

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



WELCOME!

by Ginger Miller

As most of you probably know, East Side Center and the Dual Recovery Department work hard each year in the AMH gardens. The produce is either used in the East Side Center kitchen to make meals for members and employees (thank you Trudy, your culinary skills make our tummies happy and our faces smile!) or we sell the produce at the farmers market and the funds are used to start a new garden the following spring.

WWAMH has recently hired a Garden Specialist, Kayleigh Winne. Kayleigh works on Monday's and Tuesday's. When she isn't in the garden she can usually be found in the small conference room in East Side Center next to the Peer Pod. Stop in and welcome Kayleigh, say hello, she would love to meet you, and if you have some time to help her in the garden I know she'd love that too. So we want to welcome Kayleigh! I asked her to tell us a little about herself as a little introduction.

Hello, my name is Kayleigh Winne and I am the new Garden Specialist here at the East Side Center Gardens. I have spent a majority of my life appreciating the outdoors by hiking the Adirondack High Peaks with my dog and photographing nature and wildlife on my excursions. I started gardening almost ten years ago in my own backyard and as soon as the first sprout came up, I realized how good it felt to gently encourage life into full bloom. Each year after I have been able to learn and grow from the many mistakes I have made. Two years ago, I installed my own greenhouse to extend my growing seasons at home. This came with a new set of challenges that I have learned to master, and I believe my experiences and growth are an essential benefit to the Garden Program here at East Side Center.

I am currently a student at the local community college, SUNY Adirondack, working towards finishing my degree in Individual Studies focused on Horticulture. I am also enrolled in the Horticultural Therapy program online through the Horticultural Therapy Institute. I plan to continue my education by pursuing a bachelor's in Plant Science at SUNY Cobleskill with a minor in psychology.

I have learned so much about the WWAMH Gardens in the short time I have been the Garden Specialist and it's easy to see the positive impact these gardens could have on those in our community. The Garden Club program will create opportunities for members to build confidence within themselves by working with others and connecting with the land

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that is providing for them.

The Garden Club program is designed to implement the therapeutic benefits of garden environments to members by improving memory, cognitive abilities, setting long term goals, task initiation, and socialization. Members will learn to work independently and as a group, problem-solve, and follow written and oral instructions.

SPOTLIGHT TOPIC

Recovery in Spring

BY GINGER MILLER

So, after being cooped up all winter, not to mention times when COVID had us isolated even more, are you feeling some spring fever? I imagine most of us are. For those of us that deal with substance use disorder (SUD) or a mental health challenge the effects of being cut off from our usual world and activities has been devastating for many, even fatal for some.

However, did you know that spring and better weather can be a danger to those of us with SUD? And spring can present its own challenge for those with some mental health diagnosis as well. How so? There are a few ways.

We all have our own path of recovery and are at different levels of growth. For those of us with SUD if we don't recognize our weak spots or let our 'built in forgetters' give us the false hope or allow us to be less honest with ourselves the dangers below can snag some of us.

Complacency – for some, after spending more time at support meetings (or other supports) during the winter, they may find that they feel less inclined to maintain their recovery path, it's more difficult to make the time for those supports. After all, spring and summer pass very quickly in our area so we have to make the most of the time we have with good weather. Others may start feeling more confident with their recovery and begin to think 'I got this' about their sobriety since they maintained abstinence for several months during the winter and built their recovery.

Triggers – some examples of triggers could be the smell of fresh cut grass, or mowing the lawn, or the activities of spring and summer such as graduations, 4th of July, camping, picnics or parties, or connecting with old friends, these were the kind of activities that we use to think were 'great' times for us to use and can become tempting again if we don't stay self-aware.

Social pressures – aside from the triggers of being around the activities mentioned above often comes the social pressure from family and friends that don't understand SUD or don't respect our decision to be in recovery. For some the 'one won't hurt', 'don't be a downer', or 'don't be a wuss' type taunting is the only push they need to fall off the wagon again.

Being a 'part of' – again, the trigger activities are often the ones that can make us feel like we want to be 'a part of' the activity not just near it. Similar to the way a child at the carnival might feel when told that they can't go on the rides or play the games.

These are the types of challenges people in recovery from SUD have all faced, particularly in early recovery. It is such a blessing, after much hard work, to reach a point of maturity in recovery where these things are less problematic. Recovery takes time but is very real and can be truly awesome.

