: Recovery Record (Free), Rise Up & Recovery (Free), LifeSum (Free)

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Apps: nOCD (Free), Worry Watch (\$), GG OCD (Free)

PTSD Apps: PTSD Coach (Free), BreathezRelax (Free)

Schizophrenia Apps: UCSF Prime (Free), Schizophrenia Health Story Lines (Free)

Mindfulness & Meditation Apps: Headspace (\$), Calm (\$), Ten Percent Happier (\$)

THANKS FOR READING! :)

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AT RRYAN@WWAMH.ORG



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

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