

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

Tails of Communication

By Ginger Miller

Animals use their tails as a visual communication tool to express emotions like fear, happiness, and aggression, or to signal danger and mark territory. The tail position, speed of movement, and posture communicate specific messages.

Let's look at few animals in the wild. When a beaver slaps its tail on the water it is warning other beavers of danger. Perhaps you've come across a white-tailed deer eating grass; until it notices you its short tail was relaxed and down. As soon as the deer is alarmed it flashes the white underside of its tail, signaling to other deer in the area the possibility of danger. Squirrels will vigorously flick their tail, known as "tail flagging", to warn other squirrels and even the predator itself, that they have been spotted, removing the element of surprise. Male turkeys and peacocks unfurl their large, colorful tail feathers in elaborate displays to attract mates. Pack animals will often use their tails as a way of saying 'follow me'. Holding their tails bolt upright like an antenna as they run through tall grass allows for their family or pack to follow them more easily.

Here's what our domestic friends are telling us with their tails. When a dog's tail is loose and wide swinging it often indicates happiness, while a high, stiff tail suggests aggression or alertness. Tucking the tail between the legs signifies fear or submission. A fast, low wag might indicate nervousness. When a cat struts with its tail straight-up, it often indicates a friendly greeting. A gentle swish indicates relaxation, whereas a rapidly twitching or thumping tail indicates irritation or intense focus. A puffy tail signifies fear or a defensive state.

What about us humans; what do our **tales** communicate to others? (see that play on words I pulled there?!) Human tales communicate vital social, cultural, and emotional information. They often act as tools for teaching, building empathy or understanding, fostering cooperation, strengthen community bonds, and transmitting knowledge. They connect individuals by sharing experiences, reinforcing community bonds, and helping people make sense of a complex world. Some common tales I heard as a child were: The Boy Who Cried Wolf, Little Bunny Foo Foo, Johnny Appleseed, Stone Soup, Chicken Little, Br'er Rabbit, and of course how BIG that fish was that Grandpa caught. That last one actually falls in a slightly different category of tales, the white lie.

The white lies (tales) we tell also communicate hidden messages. For example, if we look at why the person is telling the white lie, it tells us something about them. People tell white lies primarily to spare others' feelings, maintain social harmony, and avoid awkwardness or conflict. For example, the key motivation of



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kindness might incline a small untruth to protect someone from hurt feelings, such as complimenting a bad haircut. Another motivation might be to maintain social politeness, such as saying "I'm fine" or fabricating a polite excuse to decline an invitation. Sometimes these tales are told as a way of protecting oneself from embarrassment, punishment, or uncomfortable confrontations; common of children trying to avoid punishment. Then there is the reason as means of boosting someone's confidence or admiration (or our own), like Grandpa's BIG fish.

The trouble with these **tales** (white lies) is that, while they may be beneficial for social interaction in the moment, that **tail** can whip back around sometimes and sting when it slaps us with damaged trust if the truth is later revealed.



 Warren/Washington Connections is a new feature to our Newsletter. This section will provide information on resources that may be helpful to you or someone you support in our local communities.

WARREN/WASHINGTON CONNECTIONS

Four Winds Hospital

BY JARED RACE



Four Winds is a private psychiatric hospital located at 30 Crescent Avenue, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866, just 25 minutes south of Glens Falls. They offer both inpatient and outpatient services for children, adolescents, and adults. Four Winds strives to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for all individuals, while encouraging wellness and growth.

Their inpatient care is appropriate for those feeling suicidal or suffering from a serious mental health crisis that impacts their ability to function in everyday life. Outpatient services can be an alternative to inpatient services. Outpatient can also assist individuals ready to be released from inpatient services, and reevaluate their current long-term outpatient support.

Four Winds accepts most types of insurance. New York State Medicaid covers partial hospital service individuals 21 years old or older, and inpatient services for individuals under 21 or over 65. Managed Medicaid covers services for all ages. If an individual does not have health insurance, they charge a flat rate of \$13,000 up front for inpatient care.

Four Winds does not restrict its services to specific regions. Anyone is welcome to inquire about treatment at their facility, as Four Winds does not restrict its services to specific regions. Examples of common referral sources include: emergency rooms, clinicians, schools, physicians, employers, clergy, Employee Assistance Programs, managed care organizations, and more. An individual can also get in touch with Four Winds on their own behalf at 518-584-3600, ext. 3001 or 1-800-888-5448.