There are some mental health issues that become more challenging when better weather comes around. I know for some that may sound a little odd because we know that being able to get outside and be active in the fresh air is good for our mental health. Let me explain. I'll share a little of my own experience with having depression and seasonal affect disorder:



Recovery in Spring (Cont'd)

There have been times when the weather started getting better that my mind would start thinking, “This is great! Now I can do...this or that” but when the time comes to do it the depression that settled in over the winter is still lingering and I end up not doing what I was initially eager to do. Then later I start feeling bad that I didn’t do it and question myself as to why. There have even been times I’d get angry at myself for backing out. Or I might start feeling like I’m being lazy.

It can be easy to push aside the knowledge of the symptoms of depression and feel like I’m just making excuses. My mind is almost literally at battle with itself. What was just stated in only a few sentences can steal what little energy I might have started building; leaving me exhausted and even more depressed. It can be a vicious circle. I have worked hard at having patience and being kind with myself, remaining hopeful and positive, and reminding myself of the symptoms that come with depression. Because I have dealt with having depression for so long now, I am able to use the tool of looking back at the fact that I have made it through these thoughts and feelings before so I can do it again.

What a tossed salad all of this can be for some with dual diagnosis!

As we all journey through another spring take time to enjoy the moments that can create beautiful memories. If we need to use recovery tools to be safe and enjoy the activities ahead, don’t forget to bring them along. If someone is trying to stand be kind and lend a hand. Whether we dive in or crawl in, I hope we all have a safe and joyful spring!

UNDERSTANDING THE DIAGNOSIS

Dissociative Disorder (Formerly known as Multiple Personality Disorder)

BY GINGER MILLER

The Mayo Clinic describes Dissociative Disorder as “mental disorders that involve experiencing a disconnection and lack of continuity between thoughts, memories, surroundings, actions and identity. People with dissociative disorders escape reality in ways that are involuntary and unhealthy and cause problems with functioning in everyday life.

Dissociative disorders usually develop as a reaction to trauma and help keep difficult memories at bay. Symptoms — ranging from amnesia to alternate identities — depend in part on the type of dissociative disorder you have. Times of stress can temporarily worsen symptoms, making them more obvious.

Signs and symptoms depend on the type of dissociative disorders you have, but may include:

- Memory loss (amnesia) of certain time periods, events, people and personal information
- A sense of being detached from yourself and your emotions
- A perception of the people and things around you as distorted and unreal
- A blurred sense of identity
- Significant stress or problems in your relationships, work or other important areas of your life
- Inability to cope well with emotional or professional stress
- Mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors



There are three major dissociative disorders defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), published by the American Psychiatric Association:



Dissociative Disorder (Con't)

- **Dissociative amnesia.** The main symptom is memory loss that's more severe than normal forgetfulness and that can't be explained by a medical condition. You can't recall information about yourself or events and people in your life, especially from a traumatic time. Dissociative amnesia can be specific to events in a certain time, such as intense combat, or more rarely, can involve complete loss of memory about yourself. An episode of amnesia usually occurs suddenly and may last minutes, hours, or rarely, months or years.
- **"Switching" to alternate identities.** You may feel the presence of two or more people talking or living inside your head, and you may feel as though you're possessed by other identities. Each identity may have a unique name, personal history and characteristics, including obvious differences in voice, gender, mannerisms and even such physical qualities as the need for eyeglasses. There also are differences in how familiar each identity is with the others. People with dissociative identity disorder typically also have dissociative amnesia and often have dissociative fugue. (Dissociative Fugue is where you purposefully travel or experience confused wandering that involves amnesia — inability to remember your identity or other important personal information.)
- **Depersonalization-derealization disorder.** This involves an ongoing or episodic sense of detachment or being outside yourself — observing your actions, feelings, thoughts and self from a distance as though watching a movie (depersonalization). Other people and things around you may feel detached and foggy or dreamlike, time may be slowed down or sped up, and the world may seem unreal (derealization). You may experience depersonalization, derealization or both. Symptoms, which can be profoundly distressing, may last only a few moments or come and go over many years.

When to see a doctor

- Some people with dissociative disorders present in a crisis with traumatic flashbacks that are overwhelming or associated with unsafe behavior. People with these symptoms should be seen in an emergency room.
- If you or a loved one has less urgent symptoms that may indicate a dissociative disorder, call your doctor.
- Suicidal thoughts or behavior

If you have thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else, call 911 or your local emergency number immediately, go to an emergency room, or confide in a trusted relative or friend. Or call a suicide hotline number — in the United States, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) to reach a trained counselor.

Did you know
April 2nd
is World
Autism
Awareness Day?



