

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

Welcome New Peers!

BY GINGER MILLER

Our Dual Recovery Department continues to grow and change. We have two new Peers I'd like to introduce. Ashley Casimano has stepped into our East Side Center Peer Specialist role and is making meaningful connections already.

Hi, my name is Ashley Casimano, and I am excited to begin my new role as a Peer Specialist. I am passionate about supporting others as they navigate their own journeys, and I believe strongly in the power of connection, encouragement, and lived experience. My goal is to meet people where they are, help them recognize their strengths, and walk alongside them as they work toward healing, growth, and stability. I look forward to getting to know everyone, learning more about the program, and contributing in a meaningful way.

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my pets. I have a 4 lb Toy Poodle that is a recent "foster fail", a shy and loving rescue mix and a willful but snuggly cat. Moments to recharge in nature are incredibly important to me while not at work. Camping, watching movies and walking around outdoor markets are some of my favorite activities. I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of this work and excited for what is ahead.

Melissa Carvey is now one of our Relief Peer Specialist's. She has had the opportunity to shadow all of our Peer Groups and has started providing coverage for many of them.

Hello, my name is Melissa Carvey and I am married to a wonderful husband and we live in Queensbury and share our home with 2 furbabies, Sully, a 4-yo Beagle/ Blue-tick mix and Marley, a 9 yo temperamental, multicolored kitty.

We moved here from Vermont 3 years ago to be closer to family in the area and extended area. We have 2 grown sons, Ryan, my 31 year old, who is on the Spectrum but has a job and his own apartment and Erik, my 26 yo who shares a condo with his best friend. They both live in VT, but no distance or time keeps us from frequent visits and holiday gatherings.

I enjoy reading, cooking (big time foodie), nature and art. In my spare time I like to play with watercolors and acrylics and took some art classes in college and learned to draw the human body from a human model. I am looking forward to enjoying the summer with friends and family, life's most precious gifts!

Please join me in welcoming these to wonderful ladies to our Dual Recovery community!

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WARREN/WASHINGTON CONNECTIONS

L.E.A.P. - Learning, Employment, Assistance, Partnership

By Ginger Miller



L.E.A.P is the Community Action Agency as well as the designated American Job Center for Washington County. Their mission states, "We support individuals and families in attaining self-sufficiency by providing services, sharing resources, and through community collaboration."

A brief overview of each of their support components may help you to see the wide range of support LEAP can offer to Washington County, New York residents; perhaps even something that could help you.

Learning - Our staff work with families to establish goals focusing on their strengths and connecting them with community resources, including education for children with the Head Start Program. The Head Start Program includes Early Head Start and Head Start Preschool; both are offered as a home-based program or a center-based program. For more details or an application for Head Start contact Mary at 518-746-9066 or email mary.hoag@leapservices.org

Employment - The first step to getting a job is preparation. Whether you have job experience, are looking for a new opportunity, or are entering the workforce for the first time, their employment counselors can give you the tools to plan your path to success. Their employment counselors can help you with many things including: Identifying your skills, Building a resume, Creating cover letters, Improving job interviewing skills, Strategies for job searching, Answering questions you may have about which career option or path is right for you, and connecting individuals with transportation services that are available for qualified Washington County residents. If lack of access to technology is hindering your job search, don't worry; LEAP has computers, a phone, fax machine, and copier you can use. These services are available for both adults and youth. They can also help connect and support you with attaining a GED.

Their goal is to bridge the gap between employers and job seekers, making it easier for local businesses to find the candidates they need and people to get the jobs they want. They can also help existing employees with training so they can advance in their career. To get started you can ask their staff about the following one of the following: Interview/Recruitment Space, Candidate Screenings and Referrals, Getting Connected with Area Job Fairs, or On-the-Job Employment Training Opportunities for Existing Employees. For more information call their employment counselors at 518-746-2391 or email them at employment@leapservices.org.

Assistance - The LEAP staff are a wonderful resource for Washington County residents. If you find yourself with a need you can't meet on your own, they welcome you to stop in and see them. If they are unable to help you directly, they will connect you with other organizations and people who can. Some of the common resources they can assist with are emergency assistance, transportation, and hunger assistance.

Emergency Assistance includes things such as avoiding eviction or utility shut off, the cost of prescription drugs, and paying first months' rent. To contact LEAP's Emergency Assistance staff call 518-746-2391 or email them at assistance@leapservices.org to learn more.



