

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

Building Our Recovery Foundation

BY GINGER MILLER



Daylight Savings
Time
Fall back
on Nov. 6

I was having a conversation with a friend the other day and she was expressing some feelings I remember having. She was telling me how she knows she's done a lot of changing, can see it, and is even proud of it. Our conversation continued, using the analogy of building a life in recovery and rebuilding our ourselves to that of building a home.

For me, one of the best gifts of recovery, in retrospect, is the fact that I got to start over. I got to rebuild from the ground up and build my life to be more like what I want it to be. I got to start with a clean slate. Of course, that doesn't mean that the bad memories are erased, all the mistakes and poor choices undone, and consequences don't exist anymore, but it does mean I get to choose how I handle them now. I'm not on autopilot anymore, nor do I allow people I don't value in my life to dictate or persuade the choices I make anymore.

My friend was concerned that her foundation was still the same, that the old habits and things of the past were still in her and would come back. So, I shared with her some things I was taught. When it comes to addiction there is always the possibility of a reoccurrence. However, as we build the foundation of our new life we find 'tools' that help us and we figure out which 'building materials' serve us best. So, if we keep doing the things we did to get clean and sober, then the likelihood of a reoccurrence is decreased significantly. Honesty is a key tool; honesty with ourselves so that we can be honest with the people in our support network. The support network we have built, blocks of our new foundation, we need to stay connected to – after all a house does best on its foundation, right?! If something happens to one of the supports, then we remove that block and put a new one in.

Because each of us builds our own foundation and use different tools, some of the blocks and tools might be different. Some of them could be meetings/support groups, therapy, prescription medication, self-care, maintaining doctor appointments, being involved in a religious community, recovery community, or other group of like-minded individuals (could be sports, reading club, another hobby club, gym, etc.), changing thinking patterns or behaviors, or creating new schedules, just to name a few.

When it comes to mental health management much of the same applies. Keeping track of the things that help us most (probably many of the same things listed above) and making them part of our routine and habits will continue to support our stability and growth.

IN THIS ISSUE:

SPOTLIGHT TOPIC Building Our Recovery Foundation

PAGE 01 - 02

*** NEW ***

Riddle Of The Month

PAGE 02

UNDERSTANDING THE DIAGNOSIS

Delusional Disorder

PAGE 03 - 04

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Emotions Can Have Us Running In Circles

PAGE 04 - 05

INSPIRATION & MOTIVATION

PAGE 05

*** NEW ***

IS THIS MEETING FOR YOU?

SMART Recovery

(also meetings specific for First Responders & Veterans)

PAGE 06

CREATIVE WRITING CORNER

PAGE 07

RECOVERY RESOURCES

PAGE 08



Building Our Recovery Foundation (Con't)

Knowing what things don't work is just as important so that we know what to stay away from. And, a support network is essential for us too.

Whether we are working on substance use disorder recovery, mental health maintenance and recovery, or both, I believe one of the MOST helpful tools I have developed is self-awareness. The ability to slow down enough or take time to reflect on or observe and accurately identify my thoughts, actions, and emotions and determine if they are grounded in reality or not, has been priceless. Working on objectively evaluating myself and managing my feelings allows me to adjust my thinking and behavior to align with my values (knowing our values is another block in our foundation). An example of that might be reflecting and noticing, "Hmmm... every time my sister calls me and asks for money, I end up using (or for mental health – I end up depressed). That probably isn't a coincidence," without this self-awareness a person might just find the substance they misuse (or be depressed enough to just go to bed) and not look back; the spiral begins again.

I believe another essential tool is learning how to be honest with ourselves, checking my motives, and really digging sometimes. It can be easy to say well my motive is because I want to go out to eat with my friend, but when digging deeper realize, I'm really hoping to talk with that friend about borrowing something from them. There's the real motive! There's the honesty with self. Understanding my real motives helps me to stay on the right track of doing the next right thing, which in turns better my life and who I want to be, who I am.

I found that I had fallen into using 'autopilot' for a lot of things in my life. The problem was that I had been on autopilot for so long that I forgot I was on autopilot. When I'm not aware of my habits, routines, reactions, and impulses then I can't control them; they control me. I found that some of those autopilot routes needed to be changed. They were not roads I wanted to be on. They weren't leading to being the person I want to be or the 'house' I'm rebuilding.

As my friend went on to explain some of what she observed through her self-awareness, it sounded to me like she built a new foundation but still has a few old blocks. Those blocks weren't ones that contributed to her addiction or mental health issues; they were more like personality traits, quirky things from her past, or at worst maybe character defects. I explained to her that the way I was seeing it was that she did indeed build a new foundation; she had already explained that to me. It was for her to decide whether perhaps she tore down the old foundation and rebuilt but she kept a few of the old blocks, or maybe she rebuilt her foundation in a new location but used some of the old blocks. The analogy could be applied a few different ways. And I reminded her that if the old blocks were things that bothered her and she wanted to change she has that option too.

