

ROADS TO RECOVERY NEWSLETTER

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

*A newsletter for you
and about you*



Check Out Our *Peer Perspective* Pod Cast!

On ASCENDMW.org, SPOTIFY, IHeart Radio, Apple Pod Cast, and Amazon
“Peer Perspective” A new episode is released every Friday.

In May, for Mental Health Awareness Month, we are doing a special 5 week series.
Each week we will have a different topic that focuses on understanding your
mental health.

SPOTLIGHT TOPIC

New Peer Support, Welcome, Jenna!

BY GINGER MILLER

Since June of 2021, I have served as the CRPA and Peer Specialist for ASCEND Mental Wellness. In February this year, I took on the role of Dual Recovery Coordinator and I am excited to transition into and serve in this role.

The Peer role is important roll because it can be a gentle way for someone hesitant to ask for help, to see they are not alone and that it is ok to ask for help. Getting support and encouragement can be as easy as talking with someone else that ‘gets it’ because they too have struggled with addiction and/or mental health symptoms. Peers serve as role models and provide hope that others can make it in recovery too.

In March we hired a new Peer, Jenna Jackson. We believe Jenna, is a wonderful addition to the Support Services team her at ASCEND Mental Wellness. She has begun to make wonderful connections with the East Side Center members and many of the individuals in the Dual Recovery program. Jenna will be taking over the Dual Recovery Groups I have been running as well as any new one to one support coming into Dual Recovery. I asked Jenna to tell us a little bit about herself. Here’s what she wrote:

“Hello everyone! My name is Jenna Jackson and I am so excited to be joining the Ascend team. I am 28 years old and I am from the area. I have a passion for helping people and I love to be outside, connecting with nature. I am in recovery and currently have 18 months clean. I cannot wait to grow in the company and community and see where this takes me. I am so happy to have this opportunity and I look forward to what’s to come!”

~ Jenna

So, if you see Jenna in groups, at East Side Center, or out and about, be sure to stop and introduce yourself!

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UNDERSTANDING THE DIAGNOSIS

Social Anxiety Disorder

Resource: National Institute of Mental Health

According to the *National Institute of Mental Health* (NIMH) social anxiety disorder is a common type of anxiety disorder. It is an intense, persistent fear of being watched and judged by others. A person with social anxiety disorder feels symptoms of anxiety or fear in situations where they may be scrutinized, evaluated, or judged by others, such as speaking in public, meeting new people, dating, being on a job interview, answering a question in class, or having to talk to a cashier in a store. This fear can affect work, school, and other daily activities. It can even make it hard to make and keep friends. Doing everyday things, such as eating or drinking in front of others or using a public restroom, also may cause anxiety or fear due to concerns about being humiliated, judged, and rejected. The good news is that social anxiety disorder is treatable.

Social anxiety disorder usually starts during late childhood and may resemble extreme shyness or avoidance of situations or social interactions. It occurs more frequently in females than in males, and this gender difference is more pronounced in adolescents and young adults. Without treatment, social anxiety disorder can last for many years, or even a lifetime.

The risk for social anxiety disorder may run in families, but no one knows for sure why some family members have it while others don't.

NIMH goes on to explain that social anxiety disorder is generally treated with psychotherapy (sometimes called "talk therapy"), medication, or both. Speak with a health care provider about the best treatment for you. *Cognitive behavioral therapy* (CBT), a research-supported type of psychotherapy, is commonly used to treat social anxiety disorder.

Some signs and symptoms of social anxiety disorder are:

- Blush, sweat, or tremble.
- Have a rapid heart rate.
- Feel their "mind going blank," or feel sick to their stomach.
- Have a rigid body posture, or speak with an overly soft voice.
- Find it difficult to make eye contact, be around people they don't know, or talk to people in social situations, even when they want to.
- Feel self-consciousness or fear that people will judge them negatively.
- Avoid places where there are other people.

CBT teaches you different ways of thinking, behaving, and reacting to situations to help you feel less anxious and fearful. CBT also can help you learn and practice social skills, which is very important for treating social anxiety disorder. CBT has been well studied and is the gold standard for psychotherapy.

