

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Together AZ

MAY 2025

Inspiring Success on the Road to Recovery

You're Not Alone

Reclaiming Connection in the Age of Isolation

By Michelle Sheydayi
Chief Marketing Officer,
Scottsdale Providence Recovery Center

In today's 24/7, non-stop world, our high-performance, efficiency-obsessed culture generally frowns upon asking for help. In the professional world or even one's personal life, one may think asking for help projects the image of helplessness or that one is "crazy" or "broken." All of this unfortunately leads to individuals suffering in silence. Thousands of people struggling with mental health issues are living in fear of ridicule, rejection, material losses, and even banishment from their families and communities.

It's Time to Shatter the Stigmas

While there are a number of valid critiques of the modern mental health industry, including overpathologizing the human experience and its profit motive, getting help does not have to be defined as a product to be purchased. Getting help and encouraging those who need help by creating more supportive environments and breaking the stigma around these conditions can be simple and accessible to anyone.



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With a vast amount of resources available for those struggling with mental health concerns, how do we normalize asking for help, break down barriers, and shatter the stigmas of these conditions? One place to start is at home. Normalizing the

discussion of feelings, healthy expression of emotions, and the sharing of the "story behind the story" can establish a family culture of vulnerability rather than hiding or masking. We recommend learning about the wide range of emotions to describe with more accuracy the experiences you may be having. A good resource for learning about emotions is the book, *"Atlas of the Heart"* by researcher Brene Brown, PhD, LCSW.

Starting a family ritual of check-ins over a shared meal can be a small way to open the door to deeper connection and normalizing the vast array of emotional experiences an individual may have on a

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Life on Life's Terms?

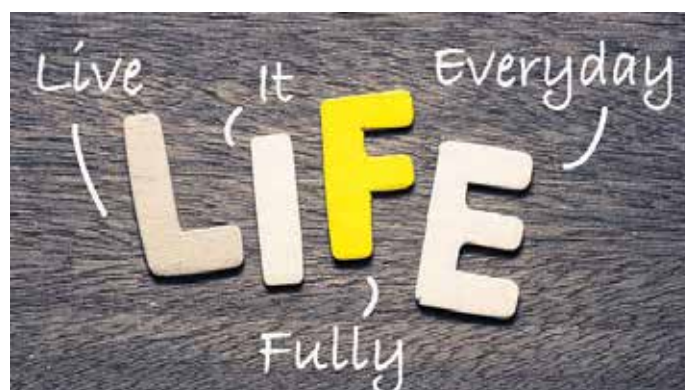
Easier Said Than Done in Times of Turbulence

By Debra Kaplan, MA, MBA, LPC

Being in recovery means something different to everyone. Whether recovery includes working the steps in a chosen fellowship(s), attending meetings, or being of service, most if not all in recovery embrace the philosophy of living life on life's terms.

For the past few months, that simple, but not easy belief has included daily social, political and financial upheavals. In terms that many can relate to 'life on life's' terms has felt like a 7.0 magnitude earthquake with weekly (daily) tremors and aftershocks. Those in recovery have put their recovery mettle to the test. Radical acceptance is not for the faint of heart.

Human brains crave stability, consistency, and controllable outcomes. We are wired to recognize patterns and constantly process information from the world around us. Why? To survive. From an



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evolutionary perspective our ability to process stimuli from the environment gave us an advantage, crucial for survival and natural selection. If we quickly identified threats, secured resources, and opportunities, we lived to survive another day.

How Our Evolutionary Brain Stirs Worry

Although our brains developed in a world different from the world of today, the primitive parts

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Publisher's Note

By Barbara Nicholson-Brown

Our Mental Wellness

The need to have open conversations about our mental health has never been greater. And while May is designated as Mental Health Awareness Month, let's support each other throughout the year.

Healing begins when we talk openly about our experiences with anxiety, depression, trauma — even anger, and it chips away at breaking down the shame and stigma surrounding mental health issues. Our mental wellness shapes everything from our thoughts and emotions to our ability to cope with stress and form connections. Together, we have the power to create a world where mental health is truly valued and not cloaked in darkness.

A huge thank you to our contributors for sharing your insights and expertise on mental health for this edition of *Together AZ*.

Mental Health America www.mhanational.org provides resources to help you prioritize your mental well-being or offer support to someone you care about.
Local: www.mhaarizona.org/

Take a Walk: It Might be the Most Underrated Mental Health Tool You Already Have!