Whether we are building a new foundation and home or a new life and self, it is a lot of work. In both cases the person usually feels the work and effort is well worth it when they start seeing results. The new home, our new life and self, is priceless. And guess what?! We can remodel, put on an addition, or just move the furniture around anytime we want when we're ready to put the work into it. So, what about you? Are you on autopilot? A little self-awareness and reflection might reveal to you that there is something you might like to change. And if not within you, maybe just some furniture or decorations at home.



Riddle of the Month:

Clem Walton was cleaning out his old barn. He was dragging things out into the yard and filling the containers with useless items he had collected over the years. At one point, he rolled an old barrel out of the barn which weighed 20 pounds. Clem put something in the barrel and when he was finished, it weighed less. What could it have been?



UNDERSTANDING THE DIAGNOSIS

Delusional Disorder

BY GINGER MILLER

A delusion is an unshakable belief in something that's untrue. The belief isn't a part of the person's culture or subculture, and almost everyone else knows this belief to be false.

According to the Cleveland Clinic, Delusional disorder is a type of mental health condition in which a person can't tell what's real from what's imagined. There are many types, including persecutory, jealous, and grandiose types. It is treatable with psychotherapy and medication. Delusional disorder most often occurs in middle to late life, with the average age of onset being 40 years. People who tend to be socially isolated are more likely to develop delusional disorder. These populations include:

- Immigrants who have language barriers.
- People who are deaf.
- Elderly people.
- People who are visually impaired.

People with delusional disorder often experience non-bizarre delusions. Non-bizarre delusions involve situations that could possibly occur in real life, such as being followed, deceived, or loved from a distance. These delusions usually involve the misinterpretation of perceptions or experiences. In reality, these situations are either untrue or are highly exaggerated.

Non-bizarre delusions are different from bizarre delusions, which include beliefs that are impossible in our reality, such as believing someone has removed an organ from your body without any physical evidence of the procedure. People with delusional disorder often continue to socialize and function well, apart from the subject of their delusion. Generally, they don't behave in an odd or unusual manner. This is unlike people with other psychotic disorders who might also have delusions as a symptom. In some cases, however, people with delusional disorder might become so preoccupied with their delusions that their lives are disrupted.

- Jealous: People with this type of delusional disorder believe that their spouse or sexual partner is unfaithful without any concrete evidence.
- Persecutory: People with this type of delusional disorder believe someone or something is mistreating, spying on or attempting to harm them (or someone close to them). People with this type of delusional disorder may make repeated complaints to legal authorities.
- Somatic: People with this type of delusional disorder believe that they have a physical issue or medical problem, such as a parasite or a bad odor.
- Mixed: People with this type of delusional disorder have two or more of the types of delusions listed above.

Delusional Disorder is not the same as schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is a spectrum (or range) of conditions that involve psychotic symptoms, which include:

- Disorganized speech or behavior.
- Negative symptoms (a decrease in emotion in a person's facial expressions and motivation).

Delusional disorder is different from schizophrenia because there aren't any other psychotic symptoms other than delusions. In addition, in contrast to schizophrenia, delusional disorder is relatively rare, and daily functioning isn't as impaired as it is in schizophrenia. Although delusions might be a symptom of more common disorders, such as schizophrenia, delusional disorder itself is rather rare. Approximately 0.05% to 0.1% of the adult population has delusional disorder.



Delusional Disorder Con't

The presence of delusions is the most obvious sign of delusional disorder, which vary based on the type. Another characteristic of this condition is that the person often lacks self-awareness that their delusions are problematic. They're unable to accept that their delusions are irrational or inaccurate, even if they recognize that other people would describe their delusions this way. Anger and violent behavior may be present if someone is experiencing persecutory, jealous, or erotomanic delusions. People with delusional disorder may also develop anxiety and/or depression as a result of the delusions. Early symptoms of delusional disorder may include:

- Feelings of being exploited.
- Preoccupation with the loyalty or trustworthiness of friends.
- A tendency to read threatening meanings into benign remarks or events.
- Persistently holding grudges.
- A readiness to respond and react to perceived slights.



If you believe you or a loved one may be experiencing delusions please seek medical advice from a health care provider, psychologist, or psychiatrist for an assessment and evaluation to determine mental status. There are other mental health conditions that can cause delusions; mental health professionals carefully assess the person for other symptoms. Delusional disorder can be misdiagnosed as any of the following conditions: obsessive-compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, delirium, bipolar disorder, and personality disorders (especially borderline personality disorder and paranoid personality disorder).