LEAP offers two types of *Transportation Assistance* to their Washington County residents. The first is Seniors Transportation for those over 60 years old. The second is Community Transportation for Washington County residents who are over 18 years old. Although medical appointments are given priority, they will also help arrange transportation for other errands such as shopping, pharmacy visits, and more depending upon availability; there are requirements that need to be met. Rides are available on weekdays by appointment. To schedule a ride or find out more call 518-746-2391 ext.4 or email transportation@leapservices.org.

Hunger Solutions emergency food pantry. The food pantry is open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 8:30am - 3:30pm by



L.E.A.P. (Con't)

appointment only. This food pantry can be utilized once per month. For more information regarding the food pantry please contact 518-746-2391 or by email at assistance@leapservices.org.

LEAP believes that **Partnership** is the most important portion of their organization that makes it a success. They have partnerships and alliances with many community organizations and networks as well as on state and national levels. They have several donors, contributors, supporters, and volunteers for their programs.

Riddles of the Month:

1. What can be swallowed but also can swallow you?
2. I am easy to lift but hard to throw, what am I?



Riddle Answers

1. Pride
2. A Feather

MENTAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Spiraling Before the Truth - A Personal Story

By McKenzie Secor



When negative thoughts come in, some of us tend to think catastrophically. Catastrophic thinking is when we imagine the worst-case scenario, exaggerate the severity of a situation, or become stuck dwelling on negative outcomes. Some people may not even realize they are doing this. It can stem from past experiences or be learned from family and other influential people. Research shows that individuals with depression, anxiety, or PTSD are more likely to engage in catastrophic thinking.

Thinking back to a personal experience, I remember a time involving a legal situation; ironically, while I was doing everything right. I was on my way to a probation appointment, calm, listening to music, and mentally prepared. I even had notes with me because I like to stay organized, especially when I know I can lose track of my thoughts.

Then my phone rang. It was my probation officer. Instant panic. "McKenzie, where are you?"

Immediately, my mind spiraled. Am I late? Did I get the time wrong? That can't be, I wrote it on all my calendars. Did I do something wrong? Am I about to go to prison? Who did I upset? What do I need to defend myself against?

Within seconds, my brain flooded with questions; all negative, all assuming I had done something wrong.

The reality? I wasn't late. I was actually about to arrive, just like I told them.

But even after getting there, my mind didn't stop. I checked in and sat in the waiting room, still mentally preparing for a situation that didn't exist. Who will take care of my belongings? Where will I go when I get out? Will people notice I'm gone? My thoughts kept racing, like a mouse on a wheel, never landing on just one.

Ten minutes past my appointment time, the officer finally came to get me. No strange tone, no concerning body language. This is odd... maybe it's a setup, I thought. We walked into the office, and another officer was there. At this point, I was fully expecting handcuffs for something I didn't even understand.

Instead, they calmly explained they were just following up on questions related to a previous situation. Nothing bad. Nothing negative. No consequences.

Relief.



SPIRALING (CON'T)

I even shared what had been going through my mind, and they laughed. Not in a hurtful way, but in a way that showed just how far my thoughts had run from reality. The phone call I received on my way there? It was simply to make sure timing worked for everyone involved.

All that mental energy for nothing. My brain had exhausted me over a situation where I already knew the truth: I had done nothing wrong.

This is just one example, and I know I'm not alone, especially for those who have been on legal mandates and are trying to do the right thing. Catastrophic thinking can be exhausting and all-consuming. For a long time, I kept it to myself out of fear of embarrassment or being dismissed.

It has affected my relationships and made it difficult to form new ones. Not because I don't want connection, but because my thoughts can take over, pulling me out of the moment and into imagined scenarios.



One tool that has helped me in these moments is a simple reality check question: What's the worst that is going to come from this? A no. That question helps bring me back down to reality. It reminds me that most of the time, the outcome I'm fearing isn't nearly as extreme as my mind makes it out to be. With that being said, this way of thinking is something I continue to work on.

Counseling has been one of my biggest supports, helping me understand the root of these thought patterns. I've also learned to talk openly with people I trust, so they can better understand what I'm experiencing and help ground me when needed. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has been especially helpful, teaching me how to pause, challenge my thoughts, and give myself time before reacting.

There is hope for a more balanced and peaceful mindset. It takes work, patience, and support, but it is possible. And most importantly, it starts with giving yourself grace.

So, I'll leave you with this: What is one situation where your mind went to the worst-case scenario, and what actually happened instead?

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.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

WHY WATER IS WONDERFUL!

By Melissa Carvey

Summers are for having fun in the sun! Many of us like to enjoy the outdoors more than any other season of the year. Warmer temperatures and longer days help create lasting memories with families and friends. It's an inviting time of the year for beachgoers, hikers, outdoor barbecues, exciting vacations, sports enthusiasts, catching fireflies with children, exploring nature, camping and many other forms of recreation and pastimes.