By Tim McLeod, NCRC-II
Director of Alumni Relations & Connect365, Sierra Tucson

When we think about improving our mental health, how many of us only think about things like therapy, self-help books, or structured wellness programs? Don't get me wrong, these are all reasonable and worthy solutions, but here's a thought when none of those things are readily available — **take a walk!**



Walking is one of the simplest and most accessible tools we already have! Stepping outside our front door and taking a walk is not only free but it is freeing, and profoundly effective in improving mental clarity, reducing stress, and enhancing overall well-being.

Yet, many of us find excuses to avoid walking. It's too cold, too hot, raining, or we convince ourselves we're just too busy. These excuses are natural, but they can rob us of an opportunity to feel better. Every time I push past these mental barriers, I return from a walk feeling rejuvenated and refreshed. It's as if walking works magic on the mind and body—no expensive tools required.

Something I have noticed when driving past a hospital is that even health-care workers—among the most stressed professionals—understand the power of walking. It's common to see them taking quick walks during lunch breaks to reset and recharge. Despite the pressure of working in high-stakes, life-and-death environments, they carve out time to walk. This underscores how powerful a simple walk can be in promoting mental resilience.

If you think about it, our bodies are already equipped to help us process emotions. As infants, we instinctively release strong feelings through crying, squirming, or moving. Over time, however, societal norms teach us to suppress these instincts and remain composed. This is where intentional movement, like walking can become an essential practice. Movement allows us to reconnect with this natural flow, processing emotions such as anger, anxiety, grief, and stress in healthy ways. Walking offers a safe outlet for these emotions, helping them flow through us rather than becoming trapped inside.

The Many Benefits of Walking

More and more research is being released proving there are a multitude of psychological and physiological benefits to walking. Taking a brisk walk can calm high-energy emotions like anger or frustration. The phrase “walk it off” isn't just an old sports cliché; it's backed by science. Walking stimulates both hemispheres of the brain through a process called bilateral stimulation, which soothes the nervous system and boosts creativity.

I am amazed at the wealth of mental and physical health benefits experienced when we walk. And humming while walking enhances the effects! It adds a meditative component that further calms the mind. Research shows that



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humming stimulates the vagus nerve and activates the body's parasympathetic nervous system—which is known as our internal “calm down” mechanism.

Studies show that walking with intentionality can:

- Reduce anxiety and help regulate emotions.
- Alleviate PTSD symptoms and decrease hyperarousal.
- Improve mood through endorphin release.
- Promote mindful reflection and emotional resilience.
- Enhance focus, cognitive performance, and memory.
- Strengthen the immune system and promote heart health by lowering blood pressure and stress hormones.

Additionally, rhythmic activities like walking or jogging improve decision-making and problem-solving. I've experienced new clarity after walking. It cleanses the cobwebs in the mind.

Rolling: A Playful Alternative

Remember rolling down grassy hills as a child? We didn't know it then, but those playful movements had mental health benefits. It has been found that rolling activates nearly all the body's sensory nerves (proprioceptors), sending signals to the brain that create a sense of safety. This shift allows the brain to move from a reactive state to a more creative, problem-solving mode. Pairing rolling with humming amplifies these effects, creating a soothing and grounding experience.

Don't Overthink It, Just Start Moving

The value of walking, rolling, or any form of intentional movement lies in its simplicity. It's not about logging a certain number of steps or achieving fitness goals; it's about choosing to move when you feel stuck or overwhelmed. Movement helps you reconnect with your body and use it as an ally in your healing journey.

Overthinking often stands in the way of action. If you stop too long to weigh the pros and cons, you'll find plenty of reasons to stay seated on your sofa. The key is to act quickly—lace up your shoes, step outside, and trust your body to guide you. Sometimes, the simplest path to mental wellness starts right at your front door. *Literally, all it takes is the first step!*



Tim McLeod, NCRC-II is Director of Alumni Relations & Connect365 at Sierra Tucson.
To learn more visit sierratucson.com

Spotlight on

Kid in the Corner



Francine Sumner, Founder
Kid in the Corner

"Kid in the Corner is a grassroots nonprofit organization that was started by Zachary Sumner's family and friends after he died by suicide on June 13, 2017. The loss of Zach was a heartbreaking tragedy that rocked our community to its core." — KidintheCorner.org Recognizing their ongoing commitment to mental health awareness, *Together AZ* is honored to highlight Francine Sumner, her family and team for their tireless work in helping to save lives, through conversation, awareness and shattering the stigma.

parents' divorce. He bravely shared he had been experiencing suicidal thoughts — and even had a plan. Thanks to the tools provided in the workshop and the immediate action of the school support team, we were able to connect with his parents, conduct a suicide risk assessment, and begin providing the support he needed.

