

ISSUE 47 • MAY/JUNE 2025

ROADS TO RECOVERY
NEWSLETTER

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

A newsletter for you
and about you



SPOTLIGHT TOPIC

Meet Our Peers

By Ginger Miller

The Ascend Peer team is growing! We'd like you to get to know them a little. I've asked each of them to share a few hobbies they have, their favorite get-away or relaxing place to go, a few go-to self-care activities they do, and what strengths they have that help them be good Peers.

ASHLEY MARIE is our community Dual Recovery Peer. She facilitates groups both within Ascend locations and in the community and she provides one to one Peer support.

Hobbies: Call of Duty Mobile (New addition)!! Singing along with the radio and making up my own lyrics, yoga and working out, playing with my nine month old, watching horror movies with my oldest.

Get-away: I'm not going to tell you where, but if you see me around feel free to ask! It's a beautiful spot on the Hudson River to park, swim, grill, or just watch the water and nature. It's only 5 minutes from Glens Falls.

Self-care: A hot hot hot shower with essential oils and loud music. Sitting on my back porch and enjoying the peace for a moment, or sometimes just yelling loudly (RAAAAARRRRR) to let off steam.

Strengths: Adaptability and Empathy, and the ability to admit I don't know everything. ❤️

JARED RACE is our East Side Center Peer. He facilitates groups at East Side Center and provides support for our East Side Center members.

Hobbies: A few of my hobbies include fishing, hiking, and bodybuilding.

Get-away: My favorite place to relax is somewhere outdoors, maybe by a lake, pond, beach, etc.

Self-care: My self care activities would be reading, meditation, and exercise.

Strengths: My empathetic and nonjudgmental attitude are important strengths in my role as a Peer Specialist.

JAMES LAVAIR is our Relief Peer. Our Relief Peer covers facilitating groups when other Peers are unable to run their regular groups.

Hobbies: I love music, watching sitcoms, riding my e-bike, and bowling.

Get-away: I visit friends near and farther away.

Self-care: I love walking while listening to my music.

Strengths: I'm a good listener and can provide good insight to many situations.

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UNDERSTANDING THE DIAGNOSIS

DEMENTIA

Dementia is not a single disease. It's an overall term to describe a collection of symptoms that one may experience if they are living with a variety of diseases. Diseases grouped under the general term "dementia" are caused by abnormal brain changes. Dementia symptoms trigger a decline in thinking skills, also known as cognitive abilities, severe enough to impair daily life and independent function. They also affect behavior, feelings and relationships.

According to the Mayo Clinic to diagnose the cause of dementia, a health care professional must recognize the pattern of loss of skills and function. The care professional also determines what the person is still able to do. More recently, biomarkers have become available to make a more accurate diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease. A health care professional reviews your medical history and symptoms and conducts a physical exam. Someone who is close to you may be asked about your symptoms as well. No single test can diagnose dementia.

A number of tests measure thinking skills, such as memory, orientation, reasoning and judgment, language skills, and attention. Your memory, language skills, visual perception, attention, problem-solving skills, movement, senses, balance, reflexes and other areas are evaluated.

Here are some common tests that may be done. CT or MRI can check for evidence of stroke, bleeding, tumor or fluid buildup, known as hydrocephalus. PET scans can show patterns of brain activity. They can determine whether amyloid or tau protein, hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease, have been deposited in the brain. Simple blood tests can detect physical problems that can affect brain function, such as too little vitamin B-12 in the body or an underactive thyroid gland. Sometimes the spinal fluid is examined for infection, for inflammation or for markers of some degenerative diseases. A mental health professional can determine whether depression or another mental health condition is contributing to your symptoms.

Most types of dementia can't be cured, but there are ways to manage your symptoms.

For more information please consult your physician or visit: <https://dementiasociety.org> or the Alzheimer's Association at <https://alz.org>

Here are a few ways you can try to help yourself cope with the disease:

- Learn about memory loss, dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

- Stay active and involved. Volunteer, exercise and join a local support group.

- Find new ways to express yourself, such as through painting, singing or writing.

- Delegate help with decision-making to someone you trust.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Healing & Building Healthy Relationships

AN ARTICLE BY DR. RICK HANSON FROM BEING WELL, INC.



Most of us didn't get everything we needed growing up. That's not a criticism of our parents—it's just the human condition. But the wounds of early relationships can leave a lasting imprint: a deep sense of anxiety about closeness, or a persistent habit of pushing people away.

These patterns are often rooted in our attachment style. But here's the hopeful part: you're not stuck with them. You can become more securely attached over time. I've seen it in my own life. It takes awareness, intention, and a few key practices—but it's absolutely possible.