For more information about Four Winds, visit their website at <https://www.fourwindshospital.com>.



Riddles of the Month:

1. What kind of ship has two mates but no captain?

2. Paul's height is 6 feet, he's an assistant at a butcher shop and wears size 9 shoes. What does Paul weigh?



Riddle Answers

1. A relationship

2. Meat



HEALTH & WELLNESS

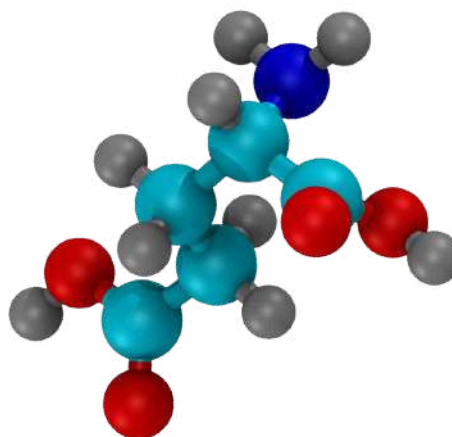
The Importance of Nutrition: Protein

By Jared Race

Protein is an important macronutrient involved with several bodily functions, consisting of twenty building blocks called amino acids. Eleven of these amino acids can be made by the body. However, the other nine must be consumed in our diet, therefore, are essential. Furthermore, to utilize a protein consumed in the diet, all of the essential amino acids must be present at once. Most parts of our body contain proteins, including hair, skin, muscle, bones, etc. Protein also influences muscle growth, tissue repair, immune system function, hormone and enzyme synthesis, among other functions.

The Nine Essential Amino Acids

- * Histidine
- * Isoleucine
- * Leucine
- * Lysine
- * Methionine
- * Phenylalanine
- * Threonine
- * Tryptophan
- * Valine



A protein that consists of all nine essential amino acids is considered a complete protein. Some examples include dairy products, beef, poultry, fish, pork, and eggs.

There are some vegan sources of complete protein, including quinoa and soy products. Notably, many vegan options do not contain all essential amino acids, making meat and dairy products a more convenient source of protein. Many high-protein vegetables are also nutrient dense, meaning they provide a high amount of nutrients relative to their calorie content. Because of this, they can promote feelings of fullness, which may lead to eating less overall compared to less nutrient-dense foods. In some cases, this can make it difficult to eat enough plant-based foods to meet the recommended daily protein intake. That said, this doesn't necessarily apply in the same way to other nutrients such as fiber, vitamins, and minerals, as veggies are a wonderful source of these essential micronutrients.

Notably, you can combine two or more incomplete proteins to make a complete protein, if the proteins include all nine essential amino acids when added together. Many people know that rice and beans are often combined for meals. However, it's not exactly common knowledge that these two foods complement each other by providing all nine essential amino acids neither food could provide on their own. Rice has a sufficient amount of amino acids, except for lysine. This is the same for beans, except the amino acid deficiency is in methionine. When these two foods are combined, their individual deficiencies are compensated for.



Mental health can be influenced by our diet, and protein is no exception. For example, some high-protein diets such as the Mediterranean diet have been shown to reduce the likelihood of developing a neurodegenerative disease. Amino acids are also the building blocks for several neurotransmitters, which are chemical signals that influence our thoughts, behavior, and mood, along with other bodily processes. For example, serotonin, a neurotransmitter associated with the regulation of mood, sleep, and sexual behavior, is composed of the essential amino acid tryptophan. Additionally, phenylalanine, another essential amino acid, is necessary for dopamine production, a neurotransmitter which influences the reward center of the brain. Overall, protein is crucial for maintaining good mental and physical health.



MENTAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Black-and-White Thinking

BY GINGER MILLER



TIPS &
TOOLS

Have you ever found yourself with thoughts like: "If I can't follow this diet perfectly, I might as well eat everything in sight.", "I made an error in the report, which means I'm terrible at my job.", "If they don't respond to my text immediately, they are ignoring me.", "If I don't get the top job, I am a failure.", or "My partner was late, so they must not care about me at all."? Perhaps you notice that you use the words 'always' and 'never' frequently? Such as 'You always say that.' and 'You never help.' If you have thoughts or speak like that frequently, you may have developed some cognitive distortions.

