

ROADS TO RECOVERY NEWSLETTER

Created by Dual Recovery at Ascend to support individuals in recovery



*A newsletter for you
and about you*

SPOTLIGHT TOPIC

Time... The Importance Of Routines And Schedules

BY GINGER MILLER

I remember as a child our family had several routines in our weekly schedule. I remember not liking them at all! I guess I felt like I was being told what to do and I really didn't like that. As I grew up, I struggled with having routines and schedules, I didn't see the benefits they offer. Today I recognize they can really help keep life in balance.

Routines encourage healthy habits such as exercise, taking medications properly, drinking enough water, eating healthy, and getting enough restful sleep. Also, routines help us maximize our time and help us understand how we want to spend our time.

When we have goals, they can be broken down into steps that we include in our routines so that they can be accomplished more easily and time efficiently. I know for many people (especially those in early recovery or managing mental health symptoms) being able to accomplish goals helps build self-esteem, self-worth, and can help keep temptations or depression away. Routines can be calming and comforting. Think about your morning routine, perhaps you're the kind of person that needs to have a cup of coffee and breakfast before you start your day... what happens if there's a day you don't get your cup of coffee and breakfast? Having routines can also make sure we get those tasks we dread done such as laundry, dishes, filing taxes, or getting our annual check-ups. Some of us have so many daily demands that it is important that we schedule time to refill our own cups. Things that naturally boost our energy and leave us feeling positive – perhaps a leisurely bath, reading, yoga, meditation, or a walk in nature help.

Whether you are that person wishing for another day in the week because there doesn't seem to be enough time in the day to complete everything, a person in early recovery that finds having free time can be a trigger, or a person that wants to manage their mental health better - creating a schedule and having routines will probably be helpful. If you already have routines and a schedule, does it still work for you or perhaps checking it over and making a few changes could be helpful? Time is so valuable, are you getting the most out of yours?

How do I create a schedule you might ask. As a peer, this is something I work on with people often. I find the easiest way to create a schedule is to start by having a blank week schedule to write on and plugging in any routines you already have such as morning routines, work or school hours, meal prep, housekeeping, meetings, or bedtime routines.

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Time... The Importance Of Routines And Schedules (Con't)

Think about your goals or tasks you need to accomplish regularly and figure out where they will most logically fit in the week. After that, I have people think about what else is most important to them, things they enjoy doing, and scheduling time for those things as well. As these activities are being plugged into the schedule keep in mind things like travel time, time needed for preparation, and the fact that things will come up that interrupt our intended schedule. I discuss how to handle or manage unforeseen changes I with the individuals I help build a schedule and routines with.

Now, just because it's written out in black and white, so to speak, doesn't mean you'll automatically follow the schedule perfectly or that the routines you want don't need time to develop, so be patient with yourself. Just keep bringing yourself back to the schedule and moving forward one step at a time. As the weeks pass it gets easier to keep on schedule or to see where things might need to be moved around for more ease. As is the case with many things that are difficult to accomplish, as you do, you'll likely see the hard work is well worth it. Then over time you'll notice that it gets easier as well.

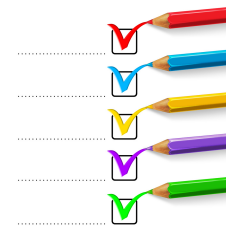
The Importance Of A Daily Routine

BY AMY JOHNSON

A well thought out daily routine that provides structure and organization to your day, which can have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. In fact, a Finish study published in Obesity Magazine, commented that people who practice a morning routine are healthier and happier in life. A routine can help lower stress and anxiety by reducing the need to make daily decisions. In the chaos we call life, a routine can really help us know what to expect, helping us feel much less overwhelmed.

I like to think of myself as an adventurous, free spirit, I am after all an Aries, and the idea of a routine always seemed so mundane and boring. It wasn't until early recovery, when I was dealing with post-acute withdrawals and heightened stress, that I decided to implement a routine. It honestly made a world of difference in my life and continues to help me thrive to this day. In fact, my love of morning walks and meditation was born out of the routine I developed in early sobriety. Redefining how you approach your days can be difficult and foreign at first so, here are some tips to get you started:

- * Get up every morning at the same time
- * Shower every day
- * Get dressed as if you are going out
- * Eat regular meals
- * Exercise daily



To further inspire you, here are some routines that your peers rely on on a daily basis.

