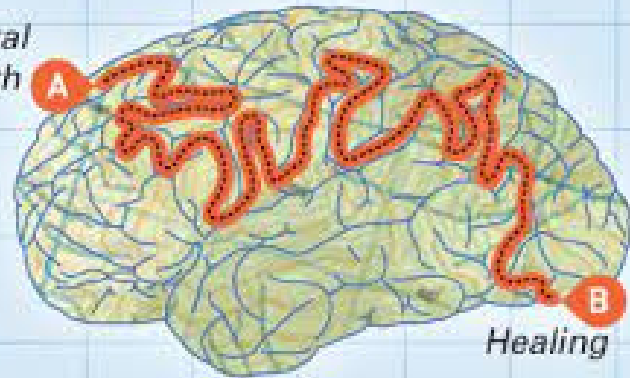


# ROADS TO RECOVERY NEWSLETTER

Created by Dual Recovery at Ascend to support individuals in recovery

Mental  
Health



*A newsletter for you  
and about you*

## SPOTLIGHT TOPIC

### Celebration and Rebranding

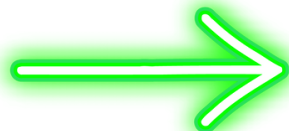
BY GINGER MILLER

We, Ascend Mental Wellness (formerly known as Warren Washington Association for Mental Health) celebrated 75 years of serving our communities as a nonprofit organization this month! On May 10th celebrated our anniversary at the Annual Community Awards at the Crandall Library. The awards given out each year are the: Walter P. Reichart Award and the Dorothea Dix Award. The Walter P. Reichart Award is given to an individual, group or agency within the mental health field and in the local community that has significantly contributed to the promotion, development and/or betterment of mental health within Warren and Washington Counties. The Dorothea Dix Award is given to an individual and/or a business/club who has significantly contributed to the lives of individuals living with mental illnesses. This year the Walter P. Reichart Award was given to Adirondack Employee Assistance Program and the Dorothea Dix award was given to Chris Lyons Chief Executive Officer of AIM Services. In addition to awards being presented we reflected back on the last 75 years of changes and challenges that WWAMH has faced and how we have evolved to meet the needs within our communities. After the awards, guests took part in a Mental Health Matters walk to the “Hope” tree outside Crandall Library to add a ribbon, message of inspiration, hope, or positivity to support mental health. As part of the celebration, we explained our new name and brand.

Beginning May 1st our new name became ASCEND Mental Wellness, and we adopted a new logo. The first changes the community has been seeing are the updates on our website and social media accounts as well as billboards in the community. The release of these changes stated, “Our goal as an agency is to always provide transparency to everyone we serve and the community. We anticipate a smooth transition from WWAMH to ASCEND Mental Wellness. We want the community to know that while our name may change, our mission and principles remain the same.” Learn more at [www.ascendmw.org](http://www.ascendmw.org).



IS NOW



## IN THIS ISSUE:

**SPOTLIGHT TOPIC**  
Celebration and Rebranding  
PAGE 01

**UNDERSTANDING THE  
DIAGNOSIS**  
Mental Health & Mental Illness  
PAGE 02

**HEALTH & WELLNESS**  
Coping With Feelings  
PAGE 03 - 04

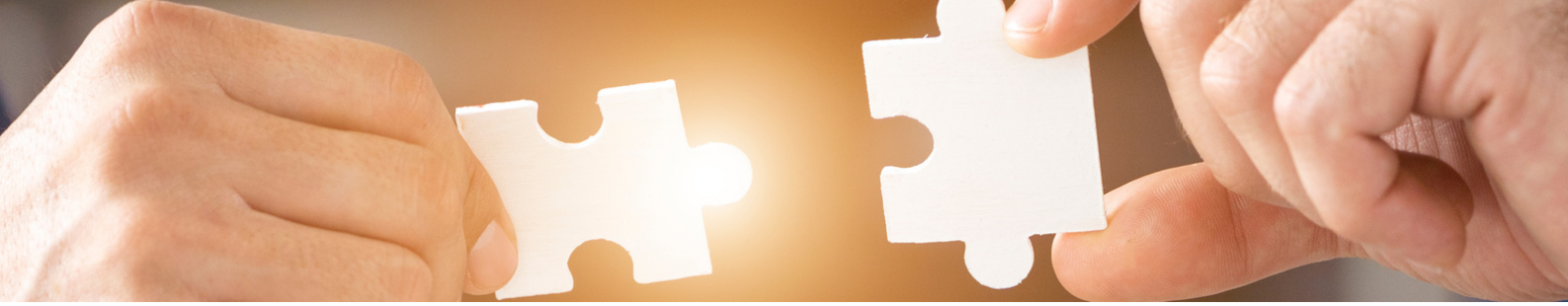
**IS THIS MEETING FOR YOU?**  
Reddit  
PAGE 04