Cognitive distortions are "thinking errors" that all people are prone to having from time to time. Thinking in extremes or absolutes is often referred to as black-and-white thinking or all-or-nothing thinking; clinically known as dichotomous thinking. They are exaggerated patterns of thought that influence how people think, feel, and act. Most cognitive distortions, including black-and-white thinking, can cause people to view things about themselves, others, and the world around them in a negative way. Cognitive distortions often contribute to poor decision-making. Addressing this thinking style can help reduce emotional distress, encourage flexible thinking and perspectives, and support relapse preventions.



Some indicators of black-and-white thinking include perfectionism, a narrow perspective, and difficulty compromising. This style of thinking can amplify emotional distress, restrict behavioral flexibility, and maintain difficulties such as depression, eating disorders, perfectionism, and relationship difficulties.

Tools such as self-monitoring, decentering, and distancing, scaling judgments, dialectical (both and) thinking, and conducting surveys to test assumptions in the real world context has proven helpful in addressing black-and-white thinking.

If you recognize that you have black-and-white thinking there are some questions you can ask yourself in those moments that will help you work on correcting those "thinking errors" and perhaps relieve some of the stress or depression that it may be contributing to.

Another tool that can be helpful is to try to look at the thought from a compassionate perspective. These kinds of statements acknowledge the challenges of perfectionism, validate our feelings, and offer supportive and encouraging alternatives to all-or-nothing thinking. They remind us that they are worthy of success and happiness, regardless of our imperfections, and encourage us to embrace a growth mindset that values progress and learning over perfection.

Questions to ask yourself:

- What evidence do you have to support this all-or-nothing thought?
- What are some alternative explanations for the situation?
- How likely is it that this extreme outcome will occur?
- Are there any shades of grey in this situation?
- How would someone else view this situation? What would they say?
- Are there any exceptions to this all-or-nothing thinking?
- What advice would you give to a friend who was thinking in this way?

Examples of Compassionate Perspective:

- "It's okay if I'm not perfect. Success can come from learning, growing, and doing the best that I can."
- "I don't have to be flawless to achieve my goals. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses, and I can embrace my imperfections and focus on my progress."
- "I am worthy of success even if I make mistakes. Being perfect is not a requirement for happiness and fulfillment."
- "I can be proud of myself for trying, even if I don't get everything right. My efforts and progress are what matter, not perfection."

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.



IS THIS MEETING/RESOURCE FOR YOU?

Refuge Recovery - A Different Path To Healing

BY MCKENZIE SECOR

In recovery, everyone's path can look a little different. For some people, traditional meetings like Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous are exactly what they need. For others, exploring different approaches can open the door to new ways of healing. That's where Refuge Recovery can come in.

Refuge Recovery is a mindfulness-based recovery program inspired by Buddhist principles. The meetings focus on meditation, self-reflection, and learning how to respond to life with awareness instead of reacting in ways that once led us back to substances.

What makes these meetings unique is the calm and grounding atmosphere. Each meeting usually begins with a guided meditation, followed by a reading and open sharing. It gives people the chance to slow down, connect with themselves, and talk honestly about what recovery looks like in their lives. From personal experience, the Hope & Healing Refuge Recovery meeting is an open, supportive setting where beginners could explore meditation at their own pace.

For many people in recovery, addiction was never just about the substances. It can come from pain, trauma, grief, mental health struggles, or feeling disconnected from ourselves and others. Refuge Recovery helps people learn how to sit with those feelings, understand them, and move through them without needing to escape.

The biggest thing people often take away from Refuge Recovery is the reminder that healing is possible. Through mindfulness, compassion, and community, people learn that recovery can be more than just staying sober, it can be about building a life that actually feels worth living.

Whether someone is brand new to recovery or has years of sobriety, Refuge Recovery offers another path and another supportive community for the journey.

There are two in-person meetings in the upstate NY area: Monday 6:30pm at Healing Springs, 125 High Rock Ave, Saratoga Springs and Wednesday 4pm at Hope & Healing, 37 Chester St, Glens Falls. See the website for others or zoom meetings. <https://www.refugerecovery.org/>