Although enjoying the outdoors can be fun, it can also be quite dangerous. Spending prolonged hours in the hot sun can greatly increase our risks of dehydration. What's especially scary is that we may not even be aware that our bodies are desperately in need of water and electrolytes. Sometimes, we are having so much fun playing and laying in the sun that we literally forget about drinking water.



WATER (Con't)

What are Electrolytes? According to the Cleveland Clinic, "Electrolytes are essential minerals (such as sodium, potassium and magnesium) that carry an electric charge when dissolved in water. They are critical for the human body because they regulate nerve and muscle function, balance fluid levels, maintain acid-base (pH) balance and keep your heart rate steady." Many of us are familiar with sports drinks like Gatorade, Powerade, and even many bottled waters containing electrolytes and minerals in the gas stations and grocery stores. Some of us prefer flavored waters and that's ok, so long as they contain the essential electrolytes that are needed to nourish our bodies and mind. One recent study published by the National Institution of Health claimed that 75% of Americans are chronically dehydrated! Wow!! With this said, electrolyte supplements are not just for athletes, they're for all of us if we truly want to feel our best.

Dehydration Risks and Warning Signs - As the body ages, recognizing the signs of dehydration becomes crucial. Older adults are at a higher risk because their sense of thirst diminishes. Also, a contributing factor for dehydration in older adults is a declining kidney function. Another factor is the increase in medications a senior may need to maintain their health. While dehydration in older adults may be tricky to identify here are some important symptoms to be aware of: Behavioral changes, such as confusion or fatigue; Physical symptoms, such as dizziness, muscle cramps and dry mouth; Dark urine – amber colored, not light yellow, is a key indicator of inadequate hydration as well.

Why Staying Hydrated Is So Important and The Role of Water in The Body.

- Temperature Regulation: Water aids in maintaining body temperature through perspiration and respiration.
- Joint Lubrication: Acts as a lubricant for joints, helping maintain flexibility and reducing the risk of injuries.
- Nutrient Transfer: Facilitates the transfer of crucial nutrients to cells and helps in waste elimination.
- Digestive Health: Essential for producing saliva and stomach fluids, ensuring efficient digestion.

In summary, remember your water bottles when you leave your house. It not only can save you from a trip to the doctors office, it's also good for the environment by putting less plastics in our oceans and waterways!

IS THIS MEETING/RESOURCE FOR YOU?

Rational Recovery

Rational Recovery (RR) - is an addiction recovery program developed by Jack Trimpey. Its goal is to help people overcome alcoholism. RR is a true self-help program that promotes abstinence through self-autonomy. Rational Recovery believes that people addicted to alcohol have an addictive voice. This inner voice (called the Beast) is what pushes them to drink. While they want to continue this behavior, many of them want to quit. The goal of treatment is to recognize this voice. This can be done with the *Addictive Voice Recognition Technique (AVRT)*. A person also has to learn to resist this voice. Otherwise, they will remain stuck in a cycle of substance use.



Rational Recovery dubs itself as a "revolutionary alternative" to AA. Both self-help programs help people who are struggling with alcohol. However, they have different views and approaches in treating alcoholism. Some of the key viewpoints where RR is different are:

1. RR doesn't consider alcoholism a disease. The program defines it as a voluntary behavior that involves a conscious decision.
2. RR promotes abstinence, the complete discontinuation of alcohol. RR adherents don't keep track of their recovery time. This is because RR views recovery as an event. Under their program, you're either recovered or not.



Rational Recovery (Con't)

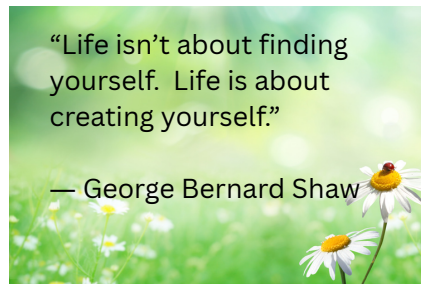
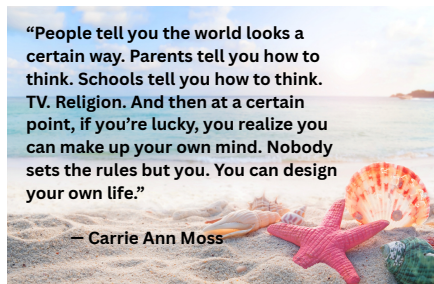
3. RR does not believe that people are powerless against alcoholism. RR promotes self-efficacy or the belief that you can achieve things on your own. This includes beating alcohol addiction. RR has no spiritual influences, you are not required to believe in a God or Higher Power.