Healthcare providers may prescribe medication to treat social anxiety disorder. Different types of medication can be effective in treating this disorder, including antidepressants, beta-blockers, and anti-anxiety medications, such as benzodiazepines.

Antidepressants are commonly used to treat depression, but they also can help treat the symptoms of social anxiety disorder. They may take several weeks to start working.

Beta-blockers can help control some of the physical symptoms of social anxiety disorder, such as rapid heart rate, sweating, and tremors. Beta-blockers are commonly the medication of choice for the "performance anxiety" type of social anxiety disorder.

Benzodiazepines, which are anti-anxiety sedative medications, are powerful and begin working right away to reduce anxious feelings. These medications can be very effective in rapidly decreasing anxiety, but some people build up a tolerance to them and need higher and higher doses to get the same effect. Some people even become dependent on them or addicted to them. Therefore, a health care provider may prescribe them only for brief periods of time if you need them.



Social Anxiety Disorder (Con't)

Both psychotherapy and medication can take some time to work. Many people try more than one medication before finding the best one for them. A health care provider can work with you to find the best medication, dose, and duration of treatment for you. People with social anxiety disorder usually obtain the best results with a combination of medication and CBT or other psychotherapies.

If you're concerned you may have symptoms of social anxiety disorder, talk to a health care provider. After discussing your history, a health care provider may conduct a physical exam to ensure that an unrelated physical problem is not causing your symptoms. They might also refer you to a mental health professional, such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, or clinical social worker. The first step to effective treatment is to get a diagnosis, usually from a mental health professional.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Rumination. What Is It? How Can I Stop It?

BY GINGER MILLER



According to the [American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#), the definition of rumination is “obsessional thinking involving excessive, repetitive thoughts or themes that interfere with other forms of mental activity.” The [National Library of Medicine](#) published the article, *Reflecting on Rumination: Consequences, Causes, Mechanisms, and Treatment of Rumination* that explained “rumination results from dwelling on problematic goals developing into a learnt habit that involves the tendency to process negative information in an abstract way”. In simpler terms, rumination is when you feel like you are trapped in a seemingly endless, uncontrollable cycle of negative thoughts, emotions, and feelings that continue to snowball and grow.

Although ruminating is a pretty common thing, I have yet to meet someone that feels it is truly a beneficial activity. Ruminating and overthinking can make someone feel guilty, ashamed, out of control, and helpless. Some common things people tend to ruminate over are related to trauma, stress, worrying about some aspect of the past or future, or fear of being judged regarding something said or done, to name a few.

The APA goes on to explain, “as well as being a symptom, the habit of rumination can affect a person’s health by:

- prolonging or intensifying depression
- impairing your ability to think and process emotions
- causing or aggravating anxiety, sleep problems, and impulsive behaviors
- exacerbating and maintaining stress responses, leading to chronic stress
- increasing the risk of inflammation and physical health problems, as a result of stress
- increasing the risk of substance use disorders
-

Rumination can turn worry into a habit or a way of life”.

So, how can someone stop rumination once it starts? Recognizing it is the first step. In my experience it takes a little practice. Reasoning with myself doesn’t always work; in fact, when I first started working on it using logic and reasoning rarely worked. If you have a therapist, counselor, or mental health professional they can teach you skills that can help end the negative cycle.

Here are some things I’ve used to help me:

Get Support. Having a trusted friend, family member, therapist, or clergy member to talk through the rumination can help a person to see that sometimes the thoughts are not based in facts, or they may validate what we are struggling with. This can also help us not feel so alone. Sometimes, just hearing myself speak and talk it through can give me a different perspective. And of course, the person we are speaking with may be able to offer a different perspective or advice that could be helpful. A therapist can even help you dig into the core cause of your ruminating.



Rumination. (Con't)

Distraction. When I'm stuck inside my head being tortured by my own negative thoughts, distraction is one of the easier tools I use. I can put some music on, watch TV, play a video game, go for a walk in nature, or do some arts or crafts and it helps me. The distraction gets me to focus on something other than what's rolling around in my head. I just have to be careful that I'm not turning distraction into avoidance.