Here are a few things you can start doing today to shift to a more secure place in your relationships.

Recognize Your Worth—and Be on Your Own Side

Before you try to change or "fix" anything about yourself, pause. You are already worthy of love and belonging, just as you are. This deep sense of self-acceptance is the foundation of secure attachment—and it grows stronger when you consciously choose to be on your own side.



Healthy Relationships (Con't)

For those with anxious attachment, this soothes the fear that you're only lovable when you're in distress. For avoidant types, it helps build trust that you're worthy of closeness—even when you let others in.

A few gentle ways to practice this:

- Speak to yourself with kindness, especially when you're hurting.
- Set boundaries that support your well-being and help you maintain healthy connections.
- Reflect on what you genuinely like about yourself—big or small.
- Remember moments when you felt truly accepted by someone.

Remind yourself often: "I'm on my own side."

Name What Was Missing — Kindly and Clearly

The first step toward healing is developing a coherent narrative about your early relationships. This doesn't mean blaming or rehashing everything that went wrong. Instead, it means telling the truth—to yourself—with compassion. Ask yourself:

- What did I long for as a child that I didn't receive consistently?
- How have I carried those unmet needs into my adult relationships?
- As a result, how do I feel in relationships now — do I crave reassurance, or pull away?

Creating this kind of narrative helps loosen the grip of old pain. It creates space to see your patterns for what they are: understandable adaptations to a tough situation—not flaws in who you are.

Look for Little Moments of Connection—and Take Them In

So often, we overlook the good in our relationships. Someone smiles at us. A friend checks in. A coworker listens patiently. These are real moments of connection—and they're the raw material of secure attachment. But for them to be healing, we need to internalize them. Here's how:

- Slow down. Stay with the experience for 5, 10, even 20 seconds.
- Feel it in your body: warmth, relaxation, a softening inside.
- Let it sink in. Let yourself receive it, like sunlight on your skin.

These small practices, repeated over time, start to shift the emotional brain. They build new pathways of security, replacing the old, painful ones.

Seek Out Healthy Relationships

Healing happens in relationships. And one of the most powerful things you can do is to intentionally seek out relationships that are steady, respectful, and kind—even if they're not especially close or deep (yet).

Start small. Maybe it's spending a little more time with a friend who's consistently warm. Or getting to know someone in your community or workplace who seems emotionally steady. Maybe it's a therapist, a support group, or just a neighbor you enjoy chatting with. The key is to notice how you feel around them. Ask yourself:

- Do I feel seen?
- Do I feel relaxed, accepted, or able to be myself with them?
- Do they listen and respond with warmth and consistency?

These are the kinds of experiences that slowly begin to undo old conditioning.

Take It One Small Step at a Time

It's not realistic to expect yourself to transform overnight or suddenly becoming fearless in relationships. This is about taking small, doable steps that gently expand your comfort zone.



Healthy Relationships (Con't)

If you tend to avoid closeness, try:

- making eye contact a little longer
- sharing a personal thought or feeling with someone safe
- let someone help you, even in a small way

If you tend to cling or feel anxious, try:

- pausing before reaching out, soothing yourself first
- turn a clinging complaint into a respectful request
- give others a little more space — while reminding yourself that space doesn't mean disconnection

You don't have to take big leaps. In fact, the nervous system learns best through consistent, small signals of safety and connection. Each little act of openness, each moment of presence, becomes a building block of secure attachment. Over time, those tiny shifts create big changes.

This process isn't easy—but it's deeply rewarding. You deserve relationships where you don't have to chase or protect yourself. And little by little, you can start building them.

Riddles of the Month:

1. What could make an octopus laugh?
2. What is always on the ground but never dirty?



Riddle Answers

1. Ten-tickles
2. A Shadow

IS THIS MEETING FOR YOU?

Recovery Dharma (RD)

Recovery Dharma Is for all addictions. It is trauma-informed. They practice meditation in every meeting. Although it is Buddhist-inspired, it is not required to be Buddhist or believe in a Higher Power. They teach that you're empowered—not powerless. It is compatible with other programs. Their spiritual principles include: Compassion, Kindness, and Generosity. They strive for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility.

Recovery Dharma is a peer-led movement and community that is unified by their trust in the potential of each of us to recover and find freedom from the suffering of addiction. They believe that the traditional Buddhist teachings, often referred to as the Dharma, offer a powerful approach to healing from addiction and living a life of true freedom. The Four Truths they teach are: 1st There is suffering - We experience suffering in this life. 2nd There's a cause of suffering - We experience that craving, aversion, and ignorance lead to suffering. 3rd There's a way of ending suffering - We experience that less craving, aversion, and ignorance leads to less suffering. 4th There's a path that leads to ending suffering - We cultivate and experience the path of recovery and awakening.