That same evening, I received a heartfelt text from the student. He thanked me for listening and helping, and shared that he and his parents had a real conversation for the first time in a while. They were on the same page, and—most importantly—he felt seen, heard, and supported.

He told me his suicidal thoughts were gone. This is why we do what we do. A single conversation can change a life.

What are key indicators parents and caregivers should watch for when they suspect a loved one is experiencing mental health challenges?

Parents and caregivers play such an important role in noticing when something might be off. Keep an eye out for changes in behavior, mood, or daily routines—things like:

- Pulling away from friends or family
- Losing interest in activities they used to love
- Struggling to focus or get things done
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Ongoing feelings of sadness, worry, or irritability
- Big shifts in appetite or weight
- Saying things that show hopelessness, guilt, or feeling worthless

Catching these signs early can make a huge difference in getting a young person the help they need. And most of all—trust your gut. If something doesn't feel right, lean into it. **Ask questions. Start a conversation.** You're not alone, and support is out there.

You've transformed this tragedy into a mission of mental health awareness and community education. Have you noticed increased openness when discussing this sensitive topic?

Absolutely! Thanks to Kid in the Corner's programming in classrooms and youth-focused organizations, we've seen a powerful shift: young people are becoming more open and honest about their mental health struggles.

There's a growing willingness to speak up, seek help, and support one another. By breaking the stigma, we're creating space for real, meaningful conversations—conversations that build connection, empathy, and understanding.

We've been incredibly fortunate to witness youth stepping forward to share their stories—on panels, at our recent Gala, and even in the creation of a powerful PSA. And what we've heard from them is profound: sharing their stories doesn't just help others—it helps them. By speaking out, they're not only shattering stigma in their communities, but also breaking it down within themselves.

Describe the core mission of Kid in the Corner.

Kid in the Corner's mission is to shatter the stigma around mental health and provide support to those in need. We believe through education, kindness, and community connection, we can help change the story for the next kid in the corner. We accomplish this mission by using a three-pronged approach:

1. Educate and spread awareness
2. Promote kindness and community connection
3. Connect the community to resources

The organization exists to create a world where no one feels alone in their mental health challenges. The organization raises awareness, promotes kindness, and provides resources to educate and empower youth, families, and communities in the fight against stigma and isolation.

Share an inspiring story of someone who benefited from Kid in the Corner's work.

One especially powerful story comes from an elementary school student who attended a Kid in the Corner workshop. After the session, he found the courage to open up about the deep loneliness he was feeling in the midst of his

What are the future goals for Kid in the Corner?

At Kid in the Corner, we're excited to grow—reaching more schools, communities, and more young people across Arizona and beyond.

We're always listening, learning, and evolving so we can create resources that truly meet the needs of vulnerable youth. Whether it's in a classroom, through a community program, or online, our goal is to make support and education easy to access and meaningful for those who need it most.

Looking ahead, our vision is big: we want to help create a world where asking for help is seen as strong, not scary—and where kindness isn't just nice, it's essential to how we care for mental health. This is the movement we're building. One conversation, one connection, one act of kindness at a time.

What is one crucial piece of information you wish more people understood about those struggling with mental illness?

It's okay not to be okay—because health is health. We'll be caring for both our physical and mental health for the rest of our lives. Just like we've all had colds—and will again—we know when a cold turns into something more serious, like bronchitis or pneumonia, it's time to seek professional help. Why? Because what we're doing on our own isn't enough.

The same goes for our mental health. We all experience sad or difficult days, and we will again. But when those tough days become something we can't manage on our own, it's just as important to reach out for professional support.

Mental illness is not a choice or a personal failure. Many people are fighting invisible battles, and a little compassion can make a world of difference. Let's always remember: everyone deserves support, understanding, and kindness.

