ROADS TO RECOVERY NEWSLETTER

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

A newsletten for you and about you



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SPOTLIGHT TOPIC

Asking For Help

BY GINGER MILLER

Asking for help is very difficult for many people, but everyone needs help from time to time. If you find it difficult to ask for help, perhaps asking yourself why you do could help. Are there old messages that run through your mind that you were taught by someone else when you were younger? Do you ever have thoughts like these come to mind, "Big boys/girls don't cry," "Man up," "Stay strong," "If you're going to cry, I'll give you a reason to," "Do it yourself, no one else will do it right/fast enough," or any other similar idea? Perhaps the thought was so repetitive over the years it has even become a subconscious belief. I've known some people that felt if they asked for help it meant they were weak. If that thought crosses your mind, consider the idea that if you ask for help while feeling that way it actually takes strength to ask.

Many people view asking for help as a sign of strength. One of the reasons I found it hard to ask for help was fear of rejection, "What if I ask for help and the person says no?" I got to a point where I was so worn down, I became willing to start asking for help with something small; I figured if that got rejected, so what I'd figure out how to do it myself. I was surprised that people would say yes more often than I thought. That made it a little easier to ask for things I felt were a little bigger. In this process it also helped me start feeling a little more connected to people, making friends. If I felt I might be infringing on their time, sometimes I'd ask "Can you help me with___ and afterward I'll help you with ." Another thing that made it hard for me to ask for help was the thought that I was 'bothering' someone, this thought still comes to mind sometimes. One of the things that has helped me with this particular issue I learned in recovery, it can be helpful for others to help you. For example, we may not be aware of the fact that the other person is having a down day and by their helping us it helped cheer them up – it helped them to help us. I've experienced that myself, I often feel better after helping someone; so, I could start thinking of it as a possible opportunity for that person to help themselves while helping me. I've even had a few times the person that helped me thanked me for helping them, and I didn't even realize I was!

As I look back, I can remember struggling with the feeling of why anyone would want to help me, I now know that was due to a lack of self-esteem. Occasionally, I even felt I deserved to suffer and that would keep me from asking for help. Closely related to that (for me) was the victim mindset I was stuck in, feeling that 'nobody ever helps me, I have to struggle all alone.' Now I see the irony in that, part of why I was struggling and feeling alone was because I didn'task for help!

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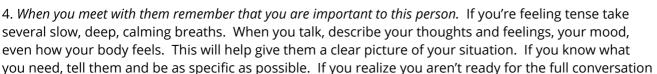


Asking For Help (Con't)

Over time I began recognizing some of the benefits of asking for help. When I ask for help it lessens my stress/anxiety/ depression/fear about the issue that I asked for help with. It has helped me build trust in others, and I've learned to listen to my gut as to who to ask for help from. I believe that it has helped build my decision-making skills. Friendships have been built and I feel supported and valued by others. Sometimes I have learned something new, and I began recognizing that having the help often made for a better outcome. Learning to ask for help pushed me out of my comfort zone so I've had personal growth which has helped build my self-confidence too.

I also remember being afraid to ask for help because I didn't know how and felt like I was stupid for not knowing how. So, I'll share with you some things I have learned about how to ask for help in case you can relate to those feelings.

- 1. Take time to think about what you want. If you know what you want that makes it much easier to ask for help. If you know you need something but don't know what it is, that's ok too, taking time to explain what the issue or situation is and how you are feeling about it may help someone who knows you well (or a professional such as a therapist or psychiatrist) to help you identify what the need is. As a few examples, it isn't unusual to not be able to identify that you aren't feeling supported, that you feel neglected, or you don't feel heard.
- 2. When you know what you want it may help you decide who to ask for help from. Think about who you feel you can trust enough to speak openly with. Think about if you think the person can relate to your situation, if they're a good listener, and if you feel they can be nonjudgemental. Generally, our gut knows which people we can go to with which types of help we may be looking for. Some people to consider looking to might be family, friends, religious or spiritual leaders, support groups, doctors, therapists, even crisis lines such as 988.
- 3. Setting a time and place. Have a time and place (especially since you'll probably want some privacy) in mind to ask the other person if they are available for. If they live with others (children, partner, parents, etc.) you may want to ask for a time when they aren't home. Try to choose somewhere you can be comfortable having the conversation. When you ask them, you might say something like, "I'd like to talk to you about something that is important and personal to me. When would be a good time for you?" If you think you'll be nervous or anxious when you ask them, think of what might help keep you calm while you ask, perhaps being outside, walking while you talk, or holding onto a comforting item. If you choose to make an appointment with a doctor, therapist, or health care professional keep in mind that will probably ask several questions to get the best understanding they can of your needs. Answering clearly and honestly is going to help them to be able to help you.



