ROADS TO RECOVERY NEWSLETTER

Created by Dual Recovery at Ascend Mental Wellness to support individuals in recovery

> A newsletten fon you and about you



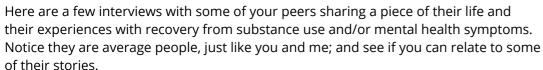
Check Out Our NEW Peer Perspective Pod Cast!

On ASCENDMW.org or SPOTIFY "Peer Perspective"

SPOTLIGHT TOPIC

You Are Not Alone





I was born and raised in a small, quiet town called Granville. It was rough on me growing up as a child of divorce and other kids made it harder by being mean. I also didn't know about my learning disability then. I remember being around the age of 15 or so and in 10th grade when I noticed my first mental health symptoms which were mania and depression. In my senior year I finally got on medication and started therapy at Caleo Counseling. This was a tremendous help and huge turning point in my recovery. I began making a lot of progress. I can see how much my peers, therapy, and meds really helped me. A really important thing I have learned is to not forget to take my meds! For me, recovery means my story isn't over; sometimes if you fall, you just have to pick yourself up and ask for help. I think it is important to share my story because you may never know who needs help and hearing (or reading) about my story might be what helps someone else realize they aren't alone in their struggle, there is hope, it does get better.

~ Brittany G.

I grew up in South Glens Falls with both my mom and dad. I was very close with both of my parents. My love of gardening actually came from working in one with my dad. My love of reading came from my mom. Wall shared some very happy holidays together. My mental illness started after I endured a traumatic brain injury. I ended up on the BHU (Behavior Health Unit in the hospital) with a diagnosis of major depressive disorder with psychotic features. It has honestly been an up and down battle trying to find medications that work. My recovery has taught me many things. The most important lesson being cooperate with your caregivers and put in the effort, do the work needed. The least helpful things for me were self-medicating with alcohol and getting caught in that viscous cycle. Recovery, to me, means having a life worth living. It will be a lifelong process, but it is possible to be a happy, healthy, productive member of society. I decided to share my story to let others know they are not alone and to thank the healthcare system for working.

~ Anita K.

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You Are Not Alone (Con't)

I grew up in Queensbury and was an honors student in school. I have two brothers. My hobbies were botany class, soccer, and swimming club. I did a lot of babysitting. I had a decent upbringing. I was 18 years old when I started experiencing hallucinations and paranoia. I ended up having to repeat my senior year because of my mental health symptoms and I was using substances by then also. I was drinking and smoking to self-medicate. In my 20's I was hospitalized for manic depression and schizoaffective. That is when they started me on psychological medication. The medication did help me feel better and I was able to go back to school for liberal arts. The one thing I learned and would recommend to others is that staying on my meds really helped me lead a better life, if you're on meds don't try to manage them or quit them by yourself. Staying active and busy helped me a lot too. The thing that helped the least was going to prison.

Recovery to me means being asymptomatic, a steady relationship and secure housing. I wish I had been told before I became addicted, how much my addiction would affect my son. I wanted to share part of my story so that maybe it would help others that are struggling.

I grew up with one older sister and both of my parents in a small town called Granville. Some of my favorite things to do were ride bikes and snowmobiles with my friends. I loved hanging out with my friends, but I had a tough childhood due to my mom's mental illness, schizophrenia. In 2002, when I was about 25 years old was when the first symptoms of my mental illness began. I began having tear spells, sadness, and anxiety. Not knowing what these feelings were, I went to a doctor who put me on medication which really helped for a long time. When my medication was switched I became symptomatic again. It took years, a loving relationship, and medical marijuana to really get me back on track again. I'm currently doing very well. Through those years I have learned that you can't just wait for things to get better; you have to take the initiative and make an effort to change. I've come to see, for me, medical marijuana and other medications help me the most and that being around negative people in my life have been least helpful. Recovery for me is relief, happiness, and hope. I want others to know that there is hope and recovery is possible, and that even though it may be hard to share your story it is ok to.

~ Seth L.

~ Bethany P.

Substance Use Disorder and mental illness affects us all in profound but different ways, however many similarities exist. For all our peers who had the tenacity and courage to tell their stories, were blindsided by serious mental health symptoms. Reeling from what they were experiencing, confused, and unsure, all were able to find their own roads to recovery and thrive. It is a true testament to their strength and resilience in life.