YOUR VOICE

Random Acts of Kindness response:
My friend and I spent an evening making little positive notes. We carried the notes with us everywhere we went and randomly handed them out. Leaving them with a tip at a restaurant, give them to a cashier before leaving, leave them as surprises at a friends house, hand one to a stranger, things like that. Most people would say thank you and smile - the real fun was watching their face from a distance, another smile. It was so much fun we want to keep doing it!
L.G & G.M.



Just a reminder....
Tax Due date
is here already!



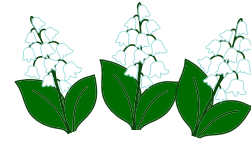


THE FUN SPOT

Sudoku



5			2	4	1			3
3				7				5
		7	3	6	5	8		
7		9		1		5		8
		6		3		7		
4	1		6		7		3	2
	2	1		9		4	5	
9		4	1	2	6	3		7
		3		5		2		



INSPIRATION & MOTIVATION

Change happens when the pain of staying the same is greater than the pain of change.

~Tony Robibins

You are the light.

Never let anyone any person or any force Dampen, Dim, or Diminish Your light.

~ John Lewis

Be the type of person you want to meet.

"you can start late, look different, be uncertain, and still succeed."

~Misty Copeland

THE APRIL CHALLENGES

1. The article on the next page is about alternative health care. We would love to hear from you if you have ever tried any of the different types of treatments listed. Tell us what you tried, if you liked it, and did it help?
2. Write to us and tell us about a good April Fools joke you pulled!
3. Mother's Day is approaching quickly in May. Write to us and tell us a few of your mother's outstanding qualities.

Everyone who chooses to participate in April's challenges and writes to us before May 25th will win a *mystery* gift! You will also see your response next month in our "Your Voice" section! If you want it to be printed anonymously, just let us know when you send it in that you don't want your name on it. Email us at: gmillers@wwamh.org or mail it in to WWAMH Dual Recovery Dept., 230 Maple Street, Glens Falls, NY 12801 to participate.



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Alternative Health Care

Did you know that April 10th is World Homeopathy Day?

BY GINGER MILLER

My research found that the terms alternative, integrative, complementary, and holistic are relatively interchangeable. For this article I'll use the term alternative for consistency and because it is one of the first terms used for these types of treatments. I've noticed that many alternative health care treatments have become more easily accessible in our country over the last 30 years; I believe, because more and more people are seeking them out, myself included. It's been said that knowledge is power, and that would certainly include our options regarding health care treatments. So, if you aren't familiar with alternative health care, is it something you might want to consider? What is it? How does it compare to the standard medical treatments available? Can it be trusted? I'll share a little of my own experiences with some of them (please keep in mind I am only sharing my experiences and opinions, I am in no way licensed in any kind of medical practices), as well as some information from the International Journal of Health Sciences and the National Institutes of Health.

Conventional medicine relies on methods proved to be safe and effective with carefully designed trials and research. Simply put they are very scientifically based.



An article in The International Journal of Health Sciences titled "Complementary and Alternative Healthcare: Is it Evidence-based?" includes information about the group CAM. Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) is diverse medical and health care systems, practices, and products. The list of practices that are considered as CAM changes continually as CAM practices and therapies are proven safe and effective thus becoming accepted as the "mainstream" healthcare practices. Until more recently practices such as acupuncture, homeopathy, Ayurveda, Naturopathy, energy healing, massage therapy, Feldenkrais method, Alexander technique, spinal manipulation (chiropractic), craniosacral therapy, art therapy, music therapy, mindfulness-based stress reduction, relaxation techniques (such as meditation, breathing exercises and guided imagery), qigong, hypnotherapy (even psychotherapy for that matter), yoga, tai chi, Pilates, Chinese or Oriental medicine and practices, (and I'm sure I've missed others for this list) have been looked down upon or considered quackery in the Western Medical community as a whole, even though these therapies have been practiced for centuries worldwide. I can't help but wonder how much of this mistrust may come from the fact that there still are those who believe that alternative treatment means using homeopathy instead of vaccines, "liver flushes" instead of HIV drugs, and garlic instead of chemotherapy which is a gross misunderstanding of alternative treatments in general.

Here is a very brief review of a few of these alternative treatments or therapy groups.

Naturopathy ~

focuses on non-invasive treatments to help your body do its own healing often working with multiple modalities



Ayurveda ~

originated in India more than 5,000 years ago, emphasizes a unique cure per individual circumstances. It incorporates treatments including yoga, meditation, massage, diet, and herbs.