Brigid
 "Get up early every morning & have coffee
 Shower
 Meds
 Watch news
 East Side Center"

Thomas B.
 "Wake up early every day
 Take a walk
 Have coffee at Stewart's"



Jay E.

"Shower every morning
Listen to music daily
Take a daily walk"

Tony C

"Take meds every day
Take a walk
Go to East Side Center
YMCA"

Bethany

"Get up same time every day
Exercise at East Side Center"

Harleigh

"Go to East Side Center
Help care for step-son
Make dinner every night"

UNDERSTANDING THE DIAGNOSIS

Phobias

BY GINGER MILLER

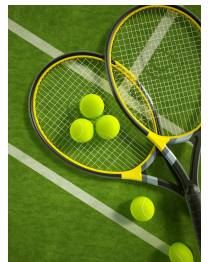
According to Johns Hopkins a phobia is an uncontrollable, irrational, and lasting fear of a certain object, situation, or activity. This fear can be so overwhelming that a person may go to great lengths to avoid the source of this fear. One response can be a panic attack. This is a sudden, intense fear that lasts for several minutes. It happens when there is no real danger.

About 19 million Americans have one or more phobias that range from mild to severe. Phobias can happen in early childhood, but they are often first seen between ages 15 and 20. They affect men and women equally. Men are more likely to seek treatment for phobias.

Research suggests that both genetic and environmental factors contribute to the start of phobias. Certain phobias have been linked to a very bad first encounter with the feared object or situation. Mental health experts don't know if this first encounter is necessary or if phobias can simply occur in people who are likely to have them.

The DSM V (Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition) classifies phobias under Anxiety Disorders. It explains that fear and phobia may present similarly at first glance, but the latter is often much more intense and disruptive. There are five main types of specific phobia:

- Animals, such as snakes, dogs, spiders, etc.
- Natural environment, such as lightning, storms, tornadoes
- Blood-injection-injury, such as receiving a shot or blood test, seeing blood, or going to the dentist
- Situational, such as fear of public speaking or being in small spaces
- Other, which are fears that do not fit into the other categories, such as fear of colors or fear of small things



Within these five categories are a breadth of types. For example, an animal phobia might involve not just dogs, but dogs of a specific breed or size. Although over 500 named phobias exist, most are extremely rare.



Phobias (Con't)

According to the Mayo Clinic the best treatment for specific phobias is a form of therapy called exposure therapy. Sometimes your health care professional also may recommend other therapies or medicine. Knowing the cause of a phobia is less important than focusing on how to treat the avoidance behavior that has developed over time.

The goal of treatment is to improve your quality of life so that you're no longer limited by your phobias. As you learn how to better manage your responses, thoughts and feelings, your anxiety and fear will get lower and no longer control your life. Typically, one specific phobia is treated at a time.

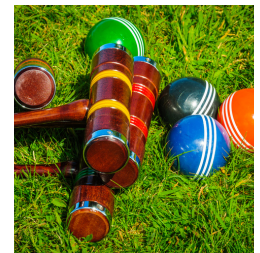
Talking with a mental health professional can help you manage your specific phobia. The most effective treatments are:

- Exposure therapy. This therapy focuses on changing your response to the object or situation that you fear. Gradual, repeated exposure to the source of your specific phobia, and the related thoughts, feelings and sensations, may help you learn to manage your anxiety. For example, if you're afraid of elevators, your therapy may progress from simply thinking about getting into an elevator, to looking at pictures of elevators, to going near an elevator, to stepping into an elevator. Next, you may take a one-floor ride, then ride several floors, and then ride in a crowded elevator.
- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). CBT involves gradual exposure combined with other ways to learn how to view and cope with the feared object or situation differently. You learn how to challenge your worries and put up with uncomfortable feelings. CBT helps you learn how to create a sense of mastery and confidence with your thoughts and feelings rather than feeling overcome by them.

Medications can help reduce the anxiety and panic symptoms you feel from thinking about or being exposed to the object or situation you fear. Medicines may be used during treatment at first or for short-term use in specific, occasionally encountered situations, such as flying on an airplane, public speaking or going through an MRI procedure.