UNDERSTANDING THE DIAGNOSIS

Psychosis

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Health) explains that most people think of psychosis as a break with reality. In a way it is. Psychosis is characterized as disruptions to a person's thoughts and perceptions that make it difficult for them to recognize what is real and what isn't. These disruptions are often experienced as seeing, hearing, and believing things that aren't real or having strange, persistent thoughts, behaviors and emotions. While everyone's experience is different, most people say psychosis is frightening and confusing.

According to studies, between 15 and 100 persons out of 100,000 are thought to experience psychosis annually (NAMI). Often, psychosis begins in young adulthood when a person is in their late teens to mid-20s. A psychotic episode, nevertheless, can occur in persons of all ages and as a result of a variety of ailments and diseases. For instance, older adults with neurological disorders may be at higher risk for psychosis.



Psychosis (Con't)

Studies have shown that it is common for a person to have psychotic symptoms for more than a year before receiving treatment. Reducing this duration of untreated psychosis is critical because early treatment often means better recovery. A qualified psychologist, psychiatrist, or social worker can make a diagnosis and help develop a treatment plan. Antipsychotic drugs are typically used to treat psychosis. Other components are frequently included in treatment. There is substantial research support for coordinated specialty care showing that people experience better outcomes from coordinated specialty care if they begin treatment as soon as possible after psychotic symptoms emerge.

Coordinated specialty care consists of multiple components:

- Individual or group psychotherapy is tailored to a person's recovery goals. Cognitive and behavioral therapies focus on developing the knowledge and skills necessary to build resilience and cope with aspects of psychosis while maintaining and achieving personal goals.
- Family support and education programs teach family members about psychosis as well as coping, communication, and problemsolving skills. Family members who are informed and involved are more prepared to help loved ones through the recovery process.
- Medication management (also called pharmacotherapy) means tailoring medication to a person's specific needs by selecting the appropriate type and dose of medication to help reduce psychosis symptoms. Like all medications, antipsychotic medications have risks and benefits. People should talk with a health care provider about side effects, medication costs, and dosage preferences (daily pill or monthly injection).
- Supported employment and education services focus on returning to work or school, using the support of a coach to help people achieve their goals.
- Case management provides opportunities for people with psychosis to work with a case manager to address practical problems and improve access to needed support services.

A person will often show changes in their behavior before psychosis develops. Behavioral warning signs for psychosis include:

- Suspiciousness, paranoid ideas, or uneasiness with others
- Trouble thinking clearly and logically
- Withdrawing socially and spending a lot more time alone
- Unusual or overly intense ideas, strange feelings, or a lack of feelings
- · Decline in self-care or personal hygiene
- Disruption of sleep, including difficulty falling asleep and reduced sleep time
- · Difficulty telling reality from fantasy
- · Confused speech or trouble communicating
- Sudden drop in grades or job performance

Alongside these symptoms, a person with psychosis may also experience more general changes in behavior that include:

- Emotional disruption
- Anxiety
- Lack of motivation
- Difficulty functioning overall

People with psychosis should be involved in their treatment planning and consulted in making decisions about their care. Their needs and goals should drive the treatment programs, which will help them stay engaged throughout the recovery process.

It is important to find a mental health professional who is trained in psychosis treatment and who makes the person feel comfortable. With early diagnosis and appropriate treatment, it is possible to recover from psychosis. Some people who receive early treatment never have another psychotic episode. For other people, recovery means the ability to lead a fulfilling and productive life, even if psychotic symptoms sometimes return.

If you have more questions about treatment for psychosis please consult your physician, a psychiatrist, or contact NAMI for additional information and support. The NAMI HelpLine can connect you with the NAMI office in your state and help you find programs close to home. Also, you can talk with someone at the NAMI HelpLine, Monday–Friday, 10:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m. ET, by calling 1-800-950-NAMI (6264), texting "HelpLine" to 62640, or emailing helpline@nami.org

Riddle of the Month:

What asks but never answers?



Riddle Answer

!lwo nA



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Quality of Life Assessment

BY GINGER MILLER



When I was in my 20's I came across a medical questionnaire that got me thinking a little deeper about myself and my life. I knew I was unhappy about some things, but I hadn't stopped to think very deeply; maybe I wasn't ready to face it yet. That questionnaire was part of a springboard for me recognizing I needed help. After I filled it out I took it to my doctor to review. I thought I would share that questionnaire with all of you since October is National Depression Awareness Month, October 5th is National Depression Screening Day, and October 10th is World Mental Health Day. Fill it out and take it to your doctor or therapist to see if you learn something new about yourself too.

This assessment asks how you feel about your quality of life, health, or other areas of your life. Please answer all the questions. If you are unsure about which response to give to a question, please choose the one that appears most appropriate. This can often be your first response.