yet, that is ok - tell them exactly that. Starting small is perfectly fine if

that is all you can do in that moment.

5. When you are finished take a few minutes to recognize that you've taken a big step by asking for help, be proud of yourself for being strong. Know that it is normal to feel stressed, nervous, or tired after having personal or emotional conversations. If the person was agreeable to helping, reach out and thank them for their support. If the conversation didn't go as well as you hoped, don't give up, try again. Maybe talking with someone else would be helpful, they may give you a different point of view.



Happy



- · Can I tell you about something that's been troubling me?
- · I'm having a hard time getting things done, could you help me
- · I'm having a hard time with my recovery, I'm looking for___ (support, meetings, etc.) could you help me?
- · I'm feeling very lonely lately. Could we maybe set up a time once a week to talk on the phone?
- · I recognize I'm isolating more, and I want to work on not doing that. Would we be able to set up a time to go for a walk (or some other activity) once a week?
- · I think I need some help. Do you know any good doctors/ therapists that treat _____ (mental health, addiction, etc.)?



UNDERSTANDING THE DIAGNOSIS

Alzheimer's Disease

BY GINGER MILLER



According to the *Mayo Clinic* Alzheimer's disease is a brain disorder that progresses over time. The brain can go through changes that lead to deposits of certain proteins. The brain begins to shrink and brain cells eventually die off. A gradual decline in memory, thinking, behavior and social skills indicate dementia, which is the most common effect of Alzheimer's disease. These changes affect a person's ability to function in many ways. The early signs of the disease include forgetting recent events or conversations and over time, it progresses to serious memory problems and the loss of ability to perform everyday tasks. There are some medications that may improve or slow the progression of symptoms. Also, there are several programs and services that can help support people with the disease and their caregivers. There is no treatment that cures Alzheimer's disease at this point. In its advanced stages, severe loss of brain function can cause dehydration, malnutrition, or infection; these complications can result in death.

The *Mayo Clinic* explains that brain changes associated with Alzheimer's disease lead to growing trouble with:

Persistent **memory loss** that gets worse over time and affects the ability to function at work or at home. Examples of this include repeating statements and questions over and over, forgetting conversations, appointments or events, misplacing items, often putting them in places that don't make sense, get lost in places they used to know well, eventually forgetting the names of family members and having trouble finding the right words for objects, expressing thoughts or taking part in conversations.

The key symptom of Alzheimer's disease is memory loss. Early signs often include difficulty remembering recent events or conversations. The memory gets worse and other symptoms develop as the disease progresses. Early on, a person with the disease may be aware of having trouble remembering things and thinking clearly. As symptoms worsen, family members or friends may be more likely to notice the issues.

Alzheimer's Disease causes difficulty **concentrating and thinking**, especially about abstract concepts such as numbers. Doing more than one task at a time is especially difficult. Managing finances, balance checkbooks and pay bills on time may become more challenging. Eventually, a person with Alzheimer's disease may be unable to recognize and manage numbers.

There is a decline in the ability to make sensible **decisions and judgment** in everyday situations. For example, a person may behave inappropriately in social settings or wear clothes for the wrong type of weather. It may become harder for someone to respond to everyday problems. For example, the person may not know how to handle food burning on the stove or make decisions while driving.

Routine activities that require completing steps in order become a struggle, such as planning and cooking a meal or playing a favorite game. People with advanced Alzheimer's disease eventually forget how to do basic tasks such as dressing and bathing.