HEALTH & WELLNESS Emotions Can Have Us Running In Circles



BY GINGER MILLER

Sometimes I've felt like I was running in very unhealthy circles. Can you relate? Have you ever pigged out on a couple of pints of ice cream and maybe a few slices of cake or couple of bags of chips and then wonder how did you just did that to yourself? Or perhaps you saw an Instagram post from your ex and decide to fire off an angry text to them about what an insufferable blankety blank they are? Then the next morning, you don't want to get out of bed because you're so embarrassed. Maybe you've taken a little break from work to "check a couple of messages on Facebook" and four hours later you find yourself deep down some rabbit hole starting to think the world is about to end? Or maybe you're "just browsing" on Amazon and, before you know it, you end up spending \$572 on tapestries and an awesome pair of jeans? Then your credit card bill comes and you wonder how you could have allowed yourself to spend so much.

I think we've all been there. We've all been in a situation where we knew what the right thing to do was, and yet, we did just the opposite. But it's not just that we know what we should do, it's that we think that we should be able to do the "right thing" in every situation, no matter the circumstances.

- We should be able to be around fatty, sugary, salty foods and not eat them, even if we're really hungry.
- We should be able to see how happy our ex is on Instagram without getting upset and feeling inadequate.
- We should be able to check the news without it ruining our morning.



We should. But we don't. Our reasonable, rational brains don't understand why we keep running in circles in these situations. So, we start to beat ourselves up. This, of course, just makes it worse, and we reach for another pint of ice cream, vodka, or shopping site, etc. to numb the pain and the cycle continues...

Emotions Can Have Us Running In Circles Con't

BY GINGER MILLER

We all want to believe that we can act like reasonable, rational people. We want to believe this so badly that our brains have all sorts of ways of tricking themselves into believing that the “rational part” of the mind is in control. But this is an illusion. Our rational brains don't understand what's going on because our rational brains are not in control. Instead, we don't do what we should in these situations because they're full of emotional triggers that are far too fast, far too ingrained, and far too powerful for our rational minds to handle in the moment.

You see, our rational brains are absolutely terrible when our emotional brains are firing on all cylinders. From an evolutionary standpoint, the emotional brain is too old and too important for our survival that our rational brains sometimes can't even get their shoes on before our emotions have burned the house down.

But the rational brain can work really well when it doesn't have competition from the emotional brain—i.e., when we're not emotionally triggered—and that's when we need to be using it the most. We can't control exactly which emotions we're going to experience—at least not directly. But we can often control which emotional triggers we're exposed to before we're even exposed to them.



- ~ If you get triggered by seeing your ex on social media, you can unfollow, hide, and/or block them.
- ~ If you're always angry after watching or reading the news, stop watching the news. (No, seriously, quit watching the news.)
- ~ If you have problems overeating foods that are bad for you, you can eliminate a lot of this by not buying those foods at the grocery store in the first place.
- ~ If you're going out to eat, you can look up the menu online ahead of time—preferably when you're not hungry—and make the healthier choice before you're even at the restaurant.

But be warned: these things seem overly simple. So simple that most people think they shouldn't have to do them in order to have self-control in these situations. This is a trap set by your emotional brain.

In a paradoxical way, it's only when you finally accept that you have little self-control in certain situations that you can start to take more control over these situations.

So, can you think about which emotional triggers you struggle with the most? Don't judge yourself too harshly here; we all have at least a couple of areas we could improve on. Think about ways you could remove those triggers from your life. You can't avoid 100% of these triggers, but you'll be surprised at how much control you do have when you really think about it. Ponder which triggers do you do well with already and why? If we identify these too, we can use similar strategies to help us in the areas we're struggling with.

INSPIRATION & MOTIVATION





IS THIS MEETING FOR YOU?

SMART Recovery (also offers Veteran & First Responder Specific)

BY GINGER MILLER

SMART Recovery's philosophy is largely focused on using cognitive behavioral therapy to change bad habits. Major changes can be overwhelming. SMART's practical tools and social supports are proven effective to support and sustain successful long-term life change. Harmful habits include substance addictions (to alcohol and other drugs), as well as activity addictions (to behaviors like sex, relationships, spending, gambling, eating, exercise, and self-injury). No matter your harmful habit, SMART Recovery states they can help you change it. Successful long-term recovery takes dedication and perseverance.

SMART is not just any mutual-support program. Their science-based approach emphasizes self-empowerment and self-reliance. There's no lifetime commitment; you decide when the time is right to move on. You choose how to personalize your own plan for successful change. SMART can be used both as a stand-alone program or in combination with other recovery paths. SMART Recovery recognizes the only one who can become truly expert on your recovery is you.