Please keep in mind your standards, hopes, pleasures and concerns. We ask that you think about your life in the last two weeks.

The WHOQOL-BREF is a 26-item instrument consisting of four domains: physical health, psychological health, social relationship, and environmental health.

- How would you rate your quality of life?
 - 1. Very Poor
- 2. Poor
- 3. Neither Poor nor Good
- 4. Good
- 5. Very Good

- How satisfied are you with your health?
 - 1. Very Dissatisfied 2. Dissatisfied 3. Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied 4. Satisfied 5. Very Satisfied

		Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	Very much	An extreme amount	
3.	How satisfied are you with your health?	1	2	3	4	5	
4.	How much do you need any medical treatment to function in your daily life?	1	2	3	4	5	
5.	How much do you enjoy life?	1	2	3	4	5	
6.	To what extent do you feel your life to be meaningful?	1	2	3	4	5	
		Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	Very much	Extremely	
7.	How well are you able to concentrate?	1	2	3	4	5	
8.	How safe do you feel in your daily life?	1	2	3	4	5	
9.	How healthy is your physical environment?	1	2	3	4	5	

SAMSHA Fact: Mental health conditions have nothing to do with being lazy or weak and many people need help to get better. Many factors contribute to mental health conditions, including:

- Biological factors, such as genes, physical illness, injury, or brain chemistry
- Life experiences, such as trauma or a history of abuse
- Family history of mental health conditions



Quality of Life Assessment (Con't)

		Not at all	A little	Moderately	Mostly	Completely
10.	Do you have enough energy for everyday life?	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Are you able to accept your bodily appearance?	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Have you enough money to meet your needs?	1	2	3	4	5
13.	How available to you is the information that you need in your day-to-day life?	1	2	3	4	5
14.	To what extent do you have the opportunity for leisure activities?	1	2	3	4	5
		Very poor	Poor	Neither poor nor good	Good	Very good
15.	How well are you able to get around?	1	2	3	4	5

		Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
16.	How satisfied are you with your sleep?	1	2	3	4	5
17.	How satisfied are you with your ability to perform your daily living activities?	1	2	3	4	5
18.	How satisfied are you with your capacity for work?	1	2	3	4	5
19.	How satisfied are you with yourself?	1	2	3	4	5
20.	How satisfied are you with your personal relationships?	1	2	3	4	5
21.	How satisfied are you with your sex life?	1	2	3	4	5
22.	How satisfied are you with the support you get from your friends?	1	2	3	4	5
23.	How satisfied are you with the conditions of your living place?	1	2	3	4	5
24.	How satisfied are you with your access to health services?	1	2	3	4	5
25.	How satisfied are you with your transport?	1	2	3	4	5

SAMSHA Fact: Mental health issues can affect anyone. In 2020, about:

- One in 5
 American adults experienced a mental health condition in a given year
- One in 6 young people have experienced a major depressive episode
- One in 20
 Americans have lived with a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression



26. How often do you have negative feelings, such as blue mood, despair, anxiety, depression?

2. Dissatisfied

3. Neither satisfied or dissatisfied

1. Very dissatisfied

5. Very satisfied

4. Satisfied



IS THIS MEETING FOR YOU?

Secular Organizations for Sobriety (SOS)

Dear Hesitant,

Secular Organizations for Sobriety (SOS) is a nonprofit network of autonomous, non-professional local groups, dedicated solely to helping individuals achieve and maintain sobriety/abstinence from alcohol and drug addiction, food addiction and more. "No God at the Bottom of a Glass" is an award-winning short documentary produced by Sarah Barker of <u>Creative Media Hub.</u> The film tells the story of Secular Organizations for Sobriety (SOS), the brainchild and of founder, James Christopher. Secular Organizations for Sobriety was founded in 1985. James Christopher is a sober alcoholic himself, since 1978, and author of the books, "SOS Sobriety" and "Unhooked: Staying Sober and Drug-Free".

To find an on-line meeting go to: https://www.sossobriety.org/on-line-groups

For more information, free literature, to start a local group, or contact SOS go to: https://www.sossobriety.org/

An S.O.S. Facebook Group for those seeking additional support with their secular recovery. S.O.S. (Save Ourselves)

Peer Perspective

BY GINGER MILLER

Dear Peer,

I've been seeing the same therapist for a couple of years now. I like her and she has been helpful with some things but I'm still unsure of talking with her about other certain things. Am I supposed to be able to talk with my therapist about everything? I'm not sure what to do with the things I don't talk with her about, and they have been coming up in my mind more often. What would you do if you were

~ Hesitant

This section needs YOU! Send us your questions and concerns.