Brain changes that occur in Alzheimer's disease often affect **moods and behaviors**. Problems may include depression, loss of interest in activities they previously enjoyed, social withdrawal, mood swings, distrust in others including others that they previously trusted, anger or aggression, changes in sleeping habits, wandering, loss of inhibitions, and delusions such as believing something has been stolen.



There are a number of conditions that can cause memory loss or other dementia symptoms. Some of those conditions can be treated. If you are concerned about your memory or other thinking skills, talk to your doctor. If you are concerned about a family member or friends thinking or memory skills, talk with them about your concerns; you could even offer to go together to talk to their doctor and share your observances and concerns.



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Emotional Support Animals (ESA)

BY AMY JOHNSON

during times of high stress and anxiety.





Recently, I found myself at a crossroads in life; unsure of how to navigate the next stages of my life due to infertility issues. Remembering all the comfort and joy my little dog Mimi gave me, I decided to look into what an Emotional Support Animal (ESA) is and the process it entailed.

gave me such unconditional love and affection, at a time when I was all alone and had none. This really helped



According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, an emotional support animal is any animal that provides emotional support, alleviating one or more symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Service dogs, on the other hand, are trained to perform specific tasks that directly relieve challenges associated with their disability. For example, a service animal can alert a person if they forget to take medication.



The process for getting an ESA is a straightforward process. An ESA must be prescribed by a licensed mental health provider as part of an individual's ongoing treatment plan. If your provider feels you are a good fit, you will be provided with a prescription in the form of an ESA letter. This letter confirms you legitimately need this

animal for emotional support and are entitled to obtain certain rights under federal law. ESA's are commonly prescribed for individuals living with anxiety, depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and other mental disorders. Fellow peer, Amber M., has an emotional support animal, a cat named Winnie. She says, "having her has been an amazing experience. She shows me unconditional love and sleeps by me at night. This gives me a lot of comfort and taking care of her every day gives me a sense of purpose in my life."



Riddle of the Month:

What do an island and the letter T have in common?



Riddle Answer

They are both in the middle of water.

INSPIRATION & MOTIVATION

"Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!" - Anne Frank









IS THIS MEETING FOR YOU?

TAR Network (Toxic Abusive Relationships)

"Have you stepped in TAR? (Toxic Abusive Relationships)" was coined by Dr. Jamie Huysman, PsyD, LCSW. According to Dr. Huysman TAR is characterized by the dark triad of a lack of empathy, lack of accountability, and a Machiavellian approach in any relationship. Unsuspecting empathetic people who have stepped in TAR are figuratively stuck in a dark, thick substance – composed of shame, blame, isolation, gaslighting, and trauma bonds – triggered by their own unresolved childhood wounds. To help those who consider themselves the walking wounded or collateral damage left in the wake of narcissistic abuse, Dr. Huysman, along with an international team, founded TAR Network. The mission of TAR Network is to support men, women, the LGBTQ+ community, tweens & teens, families, parents who are alienated from their children, workers, and caregivers going through or emerging from TAR. (When you visit their website they have these specific areas broken down so you get the specific support you are looking for!) With subject matter experts, affiliates, organizations with supportive resources, and our individual donor community our programs will help you out of the fog and into the light. TAR Network is currently developing several innovative projects: TAR Tales – a safe place to share your truth, TAR Centers – a safe place to get vital CPTSD treatment, and TAR Anon – a safe and nonjudgmental worldwide support network. There is strength in numbers. We've all suffered from trauma and abuse at the hands of someone close. Please join us in this worldwide effort toward recovery. ~ tarnetwork.org

For more information about TAR Network visit their website (tarnetwork.org) or call 1-844-TAR-LINE (827-5463)

Peer Perspective BY GINGER MILLER

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.

Dear Peer, The holidays are a big trigger for me. I get very anxious and stressed. I feel like I have to get everyone gifts, and I do want to because I enjoy giving gifts, but I feel so pressured. I'm on a fixed income and feel bad if I don't have something to give everyone. When I'm anxious I can get a little edgy and short with people and then I feel even worse for snapping at them. Do you have any ideas or tips that might make my holidays a little less stressful?