Practice Mindfulness. There are a lot of ways to practice mindfulness. My favorites are things like meditation, grounding techniques, and yoga or tai chi. There is a plethora of information on mindfulness on the internet including on YouTube, or even TikTok.

Journaling. Sometimes just getting what is rolling around in my mind out on paper helps. Some of my rumination comes from the fear of forgetting something, writing about that definitely keeps it from snowballing and I know it's on paper, so I won't forget. Sometimes I go back and read what I've written a day or two later to see if I can see the situation differently now and that is helpful too.

These are just a few ways I use to work on bringing the obsessive thoughts to a stop. Whatever method you try, remember it may take practice so don't give up. Be kind to yourself as you work on changing because change takes time and sometimes courage. And don't forget, asking for help with mental health is just as important as asking for help with any other health issue. Most importantly, know that you are worth it!

IS THIS MEETING FOR YOU?

Emotions Anonymous (EA)



Emotions Anonymous is a confidential peer-support group based on the Twelve Steps of *Alcoholics Anonymous* but adapted to those dealing with overwhelming emotions and emotional difficulties. EA meetings are not a replacement for professional therapies but are instead complementary support for individuals with emotional difficulties. They do not find it helpful to place labels on any degree of illness or health, and do not give advice or counsel. They do not endorse or oppose the use of any medication or therapy. They encourage each member to adhere to the advice of their healthcare provider. EA's aim is simply to use the tools and structure provided by the EA Twelve-Step program to create a safe, non-judgmental atmosphere that encourages individuals to make healthy life choices. One of the key tenets of EA is that one can learn to live with unsolved problems and find peace of mind. To that end, EA meetings provide a warm and caring atmosphere where individuals can feel free to share their concerns, hear of what has worked for others, and begin to alleviate feelings of fear, loneliness, and isolation. There are no dues, fees, or requirements to participate in EA meetings, other than a desire to become well emotionally. EA offers in-person and on-line meetings as well as e-mail and on-line loop groups.

For more information visit <https://emotionsanonymous.org> or call 651-647-9712.
For local support you can also text Doug at 518-788-8849

Riddle of the Month:

1. What number has all alphabetic letters in order when spelled out?
2. Why is everyone tired on April 1st?



Riddle Answer

1. Forty
2. Because they've just finished a long March!



Peer Perspective

BY GINGER MILLER

Dear Peer,

Recently, I got a new place. Before I shared a space with a roommate. We got along great, but she was moving so I had to find a new place. I am trying to get settled into my new place. I feel like this move has disrupted my routine. I feel really out of sorts. My routine is important and it helps me focus on day-to-day tasks. What can I do to help fix my routine and get back on track?

~ Out of Sorts

Dear Out of Sorts,

Congratulations on your new place! It can be exciting (in addition to stressful) to start a new chapter in life. I think moving is on the list of most disruptive things that happen in our life, no doubt it is playing havoc with your routines. I understand having routines are important for many reasons, one of which I believe is that it can support our mental wellbeing. When I'm going through a move, I remind myself (especially if I start getting anxious or fearful) that life will settle down again and that I have control over more than it may feel like in that moment. I try to keep as many of my routines as possible, even the simple or small ones, while being mindful of the fact that expecting myself to maintain all of them while everything is topsy-turvy is unrealistic. I do a lot of self-talk trying to stay focused on the positive and reminding myself that change is usually uncomfortable and that it is ok that it feels uncomfortable. Recognizing that putting some routines on hold, or cutting back on some, may be necessary for a short time may help relieve some of the stress moving can cause. An example might be if you usually go to the gym or exercise 5 days a week for an hour, while you are moving and trying to settle in maybe you change the routine to 3 days a week or only a half hour for the 5 days. Having a specific plan of when to resume the original routine such as, when the kitchen and bedroom are unpacked I'll move back to 4 days a week and when the bathroom and living room are settled I'll resume the 5th day.