INSPIRATION & MOTIVATION



Once upon a time, a group of frogs was hopping merrily through the forest, enjoying the sunshine and the cool shade of the trees. As they leaped along, two of the frogs weren't paying attention and accidentally fell into a deep, dark pit. The pit was so deep that when the other frogs gathered around the edge, they could barely see their two friends at the bottom. The trapped frogs immediately began jumping, trying to escape, but the walls were steep and slippery. The frogs at the top saw how difficult the climb was and began shouting down to their friends. "It's too deep! You'll never get out!" they said. "Just give up, there's no hope!" Despite the discouraging words, the two frogs in the pit continued to jump as high as they could. They were determined to escape, no matter what. After several attempts, however, one of the frogs, exhausted and disheartened by the negative comments, gave up and lay still at the bottom of the pit. The other frog, however, kept jumping with all his might. He leaped higher and higher, undeterred by the shouts from above. Finally, with one mighty effort, he made it to the top and clambered out of the pit. The frogs who had been watching were amazed. They couldn't understand how he had managed to escape. They crowded around him, asking, "How did you do it? We thought it was impossible!" The frog looked at them, puzzled. Then, with the help of gestures, he explained that he was deaf and had thought they were cheering him on and encouraging him to keep trying!

Creativity

CREATIVE WRITING CORNER



If I were at the beach I'd like to put a message in a bottle and send it back into the waves for someone else to find. The message would say, "Remember you are beautiful. Remember you are never alone. You are strong. Always pay it forward when someone needs the positivity in their life.



~ Alec B.

My favorite things about Spring using my five senses are:



On the sunny path we a lot of friendly animals but there was one that was overjoyed to see us. We got to see that he could talk and had magical powers; he showed us many tricks.

~ Beth W.

The taste of fresh fruits.
Listening to the birds chirp.
Seeing all the fresh grass, plants, and flowers come to life and the animals coming out to play.
The fresh scent of grass and flowers.
Touching the bare sand with my toes at the waters edge.

~ Cookie



The garden is my favorite place to be. I love to go there early in the morning, sit in the gazebo with a cup of coffee and hear the cardinal that visits our garden sing. On a rainy day I love to go to the high tunnel to work and hear the rain falling gently on the plastic roof. I feel safe and secure there. Sometimes I sing the hymn 'In The Garden'. I am reminded of my father's love of gardening and the quiet seeking of mutual enjoyment and comradery I felt with him while working there.

~ Anita K.



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.

March/April Prompts

1. Describe a place where you feel at peace.
2. Describe in detail something in nature that brings you joy.

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.



PERSONAL STORIES/ MOMENTS THAT MATTER

Kindness Matters

We've probably all done some type of gesture of kindness. Holding a door open for someone, buying a stranger a cup of coffee, a compliment, taking an extra minute to sit with someone in distress, etc. What we may not realize is how powerful that act of kindness may have been to the person receiving it - moments that matter. The *Moments That Matter* articles will highlight those gestures of kindness that had a large impact on someone. What may seem like a small or insignificant gesture to us at the moment may be just what the person receiving it NEEDED in that moment to help them hold on; hold on to hope, a moment of happiness, the fact that they matter, or maybe the belief in kindness or humanity. The ones featured in this issue were done by the mother of a child needing babysitting, a 7th-grade English teacher, and a collaborative effort by a Police Officer, a Pastor, and an unknown woman. Although these may be feel-good moments to read about, they are REAL and had a significant impact.

Responses to: "Who taught you what kindness looks like?"



A Babysitting Job



A lady I used to babysit for. When I was a teen, life was very dark and she realized it without me expressing it. She always expressed she cared and helped get me into therapy.

~ Janice



7th Grade Teacher

I'd have to say my 7th grade English teacher. She totally change my outlook in life. All I knew was abuse; mentally, emotionally, and physically. She showed me a whole different world by being kind and caring so much.

~ Cookie



The Policeman, The Pastor, and An Unknown Lady

God's representative who met me where I was at:

The policeman that gave me into the hands of the Office of Mental Health (OMH).

The pastor gave me a card (provided by a lady who I never met or knew) who brought me to the Albany Medical Trauma Unit. The card had *An Angel On My Shoulder* pin and said "I'm praying for you." It was one of Jesus' messenger's. I pray for others too!

~ Anita



Has someone done something kind for you that made a lasting impact on your life? We would love to share your story too (up to 300 words). We're happy to print with just initials or anonymous if you prefer.

To submit your story 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: graspshelp.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)

THANKS FOR READING! :)

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



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Apple Podcast, and Amazon

ASCEND DUAL RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUPS

EVERY TUESDAY
4:15-5:15 PM OPEN DISCUSSION/RECOVERY TOPICS
HOPE & HEALING RECOVERY CENTER:
37 CHESTER STREET, GLENS FALLS
IN PERSON OR
VIRTUALLY - ZOOM MEETING ID: 844-2214-0148

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