Professional treatment can help you overcome your specific phobia or manage it effectively so you do not become a prisoner to your fears. The Mayo Clinic goes on to offer these suggestion as some steps you can take on your own:

- Try not to stay away from feared situations. Practice staying near feared objects or situations as much as you can rather than staying away from them completely. Family, friends and your therapist can help you work on this. Practice what you learn in therapy and work with your therapist to create a plan if symptoms get worse.
- Reach out. Think about joining a self-help or support group where you can connect with others who know what you're going through.
- Take care of yourself. Get enough rest, eat healthy and try to be physically active every day. Reduce or avoid caffeine, as it can make anxiety worse. And do not forget to celebrate successes as things get better.



Riddle of the Month:

What has a lot to say but never speaks,
opens but you cannot walk through it,
and has a spine but no bones?



Riddle Answer

A book!



IS THIS MEETING FOR YOU?

VOA/ReST - Volunteers of America/Resilience Strength Time

BY GINGER MILLER

VOA/ReST – Volunteers of America/Resilience Strength Time is a free, confidential group process that supports emotional resilience in people struggling with isolation, fatigue, frustration, anxiety, and a sense of inadequacy or failure. No matter where you are in the country, connect to peers who understand and can help by scheduling a session today. Peer facilitators guide the conversations, and as participants share difficult experiences and listen to each other, they feel understood, empathize with others, and recover a sense of commitment and gratitude for their relationships and work. Sessions of up to ten participants are scheduled nearly every day, for an hour. People may attend alone or with others they trust. VOA/ReST groups enable participants to share their distress with others and stay resilient. 82% of Participants say that they feel significantly calmer and more peaceful after group sessions. There are also programs specific for Women, Children, and for Veterans & First Responders, and for anyone who needs to talk. For more information visit <https://www.voa.org/services/voa-rest-virtual-support/>

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Smile Power

BY GINGER MILLER



Did you know?
June 15th is
National
Smile Power Day

Have you ever stopped to think about how powerful a smile can be? Think about when you are feeling down or troubled and someone smiles at you, maybe even a stranger, doesn't it give you a little lift. Perhaps only for a few seconds depending on the situation but still it had a positive effect. What about when you start talking to someone that doesn't seem to be hearing a word you say, perhaps you smile and comment something like 'earth to Mary'. You've brought their attention to your smile and isn't there usually instantly a returned smile? A simple smile can alleviate a person's mood and it can make another person feel better about themselves, build their self-confidence, and improve their self-esteem. Smiles in fact help build bonds between people. That's pretty powerful for something that generally takes very little time or effort. And smiles are universal no matter what language you speak!

What about the personal benefits of smiling? Did you know that when you smile your brain releases tiny molecules called neuropeptides that help fight off stress? Whether the smile is genuine or even forced it prompts the brain to produce neurotransmitters like dopamine, serotonin, and endorphins causing positive emotions. Endorphins act as a mild pain reliever and serotonin is an antidepressant! Since smiling helps reduce stress it in turn helps lower blood pressure which is good for heart health. Then there is the benefit of improved looks... who doesn't look better (even younger!) when they are smiling?

So, if you are someone that struggles with feeling like you are powerless, or like you don't make a difference, I offer you a little challenge; spend an afternoon in public (at the mall, downtown, in the park, etc.) and as you are walking around smile at everyone you see. Watch and see how often they smile back, maybe even when they might have looked sad before. Pay attention to how you feel before you start the challenge and how you feel after; I'm guessing you'll feel better. Then spend a few minutes thinking about how many people YOU made smile! That's meaningful! That's powerful!

With all the benefits for others and ourselves shouldn't we all try to smile more?!





CREATIVE WRITING CORNER

Thank you to those that submitted writings! We love your sharing!



SMILE

I find a familiar friend to me when looking in the mirror. The sense of love I feel when I see my particular smile, one as if my inner secrets were divulged. I get in my groove, my peculiar smile and I, and I'm pleased as punch at the outcome of this menacing child with his eyes shining, and a beautiful smile indeed.

~ Josh B.



Who or what guides you back 'home'?

"Your scars are on the outside. I can feel them. You sense my inside scars and I think you feel them." I told this to Wit ,the retired thoroughbred. It took some time to earn his trust so that he would come near. Once we were forehead to forehead, I put my hand on his head and neck. Tears flowed as I hugged his neck tight. I didn't want to let go. He put his head on my shoulder and I cried even more. Being part of the Saratoga War Horse was one of the best experiences of my life.

~Sherri C.