**Riddle Of The Month**  
PAGE 04

**CREATIVE WRITING CORNER**  
PAGE 05

**INSPIRATION &  
MOTIVATION**  
PAGE 05

**RECOVERY RESOURCES**  
PAGE 06



# UNDERSTANDING THE DIAGNOSIS

## Mental Health & Mental Illness

BY GINGER MILLER

Every breathing human being has mental health. Mental health is essential to a person's life in the same way as physical health. Hesitation to talk about mental health adds to the notion that the topic is taboo. It is important to normalize conversations surrounding mental health so people can feel empowered to seek help if/when they need it.



SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) provides these definitions:

Mental Health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act, and helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Over the course of your life, if you experience mental health problems, your thinking, mood, and behavior could be affected.

Mental illnesses are disorders, ranging from mild to severe, that affect a person's thinking, mood, and/or behavior. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, nearly one-in-five adults live with a mental illness. Many factors contribute to mental health conditions, including biological factors (such as genes or brain chemistry), life experiences (such as trauma or abuse), and family history of mental health problems. A Serious Mental Illness (SMI) is a mental illness that interferes with a person's life and ability to function. Despite common misperceptions, having an SMI is not a choice, a weakness, or a character flaw. It is not something that just "passes" or can be "snapped out of" with willpower.

How can you identify if you or someone you know is living with mental health problems? Experiencing one or more of the following feelings or behaviors can be an early warning sign of a problem:

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people and usual activities
- Having low or no energy
- Feeling numb or like nothing matters
- Having unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared
- Yelling or fighting with family and friends
- Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Having persistent thoughts and memories you can't get out of your head
- Hearing voices or believing things that are not true
- Thinking of harming yourself or others
- Inability to perform daily tasks like taking care of your kids or getting to work or school



Do you think someone you know may have a mental health problem? Talking about mental health can be difficult. Learn about common mental health myths and facts and read about ways to help you get the conversation started at:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/>.



# HEALTH & WELLNESS

## Coping With Feelings

BY GINGER MILLER

Talking about my innermost feelings is still a challenge for me sometimes but I'm getting better at it. I remember SO many times in the past thinking that it didn't matter if I talked about my feelings, "It's not like anyone can do anything about them" or "It isn't like anyone REALLY cares how I feel" (I've worked a lot on correcting negative self-talk!). I figured I could work through them, push through them or just "move on". Often, they just seemed to intensify or get more complicated. I was not taking care of my mental health.

But guess what happens when we stuff our feelings, bottle them up, keep them pent up, stifle or hold them back? It takes a toll on us physically too. When we repress or restrict our feelings and emotions it can increase stress, anxiety, and depression; we may experience headaches or digestive problems, among many other things. It can affect how well we sleep which in turn can affect a number of other health issues. Sometimes people develop other coping strategies such as drinking or using drugs, compulsive shopping, gambling, or overeating, that in the long run add to the problems.

So, what's a person to do to deal with feelings and emotions in a healthy way? Sure, it's easy to say 'talk about them' but what about if trusting people is difficult? There are many things we can do to help us cope with our feelings and emotions so that we can manage our mental health better.