As for the daily tasks, making lists has been helpful for me. I start with one list where I write everything I can think of that I need to do that I continue adding to as things come up. In the evening I review that list and pick out two really important tasks and a few other simpler ones and write them on a separate piece of paper as my next day's to-do list. It feels great crossing them off of the large list when I sit to write the next days list again. This is also a great way for me to see I'm making progress when it may not feel like I am - I see everything getting crossed off as I do it.

I believe it's important to be patient with yourself through the transition. Trying to be realistic about my time frames for getting things done and resuming routines I chose to change or put on hold is an important part of that. Equally important is having a plan of how and when to bring pieces of my routine back into play so that they don't slip away completely, it's hard enough having the routine disrupted but even harder, I believe, to have to start from scratch again after a long period of time.

~ 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 gmliller@ascendmw.org, or text it to 518-401-5991.

INSPIRATION & MOTIVATION





CREATIVE WRITING CORNER

Living in a mind that struggles to find the good in each day can be draining. But in this guide, you can turn things around with some effort. Our thoughts and the words we speak shape our perception of life. They accompany us like steadfast companions or adversaries, influencing our journey through life. They can either uplift us or weigh us down in tough times.

1. Change Your Music: One of the most impactful changes I made was in the music I listened to. It took me over two years of consistently filling my mind with positive tunes. It may start small, but actively seeking out songs that uplift can gradually replace negative thoughts. Remember, consistency is key. Keep seeking out uplifting music, and over time, it will become effortless as your mindset shifts.
2. Listen Differently: Pay attention to the words people say. If something resonates with you, consider how you can apply it to your life. Simple phrases like "don't look back" or "you can be better today than yesterday" can be powerful reminders. And don't underestimate the impact of expressing gratitude to others – it can elicit smiles that brighten your day.
3. Spread Laughter: Making others laugh not only brings joy to them but also to yourself. Laughter can be a powerful tool for moving forward and lightening your mood. As you focus on bringing joy to others, you'll find yourself dwelling less on past mistakes and gaining momentum toward a brighter outlook.
4. Write Notes: Consider jotting down things you enjoy or look forward to. It may sound simple, but these reminders can serve as beacons of positivity in your day-to-day life.
5. Give Compliments: Genuine compliments not only lift others' spirits but also enhance your own self-esteem. Make it a habit to notice and acknowledge the positive qualities in others. You'll find that spreading positivity can have a ripple effect, improving your interactions and overall mood.
6. Embrace Excitement: Cultivate enthusiasm for the things you're looking forward to. This may require some effort, but by focusing on the positive aspects of your life, you can gradually shift your emotional landscape.

Remember, change takes time and effort. Commit to these practices daily, and be patient with yourself as you navigate this journey. Revisit this guide regularly to reaffirm your commitment and track your progress. With dedication and perseverance, you'll witness the transformative power of positivity in your life.

~ "A Friend"

What are you most proud of?

I am proud of me being sober for 11 years.
And proud that I have housing that is like living alone.
I am proud of my daughter and son-in-law. I'm proud of the fact I know my selfworth.
I am proud to say I haven't smoked for a year now.

~ Anonymous

What is your idea of a dream job?

To become a nurse working with little kids because I care a lot about other people. Little kids get scared and if I could make it less scary for them it would be wonderful for me.

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



To submit your writing please email it to gmler@ascendmw.org, mail it to ASCEND, Dual Recovery Department, 230 Maple St., Glens Falls, NY 12801, or drop it off in the Peer Pod at the East Side Center at the address above.

March/April prompts

1. Write about a time you took the path less traveled.
2. Write about a time you came in first.
3. Write a story about camping or roughing it when you found friends, first loves, or scraped knees. What is one of your favorite camping memories?

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** When calling Press 1 for Veterans, Press 2 for Spanish, Press 3 for LGBTQIA+, 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

National Human Trafficking 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: grasphehelp.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)

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)

Weekly Podcast: "Peer Perspective"
On Spotify, iHeart Radio, Apple,
Amazon, or at ASCENDMW.org

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

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INFORMATION & COPIES OF OUR NEWSLETTERS

THANKS FOR READING! :)

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR
NEWSLETTERS, PLEASE EMAIL US AT
GMILLER@ASCENDMW.ORG OR CALL 518-401-5991