For more info please email info@kidinthecorner.org and check out the Mental Health Matters Coalition website with an extensive resource page. We invite you to also save the date for our third annual Mental Health Matters Arizona Conference on Sat., September 27th. www.kidinthecorner.org

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I Have a Mental Health Diagnosis, is it Permanent?

By Amy Tilley, PsyD

Each year, May is designated as Mental Health Awareness Month. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI, www.nami.org) chooses a theme to highlight the incredible recovery journey of every person living with a mental illness. This year's NAMI theme is *"In Every Story, There's Strength."*

NAMI points out that every individual is unique but there is strength within everyone. NAMI is focusing on the resilience and diversity every human being brings to the journey of recovery.

When anyone is struggling with mental health issues, it is a serious matter and can be life altering. If you or someone you know is struggling with mental illness, and have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder, you may wonder: Will my diagnosis follow me forever? For the rest of my life? There may be times in your daily routine you think, "I will never get well. It will be this way forever."

Forever is a long time and does not necessarily need to be the truth.

A Positive Mindset

The experience of living with a mental health diagnosis is unique to each individual but this does not define you entirely. You are not "bipolar" or "depressed" or "manic" or "schizophrenic." You may have a diagnosis of bipolar disorder, depression, or anxiety, but that does not define you. One thing I have taught clients over the years is — you are a person with a mental health diagnosis. That mindset gives the person living with the diagnosis power over their symptoms and the ability to learn new coping skills, receive psychiatric care, and get therapeutic treatment to help manage the symptoms they experience.

Recovery is possible. You can live a full life of wholeness and wellness: mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual. There are steps you can take to maintain your symptoms and live a life of recovery.



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Find a therapist and attend regular individual therapy sessions to learn new coping skills. Mental health symptoms can be unpredictable; therefore, it is important that you learn to recognize triggers that could exacerbate your symptoms and cause a mental health relapse. You may feel well for several weeks or months, and then life happens... a small or big event occurs, and you feel yourself not in a great space. Make sure you reach out to your therapist and schedule a session.

Utilize psychiatric care to help manage your symptoms. There are many psychiatric medications that are effective for treating and managing your mental health symptoms. There is no shame in taking medication for anxiety, depression, mood swings, or other mental health disorders. Medication, paired with regular therapy (individual or group), is a very effective strategy to help you lead a fulfilling life.

Talk about your mental health diagnosis with others in your life. What does your support network look like? Do you have a few close relatives or friends that you can count on no matter what time of day or night? Tell those people what you are experiencing and if there are certain times in which you struggle the most, when your symptoms may be the most significant.

If you need time off from your job, inquire about the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or short term disability. This is a federal law that allows you to take protected leave from work for medical and family reasons. You maintain your health benefits while you are on leave and can concentrate on your recovery, without the distraction of managing your workload. You do not need to tell your employer what your diagnosis is, as you are protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

So—will my diagnosis be with me forever? Not necessarily. There is no reason that a mental health disorder will be with you forever. You can live a full life in recovery, taking the necessary steps to be in recovery and have a life with little to no further symptoms.

Amy Tilley, PsyD. has 20 years in the mental health and addiction recovery field. Her clinical interests include working with young adults and adults diagnosed with co-occurring conditions. Desert Star Addiction Recovery Center

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From Competitors to Community: The Partners In Treatment Story

By Aaron Johnson, Director of the Partners In Treatment Conference

In 2023, the Partners In Treatment Conference had its very first year, and I'd just joined Anew Treatment Center six weeks before we kicked it off (talk about trial by fire). My boss, Kerry, had a bold vision for the conference: bring together five treatment facilities, some of them "competitors," and build a unique event through collaboration. He initially hoped to leverage the conference to spotlight Anew as a new player in the field, yet what unfolded was so much more. As I got to know the team, I saw people representing companies that technically competed sharing strong, genuine friendships, and it quickly became clear that we needed to amplify this mindset.

"It's not a marketing shuffle. It's heart-driven leaders uniting for a shared purpose, and it's why people keep coming back."

By 2024, we'd nearly doubled in size, fueled by feedback about the conference's authentic, connective vibe. Attendees weren't just there to swap business cards; they craved meaningful industry bonds, a hunger that hits hard in a place like Arizona, where

Mental Health America ranks us 49th out of 51 for adult mental health care access. That stark reality isn't just a statistic—it's the heartbeat behind Anew and countless other Arizona programs stepping up to fill the gap. Our conference has evolved into more than an event; it's a bridge, proving collaboration can outpace and outshine what any single effort could achieve alone. Our five founding partners didn't just pool resources. We multiplied our impact. Turning steering committee meetings into a close-knit crew dreaming big together.