There is a lot to be said about having a good cry. It takes a lot of energy to keep pushing down our emotions so crying can be a soothing release. Many people aren't comfortable crying around others and that's ok. Take time to step away from a situation such as go to the restroom, go to your own room, or go for a walk just to allow yourself 10 minutes or so to let a short cry provide us a little relief. As someone who struggles with depression sometimes, I've learned that although a good cry is helpful, it can become a slippery slope too. So, if I know my depression symptoms are starting to show up, before I allow myself to start crying I will put a time limit on how long I'm going to allow myself to cry and what I plan to do after. No, I can't shut the tears off immediately but having a plan allows me to work on stopping them, using self-talk to remind myself why I've put a time limit on it, that it was healthy to cry for a short time but I don't want to get stuck there and that I have something else to go do.

If stepping away for a short cry isn't an option, another good tool is writing. A 'mind dump' is a fantastic tool. This is where you just write as much of what you are thinking and feeling as you can, even if your writing can't keep up with your thoughts. It doesn't need to make sense, be neat, or even legible. Don't worry about anything regarding the writing itself like spelling or punctuation – no one needs to read it, not even you. When you're done dumping you can burn or shred it if you choose to. The act of getting it out of your mind is what is important with this tool. The first few times trying this was a little awkward for me as I wondered, how do I start and how do I not pay attention to completing sentences or thoughts? Starting out can be as simple as stating exactly what you are thinking even about trying the writing and then before you know it you might find that you're writing about the things you are hurt, angry, or anxious about. I did have to remind myself not to worry about what the writing looked or sounded like but once I got rolling it did get easier to just dump stuff.

One of the reasons crying can help is because you are allowing yourself to let go and letting your body take over. Another tool that works well for some people is to get moving, allowing your body to take over through movement or exercise can be a great release as well. Go for a brisk walk (in nature always helps me), dance, or go for a bike ride. Things like yoga and swimming can be extra effective because you can incorporate deep breathing which can help release toxins as well. And for those that struggle with anxiety there is the added benefit that focusing our thoughts on our breathing forces our brain to stop thinking about what is increasing the anxiety.



## Coping With Feelings (Con't)

Another thing that can be helpful, releasing, even fun, is getting loud and making noise. This can be done in a lot of ways. Watch a ball game and get vocal, sing – sing loud (with loud music of course!), scream into a pillow, pound some nails into a board, use a food chopper and pound, um, I mean chop, up some veggies.

Then there is talking. This was a difficult one for me as I didn't trust people very much and I didn't feel I had any close friends. Having a therapist was helpful as over time I did become more comfortable talking with her, but it did take some time. I used the skills listed above as I developed trust with others. As for finding friends to talk with, I did this very slowly. I'd start by sharing one thing I felt less vulnerable about and see how they reacted, if they kept our conversation private, and if I felt comfortable with them. I slowly found that I was comfortable with some people about one or two topics and other people other topics (family, school/work, relationships, religion, mental health, addiction issues, and feelings). Then I could start opening up a little more as I felt we had similar viewpoints or feelings. I found self-help support groups (12 step, grief support, CODA, etc.) to be a great place to start finding like minded people to connect with. Today I find that human interactions are often the most important, they help support me, help me feel understood, validate me or help me see things differently, the fact they are listening tells me they care, I have developed a sense of belonging with some of them; even made friends. I still have a therapist and hope to never go without one, a special connection can be developed with a therapist if you find one you are comfortable with. And I learned that therapy can be more than just talking, they can teach coping skills too such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy (EMDR), Inner Child Therapy, Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT), Ego State Therapy, Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), Anger Management, and Grief Therapy, just to name a few.