Do you see dandelions as beautiful flowers or weeds and eyesores?

I personally think that dandelions are strikingly beautiful flowers! The are especially georgeous when they are gathered into a firtual carpet. It's interesting to not that dandelions are not native to this country, but however they got here they certainly have made their presence known. Those of us whose parents grew up during the Great Depression will tell you how much they valued dandelions for their nutritional value: the greens made an excellent salad and they were...free!

~ anonymous



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.



June's prompts - 1. Share how a hard experience made you stronger or wiser.

2. Summer Solstice — It's the longest day of the year. Write about how your character celebrates this special day. Why is this day meaningful to them? 3. What is the most important thing you learned from your grandparents?

To submit your writing please email it to gmillar@ascendmw.org, mail it to ASCEND, 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.

INSPIRATION & MOTIVATION

Healing doesn't mean the damage never existed. It means the damage no longer controls our life.

Advice from a tree:

- Stand tall and proud
- Go out on a limb
- Remember your roots
- Drink plenty of water
- Be content with your natural beauty
- Enjoy the view

True self-care is not baths and chocolate cake. It's making the choice to build a life you don't need to escape from.

RECOVERY

Resources

PHONE NUMBERS

Life Line Mental Health Crisis & Suicide Prevention: 24/7 support for people in emotional distress or suicidal crisis. **Call or Text 988** or visit 988lifeline.org

Mobile Crisis: Meet a clinician in an agreed-upon location. 518-741-6099

Crisis Text Line: 24/7 for any crisis. A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds, all from our secure online platform. Text 'HOME' to 741741

United Way: 24/7 Connects you to a community resource specialist who can put you in touch with local organizations that provide critical services. English and **Spanish** Dial 211

Never Use Alone Crisis Prevention Center: A toll-free nationwide overdose prevention, detection, crisis response and reversal lifeline services for people who use drugs while alone. The all volunteer peer-run call center operators are available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. No stigma. No judgment. Just love! 800-484-3731

Rose House Warm Line: 24/7 A safe place to stay or someone to talk to. 518-502-1172

National Domestic Violence Hotline: confidential support 24/7/365 **English, Spanish and 200+ languages through interpretation service** 800-799-7233 or Text 'START' to 88788

National Sexual Assault Hotline RAINN (Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network): 24/7 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or visit online.rainn.org

The Trevor Project: 24/7 crisis support services for LGBTQ young people. Text, chat, or call anytime to reach a trained counselor: thetrevorproject.org/hotline: 866-488-7386 or Text 'START' to 678678

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. (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

National Eating Disorders Association: 24/7 crisis support Text 'NEDA' to 741741

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 To speak to someone local call 518-463-0906

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 free online recovery tool that offers 130 weekly online meetings. We embrace multiple pathways including all 12 Step, Non-12 Step, Wellness and Mental Health modalities. Other resources available also such as news, blogs, guides, and more <https://www.intherooms.com/home/>

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

PODCASTS

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

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.

APPS

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

Anxiety Apps: MindShift (Free), Self-Help Anxiety Management – SAM (Free)

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

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

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

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

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

Mindfulness & Meditation Apps: Calm (\$), Serenity: Guided Meditation & Mindfulness (Free)

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

PTSD Apps: PTSD Coach (Free), Breathe2Relax (Free)

Recovery Support Meetings:

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

Suicide Prevention Apps: MY3 (Free) notOK (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@ASCEND.ORG OR CALL 518-401-5991



ASCEND DUAL RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUPS

EVERY MONDAY
2:00 - 3:00 PM EXPRESSIVE ARTS FOR RECOVERY
EAST SIDE CENTER
230 MAPLE ST, GLENS FALLS
IN PERSON

EVERY TUESDAY
4:00-5:00 PM OPEN DISCUSSION/RECOVERY TOPICS
HOPE & HEALING RECOVERY CENTER:
2 MAPLE STREET, HUDSON FALLS
IN PERSON OR
VIRTUALLY - ZOOM MEETING ID: 844-2214-0148

EVERY THURSDAY
4:30-5:30 PM OPEN DISCUSSION/RECOVERY TOPICS
CONIFER PARK
55 ELM STREET, GLENS FALLS

EVERY FRIDAY
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EMOTIONAL WELLNESS & RECOVERY
EAST SIDE CENTER
230 MAPLE ST, GLENS FALLS
IN PERSON

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