Building a trusting relationship with a therapist can take time for some people. In your position I would be asking myself why I'm hesitant to talk with her about the new things. Is it fear of digging into the new things? If so, that is very normal. You said those thoughts have been coming up in your mind often, my experience has been that means I'm ready to face working on that new thing, even though I may still be very afraid of it. Since she has been helpful with the things you have talked with her about, working up the courage to tell her about the new things that are on your mind would probably be helpful. If there are other reasons you are uncomfortable talking with her about them, I'd think more about that. If there is a trust issue, why? If you need more time to build trust that is understandable. If there is some reason you don't trust her, even though you may like her, that may be a different issue and perhaps looking for a new therapist would be a good idea. What each person shares with their therapist is very personal; and everyone's experience with a therapist can be unique and different - just like any other relationship we build. How much you choose to share with her is really up to you. It sounds like the things that are coming up are pretty important so talking with someone you trust about them is probably a good idea. If you really can't bring yourself to talk with your therapist then perhaps a parent, close friend, or a religious leader like a priest, pastor, or rabbi would be someone you could talk with. I was taught: "the acronym for fear is Face Everything And Recovery"... that is working for me. Remember, you are stronger than you believe.

~ Caring Peer

To submit a question you can leave it in the mail box in the Peer Pod (behind the door) at East Side Center, mail it to ASCEND Mental Wellness - Dual Recovery, 230 Maple St., Glens Falls, NY 12801, email it to gmiller@ascendmw.org, or text it to 518-401-5991.

INSPIRATION & MOTIVATION











CREATIVE WRITING CORNER



Thankful For The Four Seasons

I am glad to be living in an area where there are four seasons. I love summer, gardening and sitting on my porch drinking sun tea. I enjoy summer salads and barbecues, freezing and canning produce from the friendly farmer's market.

I enjoy Autumn - the brightly colored leaves, frosty mornings, the harvest and my favorite holiday, Thanksgiving!

Christmas gives me added joy when it is white with snow, and I enjoy a rest from outdoor gardening work. Winter is a time for reading and needlework. I am working on a quilt.

And then there's Spring - bulb flowers, flowering trees and shrubs. The joy of Easter, heading out to the garden once again as it awakens from winters slumber. Pussy willows, April showers, and plenty of May flowers.

~ Anita K.

My peaceful place is at a calm waterfall. The water flows over the rocks rolling quickly. Autumn leaves add to the beauty as if they are playing with the beads of rain. It's starting to sprinkle now but I have my Veteran's hat on so my glasses don't get wet. Birds are singing a joyful, lively song. Chipmunks and squirrels rustle through the fallen leaves. I sit quietly on a tree stump as a male and female cardinal eat the berries off a nearby tree. All is right in the world with just me, God and His creations. I go there, only in my mind now, and the stillness of it all remains untouched.

~ Sherri C



The air is cool,
the apples are ripe for the picking.
I can smell the cider brewing.
Getting lost in a corn maze.
Watching the kids choose the right pumpkin.
Isn't that what Autumn is all about?

~ Sherri C.

I am grateful for the 12 Promises of the 12-Step Programs

- 1. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.
- 2. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.
- 3. We will comprehend the word serenity.
- 4. We will know peace.
- 5. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.
- 6. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.
- 7. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.
- 8. Self-seeking will slip away.
- 9. Our whole attitude and outlook on life will change.
- 10. Fear of people and economic insecurity will leave us.
- 11. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.
- 12. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

~ Brian



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? We'll provide prompts each month as an option.

October's prompts

- 1. You are taking a lazy drive down scenic back roads. Describe your perfect car for the ride, and name the top five songs you would cruise to.
- 2. What is your favorite herb (rosemary, sage, thyme...)? What do you do with it? Can it be used for more than just cooking?
- 3. Think of someone that has impacted your life and probably doesn't realize it. Write a thank you letter to them letting them know how much they changed your life.

To submit your writing please email it to gmiller@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.



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 Assult 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

National Human Trafficing Hotline: Serving victims and survivors. Toll-free hotline is available from anywhere in the country, 24/7, 365 days a year at 1-888-373-7888

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: 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@ASCENDMW.ORG OR CALL 518-401-5991



ASCEND DUAL RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUPS

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

PLEASE VISIT <u>WWW.ASCENDMW.ORG</u> FOR MORE INFORMATION & COPIES OF OUR NEWSLETTERS