# IS THIS MEETING FOR YOU?

## Reddit

BY GINGER MILLER

Reddit – Although Reddit isn't an actual meeting, support can be found on the Reddit website and/or app for nearly any situation/condition 24 hours a day (not for emergencies though). Reddit is a social news website and forum where content is socially curated. The site name is a play on the words "I read it." Registration is free but is required to use the website's basic features such as commenting, creating your own discussion, and connecting to links, images, or videos. With Reddit you can protect your privacy and stay anonymous. The site is composed of hundreds of subcommunities, known as subreddits. Each subreddit has a specific topic, such as music, technology, or for the purposes of this article Recovery or Mental Health supports. Use the search bar and enter a topic (examples: recovery, mental health support, support meetings, schizophrenia, LGBTQ, etc.) Some subreddits are set as public such as r/stopdrinking. (r/stopdrinking is full of people who are sober or sober curious.) Public subreddits you can read the discussions without creating a Reddit account; to participate, however, you would need to create a Reddit account. Reddit has a help center available if you run into questions about navigating or participating in the subcommunities.

**Riddle of the Month:**  
A bus driver goes the wrong way down a one-way street. He passes the cops, but they don't stop him. Why?



**Riddle Answer**  
He was walking!



# CREATIVE WRITING CORNER

My dog Ella looks at me and bobs her head then begins to stare at me. When I call her name sometimes I wonder what she is saying in her mind about me. Is she saying leave me alone? Or what is she thinking when she steals my socks or others items... mom doesn't need these so I'm gonna hide them in my bed?

~ Mercedes T.



When I see and smell the earth coming back to life in the spring it lifts my spirits. The smell of pretty flowers like lilies, daisies lifts my spirits and brightens my day, it fills me with good moods and makes me feel good about myself.

~ Laura D.



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

If I could create a holiday for celebrating in spring I would call it "The Rite of Spring" and I would base it on William Shakespere's Midnight of Fawn. When all calamity took place and everyone fell in love with each other only they were with a different partner than promised. And the mischief and magic that the faries and others bring to life.

~ Joshua Brown

If I could come back to life as a person, plant, or animal I think I would come back as a flower; possibly a daisy, but on second thought maybe a tall majestic sunflower. I would turn my head toward the bright sun rays and soak in the warmth. I would feel the gentle breeze on my petals and sway rythmically as to the beat of a sweet, calming melody. I would admire the people - children and adults who share in my simple beauty and I would hope to bring joy to their days.

~ Amy W.



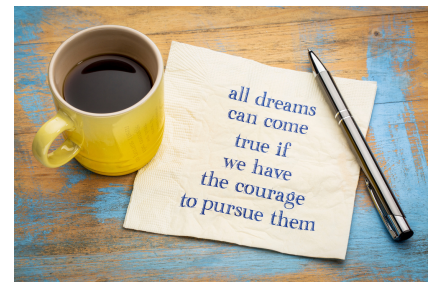
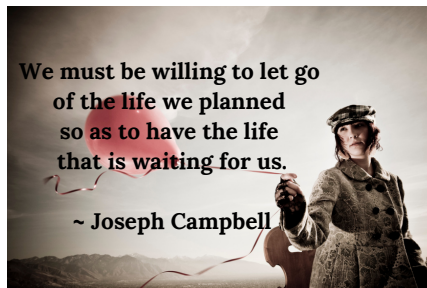
We would love to hear from you too! If you'd like to share a poem you've written, some creative writing you've done or a piece of your recovery story we would love to add it to our newsletter to help support or inspire our readers. Not sure what to write about? I'll provide a prompt each month as an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

- May's prompts - 1. If you were a bee, what would you see and where would you go?
- 2. What do you love to talk about that makes you happiest?

- 3. (If you are in recovery) What is an activity that you associated with using that you were afraid to do again when you got into recovery? Have you done it again? How do you feel about it now?

To submit your writing please email it to [gmillar@ascendmw.org](mailto: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



# 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://al-anon.org)

**Alcoholics Anonymous (AA):** Local group schedule and information: [district13.aahmbny.org](http://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](http://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](http://www.recoveryanswers.org)

**Gamblers Anonymous (GA):** Online services for anyone struggling with a gambling addiction: [gasteps.org](http://gasteps.org)

**Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP):** For those who have lost someone to substance use or addiction: [grasphep.org](http://grasphep.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](http://narcotics.com)

**Overeaters Anonymous (OA):** Online support groups for anyone who wants to stop eating compulsively: [oarecovery.com](http://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](mailto: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  
3:30-4:30 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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