~ Anxious & Stressed

Dear Anxious & Stressed,

You certainly aren't alone in your feelings. I believe the majority of people are more stressed at the end of the year for many reasons, keep that in mind if you start getting down on yourself about that. Finances and gift giving are a huge stressor for many people during the holidays. One thing I encourage people to remember when it comes to gift giving is that one of the most valuable gifts you can give someone is your time. Some things I've done, or friends of mine have done, is to give someone a card with a homemade 'gift certificate' stating something like..."Lunch is on me! Let's pick a time you can come over and I'll make us lunch and we can visit!" "This certificate is good for one (aunt & niece, mother & daughter, uncle & nephew, etc.) at the park (or mall walking, afternoon at the movies, etc.) "There is a lot of flexibility in that idea. It even allows you to spread the expense of gift giving out a little bit if you choose to take them to lunch, a movie, shopping, etc. since the dates are set in the future weeks to come. If you are a crafty person or are willing to give crafts a try there are a lot of DIY (Do It Yourself) videos on crafts you can make, and there are a lot of them that use items from the Dollar Tree! Be creative, take a look at what talents you have and use them. Do you write well? Sing? Bake? You could write a personal poem or short story as a gift. Record a song, even on TicTok or some other platform, as a gift for someone. If you enjoy cooking or baking you could do this as a gift, surprise them or even ask them what food you make do they enjoy the most and give that as a gift (it could even be for the whole family... like a lasagna or pot of soup). Another idea is to sit and determine how much you can afford to spend on each person and ask each of them something like "I'd like to get you a gift for around \$___, what are some things you would like that fall in that range?" Don't forget to look for sales, use coupons, or discounts that you may be able to access. If you catch yourself being edgy or short just stop immediately, let them know you recognize it, and apologize. Most people are understanding and appreciate the effort you are making to correct yourself. The best gift is you; the best you that you can be, with them!

~ Caring Peer



CREATIVE WRITING CORNER

Thanksgiving Plans

Thanksgiving will be celebrated this November at my daughters new farmhouse home in Argyle. A time to visit with family and thank God for all our blessings this past year. And as my grandson nicely put it - to enjoy a FEAST!

~ A.K.

Message in a bottle...

My message in the bottle would be words of hope and encouragement. The message would say "You are enough, you are doing enough".

Another would say "You are loved." or "You are perfect just the way you are." I would like someone to find it who is struggling or having a challenging time... someone who needs to heare these words to uplift them and give them hope.

~ A.W.



Someone that has impacted my life and probably doesn't realize it is my neighbor. Having a good neighbor to visit or they visit me. It helps my lonliness. Thank you for being a good friend.

~ A. G.

What do you think you would find if you fell down a rabbit hole?

First, the hole must be a big one and I would find more rabbits, probably mom's babies. If we run out of food we can eat the rabbits.



~ M.B.

A lazy drive down scenic back roads...

We are fortunate to live in an area where we have breathtaking scenic views with country roads that wind through them. I wouldn't dream of driving any other vehicle than my plain old truck, which fits in nicely with any country road. To be truthful, I'm partial to the sound of silence when driving and I almost never drive with the radio on; but if I have a passenger who requests to turn on the radio I always say yes. If the music isn't to my liking I simply tune it out in my mind.

~ S.R.



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.

November's prompts

1. How has your immagination helped you?2. If you looked into a crystal ball, what would you hope to see?3. What would you do if you were invisable for a day?





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

 $\textbf{Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP):} \ \ \text{For those who have lost someone to substance use or addiction:} \ \underline{grasphelp.org}$

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 (\$\$)

 $\textbf{Depression Apps:} \ \textbf{Talk Space Online The rapy (\$\$), Happify (Free), MoodTools (CBT; Free)}$

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

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

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! :)

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EVERY TUESDAY
4:00-5:00 PM OPEN DISCUSSION/RECOVERY TOPICS
HOPE & HEALING RECOVERY CENTER:
2 MAPLE STREET, HUDSON FALLS
IN PERSON OR

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

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