4. RR doesn't have any meetings or membership. In fact, they consider them unnecessary and obsolete. The program teaches people to overcome their alcohol and drug addiction alone. Adherents are only expected to read materials and learn the *Addictive Voice Recovery Technique (AVRT)*. Once a person develops control over their addictive voice (the Beast), there are no additional steps to follow. It is a commercial enterprise that sells copyrighted resources on addiction recovery. The most popular of which is a book written by Jack Trimpey, [Rational Recovery: The New Cure for Substance Addiction](#). Alternatively, you can get a [free crash course on AVRT](#) to learn more.

5. RR is patterned after [Cognitive Behavioral Therapy \(CBT\)](#). As such, recovery depends solely on individual effort. Every alcoholic must understand their own thought patterns and behaviors. Afterward, they must make the conscious decision to quit alcohol.

Rational Recovery may be a good option if you want a non-spiritual and cognitive approach towards recovery. Some studies show that it can work for some people. However, it also doesn't work for everyone.

INSPIRATION & MOTIVATION



PERSONAL STORIES/ MOMENTS THAT MATTER

Living With ADHD - My Personal Experience

By McKenzie Secor

Living with ADHD is often misunderstood. Most people think it simply means being hyperactive or easily distracted, but for me, ADHD affects every part of my daily life. It influences how I think, how I organize my time, how I manage emotions, and even how I view myself.

For me, ADHD feels like having a mind that is always moving. My thoughts rarely slow down, and it can feel like there are multiple conversations happening in my head at once. I am constantly thinking, planning, analyzing, and preparing for what comes next. In fact, I am often over organized. I like things to have a place, a plan, and a purpose. Having systems in place helps me manage the mental chaos that can happen behind the scenes. Some days, my mind feels like a phone with a dozen apps open and running at once. I can jump from one thought to another in seconds. I may start a task with the best



Living With ADHD (Con't)

intentions, only to find myself distracted by something completely unrelated before I finish. It's not because I don't care or because I'm lazy; it's because my brain processes information differently.

While many people associate ADHD with disorganization, my experience is often the opposite. I create routines, schedules, and systems because they help me stay grounded. When things feel out of order or don't go according to plan, I can become overwhelmed or anxious. Structure isn't just a preference for me; it's one of the ways I cope with the constant movement happening inside my mind. When things feel out of order or don't go according to plan, I can be anxious or overwhelmed, maybe even rushed. Routine and organization help me feel grounded and in control. While others may see my attention to detail as a strength, they may not realize how much effort goes into maintaining that sense of order.

One of the biggest challenges I face is spreading myself too thin. My passion for creating and planning, along with compassion for others, often leads me to take on more than I realistically have the time or energy to manage. What seems simple can quickly become overwhelming when responsibilities pile up or plans change. I often have great ideas and strong motivation but turning them into completed projects can be difficult. Sometimes I forget appointments, misplace important items, or lose track of time. Breaking larger projects into smaller, manageable steps helps prevent overwhelming, and creating routines and systems reduces stress, improves focus, and lessens decision fatigue.

One of the most important skills I have learned is to give myself grace. ADHD can make it easy to become frustrated when things don't go as planned or I feel behind. Instead of focusing on perfection, I focus on progress. Some days are easier than others, and that's okay. Celebrating small victories and acknowledging my efforts has helped me build a healthier relationship with myself and my ADHD.

ADHD also affects my emotions. I can feel things deeply and intensely. Small frustrations may feel much bigger than they appear to others. Rejection, criticism, or conflict can stay with me longer than I'd like. At the same time, I am passionate, empathetic, and deeply invested in the people and causes I care about. I often hold myself to very high standards. At times, my own expectations can create stress and anxiety when I feel like I am falling short.



Despite the challenges, ADHD has strengths too. I am creative, resourceful, and capable of thinking outside the box. When something truly captures my interest, I can become completely focused and productive. This ability, often called hyper focus, allows me to accomplish incredible things when my attention aligns with my passion. I am a problem solver who often sees solutions others might miss.

Over time, I have learned that managing ADHD is not about trying to become someone else. It's about understanding how my brain works and finding tools that help me succeed. Routines, reminders, calendars, color coding, support systems, and self-compassion have all become important parts of my journey. Living with ADHD can be frustrating, exhausting, and sometimes isolating. However, it has also taught me resilience, adaptability, and perseverance. Everyday I continue to work with my brain instead of against it. ADHD may be one of my diagnoses, but it is not who I am as a person. In fact, I like to think it makes me a unique person who can be helpful to those who struggle with time management or organization skills.

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.