They believe that recovery means empowerment, and in supporting each other as partners while walking the path together. They believe that recovery is rooted in finding our own inner wisdom and individual journeys. Recovery Dharma is founded on, and inspired by, Buddhism that originated in India and later on flourished in other regions of Asia.

To learn more about Recovery Dharma visit: <https://recoverydharma.org/get-started/beginners/>

Meetings are held in person and online. Although there are in person meeting in New York State, there aren't any in our immediate area. To find an online meeting go to: <https://recoverydharma.org/meetings/>



MENTAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT

TIPS &
TOOLS



Where To Begin - Setting Goals

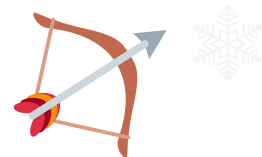
BY GINGER MILLER

I remember, back before I decided to work on my mental health, I didn't even really know what I wanted or needed to work on; I just knew I felt different than most people around me...broken even. As far as I knew, my life, health, circumstances, etc. weren't really different than the people I knew and were around, I thought I had a normal life. Maybe you can relate to this kind of thinking.

After a few decades of muddling through life, I heard a phrase that stuck with me in multiple ways. "Nothing changes, if nothing changes." So began my journey looking at my mental health more closely and I didn't even realize it at the time. The bottom line is; to make changes we need to identify what needs to be changed. Whether you feel something like I did and have to do some self-reflecting or soul searching to figure out what you want to change, or you have an idea; this needs to be tackled like any other task. Using SMART goals will help, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timebound.

First. Define your goals, they can be big or small goals, but they need to be specific. Examples:

1. I want to be more comfortable talking with people.
2. I want to see if I can take less medication, so I don't feel lethargic.
3. I want to become a more positive person.



Second. Look at what actions you can take to accomplish them. Make sure the actions are measurable. Write them out to refer to when you are confused, overwhelmed, or are not thinking your best. Examples: (continuing from prior 3)

1. I will make an effort to say hello to at least 3 people a day that I do not know. Just smile and say hello. Once I can do that I will start adding a general comment to the hello like, 'nice day out today' or 'I like your shoes'.
2. I will make an appointment with my Dr. to explain the reasons I want to take less medication to see if it is a possibility. Perhaps I can taper off one or a new one could replace two of the current ones I take. If that is possible great! If it isn't I'll start looking into natural things to support what my medication helps with – yoga, natural supplements, therapy, etc.
3. I will walk to the park at least 2 times a week and watch to see what makes people seem happy.

Third. Now look at the first action you created for yourself and ask, "Can I realistically do that?" "Is this achievable?" If even one action feels too big, break it down into a smaller action. Continuing with examples:

1. That sounds scary so I will change it to 2 people a day at least 3 days a week.
2. Yes, I can make an appointment with my Dr. I'll write down the questions I have to bring with me so I won't forget them because I'm nervous. Maybe my care manager could help me with that.
3. Yes, I can walk to the park twice a week.

Fourth. The next thing to do is make sure the action is relevant to the goal you want to achieve. Is it likely to help build toward the ultimate goal. Continuing with examples:

1. Yes, pushing myself gently past my comfort zone on a regular basis could help me become more comfortable talking to people more often.
2. Yes, talking to my Dr. is the best place to start to see if I can change my medications and energy levels.
3. Maybe not, just watching people isn't making a change. I will change my second action to - I will start finding positive quotes or sayings I like and write them in a notebook. Then I will choose 5 to put on sticky notes I can post around me to be encouraged throughout the day. Then when I look at the third action again – Yes, I can find positive quotes and write them down.



Where To Begin (Con't)

Fifth. Lastly it is important that we put a time frame on it, otherwise we may just forget about it or not recognize when we have accomplished it and can move to the next action. Did your action include a time frame? Continuing with the examples:

1. No, I didn't set a time – I will do three days a week for 3 weeks.
2. No, I will call and make the Dr appointment before this Friday.
3. No, I will have the 5 positive sticky notes written before Wednesday night.



At this point the SMART goals are in place. The goal may remain the same for some time as you accomplish each action, change the action to continue moving toward the ultimate goal. (Example in the second step, example one, the person will add a few words to their "Hello" after doing just 'Hello' for three weeks.) The actions may vary, some may be quick or easy while others may take more time or be a little more challenging, that's ok, just keep at it! Another advantage of writing these out is that you can look back on your achievements over time. Sometimes we don't see our own growth. Something that is helpful for many is to have an 'accountability partner' while working on goals. Basically, someone (friend, parent, sibling, co-worker, therapist, etc.) who agrees to check in with you to see if you are continuing to work on the actions to get you to your goal. It's best if your 'accountability partner' is able to agree to do this on a regular basis with you whether it be once a day, once a week, or once a month depending on how challenging the action is or how much encouragement or support you need with it.