Ancient Medicines ~

include Chinese, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian and Tibetan practices.



Homeopathy ~

uses minute doses of a substance that causes symptoms to stimulate the body's self-healing response. It's based on two unconventional theories: First, "Like cures like"—the notion that a disease can be cured by a substance that produces similar symptoms in healthy people. Second, the "Law of minimum dose"—the notion that the lower the dose of the medication, the greater its effectiveness. Many homeopathic products are so diluted that no molecules of the original substance remain.





Alternative Health Care (Con't)

The National Institutes of Health states, “Many alternative treatments lack solid research on which to base sound decisions. The dangers and possible benefits of many complementary and alternative treatments remain unproved.

These medical systems are based on the belief that one’s body has the power to heal itself. Healing often involves combining multiple techniques that involve the mind, body, and spirit. Treatment is usually individualized and dependent on the presenting symptoms.



Basic principles of alternative medicine include a partnership between the patient and the practitioner in the healing process, the appropriate use of conventional and alternative methods to facilitate the body’s innate healing response, the consideration of all factors that influence health, wellness and disease, including mind, spirit and community as well as body, a philosophy that neither rejects conventional medicine nor accepts alternative medicine uncritically, inquiry driven and open to new paradigms, the use of natural, less invasive interventions whenever possible, the broader concepts of promotion of health and the prevention of illness as well as the treatment of disease. Studies are underway to determine the safety and usefulness of many CAM practices. As research continues, many of the answers about whether these treatments are safe or effective will become clearer.”

This is forcing the entire medical community to grapple with certain questions: How has the role of a doctor changed over the years? Are there better ways to treat the kinds of health problems that can usually only be managed, not cured? And how do you gather evidence on therapies that involve not only the body but also the mind?

When doctors talk about treating the patient’s “body, mind, and spirit,” it can sound like a feel-good catchphrase. But in fact, there may be no other way to treat diseases that take years to develop treatments for and are intimately tied to the ways people think, feel, and live their everyday lives.



There are a few reasons I started looking into alternative treatments. I felt like the doctors were often treating my individual symptoms. Many of the individual symptoms required their own prescription and I was getting tired of all the prescriptions. Each prescription came with the risks of side effects (it wasn’t unusual for the side effects to be worse than what they were being prescribed for, ironically). Don’t misunderstand me, I’m not putting down medications, they have their place and can be very effective, I even still take some. Alternative practitioners in general do not treat symptoms separately, instead, they try to figure out how they might be connected and identify the root causes. Another thing that has bothered me at times is that I also feel there are some doctors that are still quick to recommend surgery before considering other options. I’m not one to quickly jump into surgery although I do recognize it can be very necessary. And it is very unsettling to be rushed through a doctor’s appointment and not feel heard, believed, or understood... like I’m there to provide them a paycheck not get treatment.

I have tried many of the therapies listed here and have found many of them to be helpful, some more than others. I have never felt rushed through any appointments, and they’ve always been happy to explain or answer any questions I’ve had. If you’re curious about my experiences feel free to contact me at the phone number or email address listed at the bottom of the Resources page of this newsletter.



I have found it necessary to investigate the background of the practitioner I was going to see; to investigate the same things I would with a physician: are they certified or licensed and if so, through whom? Does that educational facility have a solid reputation? And does the practitioner describe their other qualifications and knowledge base in their Practitioner Profile? Do I understand what is involved in the treatment I’m going for, in what ways it is intended to help and what risks it may carry?

Sudoku Answer Key

6	7	3	8	5	4	2	9	1
9	5	4	1	2	6	3	8	7
8	2	1	7	9	3	4	5	6
4	1	5	6	8	7	9	3	2
2	8	6	5	3	9	7	1	4
7	3	9	4	1	2	5	6	8
1	4	7	3	6	5	8	2	9
3	6	2	9	7	8	1	4	5
5	9	8	2	4	1	6	7	3

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: grasphelp.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), Breathe2Relax (Free)
- Schizophrenia Apps**: UCSF Prime (Free), Schizophrenia Health Story Lines (Free)
- Mindfulness & Meditation Apps**: Headspace (\$), Calm (\$), Serenity: Guided Meditation & Mindfulness (Free)
- Wellness**: Wellness Recovery Action Plan (Goal Setting; Free)

THANKS FOR READING! :)

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBSCRIBE TO
OUR NEWSLETTERS, PLEASE EMAIL US
AT GMILLER@WWAMH.ORG
OR CALL 518-401-5991



WWAMH 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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