Their website offers resources including a suggested reading list, blog posts, and other articles and essays. They also offer other free tools and resources such as how-to videos, podcasts, apps and more. The best part of the program is that they help you to empower yourself to overcome your addictions, which, for some, is a welcome change from traditional 12-Step programs.



SMART Recovery is a free non-profit program and is offered both in person and on-line. The meetings are peer led; however, the peers must go through a training program before leading meetings. There are books that can be purchased, if you choose, to work in and follow along in during meetings. SMART recovery does not link to any religion and does not push the concept of God or a 'Higher Power'.

For more information on SMART Recovery visit: <https://www.smartrecovery.org/> or call 440-951-5357

SMART Recovery International Veterans & First Responders (VFR)

SMART Recovery believes that Veterans & First Responders throughout the world are some of the bravest, strongest, and most honorable people. They also display their bravery through the commitment to their recovery from addiction, mental health disorders and maladaptive behaviors and in honor of their dedication to changing their lives in these ways; SMART provides a program with a safe and supportive environment specifically to help veterans and First Responders (in partnership with Veteran's Administration (VA) hospitals and mental health professionals across the country) led by Veterans and First Responders to address their challenges as they are uniquely qualified to relate to those who have similar experiences.

To find meetings at your local VA, we encourage you to call your VA to request details. Or, if meetings are not yet held in your local VA, you can request SMART Recovery meetings to be added as a resource for you and your peers.

To find a SMART Recovery or Veterans & First Responders SMART Recovery meeting go to:

<https://meetings.smartrecovery.org/meetings/location/>

Did you know? Nov 13th is National Tongue Twister Day



Riddle Answer

Clem Watton put a hole in
his barrel.

Here's a couple for you to try! Can you say them 3 times fast without messing up?

1. Nine nice night nurses nursing nicely
2. She sees cheese



CREATIVE WRITING CORNER

November has several holidays celebrating writing and things to do with writing... the perfect time to introduce our new section! November is Family Stories month, National Life Writing month, and National Novel Writing month. November 1st is National Authors Day and Fountain Pen Day. November 15th is I love to write day.

Fall Creative Writing

An old question asks, "If a tree falls in the woods and nobody is around does it make a sound?" I wanted to go for a walk through the forest in White Hall two weekends ago but it was raining. I had to really talk my older son into going because it was a bigfoot convention that weekend. In a way it surprised me because the rain does bother him. We spent the night in the woods. We woke up in the morning with the sunshine coming up. You can see the leaves changing colors. I don't have a fall activity, maybe walkin through th woods or a hike.

~ Anonymous

Using the words: cat, crunch, leaves, apples, garbage

The cat crunched through the pile of leaves. An apple fell from the tree. The cat (Garfield) jumped into the garbage.

~ Sherri C.

As The Leaves Change...

As the leaves change my feelings change. Knowing that my birthday is at the end of October makes me happy. I love the red leaves (my favorite color).

~ Sherri C.



~ Anonymous

As The Leaves Change...

As the leaves change it gets colder, which I absolutley hate. The scenery is beautiful though, I love the different colors especially the red and yellow. They contrast each other extremely well, but it doesn't seem to last long enough and all of the trees go bare in what seems to be a blink of an eye!

~ Vera Mastrianni

Creative Writing

One sunny day last week I went for a walk, it's a favorite thing I like to do during the fall. Even though it is hard for me to walk I still enjoy it. It's one of the things my kids like to do. When I used to walk with my kids and wife they would complain that I walked to slow. So I stopped walking with them. I like to walk slow, take in the view. This last walk I took was amazing, the leaves were changing. At one point the path was behind a church. I saw a cat crunch a squirrel. Close to the church there was garbage on the path and I noticed an apple tree next to the church. You could hear the leaves crunch on the path as you walked. As I walked away it reminded me of a picture I saw back in the day. It was a fall theme, it lookes so peaceful there. If you were there you could be one with nature; not a worry in the world. No phone, no CD player. I can imagine it would be like you wer back in the 1600's all you had was nature to enjoy.

We would love to hear from you too! If you'd like to share a poem you've written, some creative writing you've done or a piece of your recovery story we would love to add it to our newsletter to help support or inspire our readers. Not sure what to write about? I'll provide a prompt each month as an option.

December's prompt - One of the best experiences I've had this year is... (tell us why it was such a good experience. How did it make you feel? Did you learn something from it?)

Submit your writing please email it to gmiller@wwamh.org, mail it to WWAMH, Dual Recovery Department, 230 Maple St., Glens Falls, NY 12801, or drop it off to me in the Peer Pod at the East Side Center at the address above.

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.
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
Life Line Mental Health Crisis & Suicide Prevention - 988

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 THURSDAY FROM
3:30-4:30 PM AT THE
OPEN DOOR MISSION:
226 WARREN STREET, GLENS FALLS

AND

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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