Now you have a tool for your toolbox that we discussed in the last issue! Check back in our next issue to pick up another tool to try. If you would like to share an example of how you used this tool please feel free to send it in for others to see how this tool worked for you. Here's a chart to help you out.

Ultimate Specific Goal: _____

The first Measurable action you take toward that goal: _____

Is it an Achievable action? _____

Is the action Relevant to the ultimate goal? _____

Did you put a Time frame on it? _____

Did you have to make any adjustments (like in example 3) as you were creating your SMART goal? _____

If so, please explain some. _____

Did you utilize an accountability partner? _____ Who? (Friend, Family, Therapist, Priest, etc.)

Did having an accountability partner help? (if you did) _____ How? _____

Did you find this tool helpful? _____ Will you use it again or continue to use it? _____

To submit your experience please email it to gmler@ascendmw.org or mail it to ASCEND Dual Recovery Department, 230 Maple St., Glens Falls, NY 12801.

Open Access at Caleo Counseling Services (ASCEND's Clinical outpatient mental health clinic) is available Monday through Thursday from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM at 3043 State Route 4 in Hudson Falls, NY. Mental health clinicians' availability may vary for mental health assessments, and treatment recommendations or referrals will be made as appropriate. Please note that Open Access services are for adults only.

INSPIRATION & MOTIVATION





CREATIVE WRITING CORNER



B



This Memorial Day I'm hoping to go on vacation with my family. It's going to be the first vacation in a very long time. I'm planning on going to New Hampshire or Maine. I can't wait to be by the ocean; if I could I'd live on the beach.

~ Paizley

t

I have really good memories of spring when my great grandparents were alive and I would go over to their place and spend time with them.

My fondest memory is having my family all together enjoying holidays and birthdays at my father's house with my mother and father, brother and sister. Eating dinner and enjoying the meal and food all together. I enjoyed walking the block with my Aunt Olsa; she and my Uncle where my favorites.

A special summer memory I have is the first time I saw the ocean in Atlantic City. I rode, the waves all day! I had a blast, my fear of sharks slipped my mind and I was in the water most of the day!!

~ Bob M.

~ Alec B.

~ Laura D.

~ Vera M.

"Saying 'no' is never easy, but it has been my mojo for the past six months and I can tell you it has changed my life! One of my biggest fears was saying 'no' to my dad, as even though I'm a 40-year-old woman I always seek his approval. But this past winter something changed.

My dad holds a lot of resentment and basically hates one of my mother's brothers. Yes, my uncle is not an easy person and has many areas of opportunity, but he has always been nice to me and we have a good relationship. So when my husband and I traveled to visit my family last February, my uncle invited us for dinner at his place.

Before the dinner, my dad found out about the invitation and he got furious and told me I was betraying him and the family and that he forbade us going to the dinner!

In the past I would just say OK dad, apologize to him and figure out an excuse to miss the dinner, but this time I said 'no':
'No' to inheriting a resentment and a grudge from a previous generation that has nothing to do with me
'No' to doing what my father wants me to do instead of what I want to do
'No' to allowing him to treat me poorly and making me feel bad because I didn't follow his desires
'No' to letting him dictate my relationships with my extended family

Of course my dad didn't expect my reaction and he didn't like it, but he ended up accepting it and my husband and I went to the dinner and had a wonderful time with my uncle.

It is never easy, but it feels so good to put yourself first!"

~ Laura

We would love to hear from you! 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.

May/June Prompts

1. If a museum had an exhibit about you, what items would they put on display and why?
2. How would you spend your time if you turned invisible for a week?

To submit your writing please email it to gmler@ascendmw.org or mail it to ASCEND Dual Recovery Department, 230 Maple St., Glens Falls, NY 12801.

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)

Problem Gambling Northeast Resource Center: (518) 801-1491

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: 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)

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)

Check Out Our Peer Perspective Podcast!
On ASCENDMW.org, SPOTIFY, IHeart Radio,
Apple Pod Cast, and Amazon

ASCEND DUAL RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUPS

EVERY TUESDAY
4:30-5:30 PM OPEN DISCUSSION/RECOVERY TOPICS
HOPE & HEALING RECOVERY CENTER:
37 CHESTER STREET, GLENS FALLS
IN PERSON OR
VIRTUALLY - ZOOM MEETING ID: 844-2214-0148

PLEASE VISIT [WWW.ASCENDMW.ORG](https://www.ascendmw.org) FOR MORE
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THANKS FOR READING! :)

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



**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR SUPPORT**