Last year, I saw that spirit come alive with attendees, like when I watched East Coast community mental health clinicians join Arizona program leaders in an experiential workshop. They dove into the same self-reflection, swapped stories about their work, and built real connections, not just program plugs. Tom, one of our partners who attends dozens of industry conferences every year, captured it well: "It felt like everyone genuinely cared, wanting to listen and grow together beyond their own agendas." That's what sets us apart. It's not a marketing shuffle. It's heart-driven leaders uniting for a shared purpose, and it's why people keep coming back.

We heard that hunger for connection and growth, so this year we're introducing Premium Workshops—two-hour, interactive sessions. These aren't your typical lectures; they're guided experiences where clinicians and leaders talk, work together, and explore their own development, all with a focus on supporting each other as a community. It's a fresh take on elevating our field, and it's exactly what attendees told us they craved. Something real and different.

For me, directing this conference is about the relationships—working with a steering committee I adore and feeling a deep sense of purpose in creating an experience that lifts our industry. I love empowering people to collaborate, and there's nothing better than seeing someone realize they're not alone in this work. We've grown from five partners to a national movement, proving abundance beats scarcity every time, especially in a state like Arizona with gaps to bridge.

On June 11-13, 2025, at the We-Ko-Pa Resort near Fountain Hills, we'll gather again to advance a culture of collaboration, with every session and networking moment tied to **"Partnering Through Community."** Join us, because together, we can close those gaps faster than we ever could apart.

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Barbara Brown/TogetherAZ — 2023 Gratitude Recognition/Lifetime Achievement
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UNHEALED TRAUMA CREATES ANXIETY AND CHAOS

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BEGIN HEALING TODAY!

"Careless jokes or dismissiveness about other people struggling with addiction or mental health concerns in society or in the media reaffirms a culture of silence and shame."

more opportunities to lower defensiveness and increase the likelihood that help will be accepted. When the family norm is that one is safe to share, the struggling individual will have an easier time overcoming the internal barriers and reaching out for help and support.

One other possible exercise could be creating a family genogram together. A genogram is a detailed visual tool that illustrates the "family tree," with details about the family history including relationships, education, migrations, mental health and substance use challenges, births, marriages and deaths, chronic illness, major life events, occupations, and even emotional and social relationships. This is a powerful way to identify historical and heritable patterns to gain insight into your own experiences and the experiences of your loved ones. Often, this is all it takes to get the conversation going and create a more open dialogue around a present-day issue. There are many free online resources for learning more about creating a genogram, including genopro.com/genogram.

More Compassion and Love

Establishing a family culture of love, compassion, and curiosity is another key component to reducing stigma and reaching individuals so they do not feel so alone in their struggles. Careless jokes or dismissiveness about other people struggling with addiction or mental health concerns in society or in the media reaffirms a culture of silence and shame. On the contrary, verbalizing support or endorsement of celebrities or public figures seeking mental health or addiction help can encourage people around you to be comfortable enough to admit they are struggling.

Outside the home, the interconnectedness of society through the Internet and Social Media has given individuals and entities across the world a voice. Behavioral health organizations and professionals have a large platform and a wider reach than ever to let those suffering in silence know and feel that they are not alone. They have a unique opportunity as expert resources to illustrate how conditions may arise in daily life to better help with self-identification and encourage people to seek professional guidance. At Scottsdale Providence, we often have clients inquire about admission following a long period of research online and self-identification with mental health conditions. While this is not a substitute for professional diagnosis and interventions, it can increase the likelihood that a person will eventually seek professional help and increase people's belief in their own abilities and inner wisdom.


True Belonging

Being in a state of over-connectedness through technology, there are real concerns about the substitution of Social Media for real, authentic human connection. By working to distinguish between the facade of connection and the felt reality of true belonging, one will move into a more secure state of relationship to others and restore the bonds that increase resilience across time. It is encouraged to take relationships and vulnerability into the "real world" and have tough conversations in person, rather than over text or Social Media.

One way to practice this could be to invite a friend or family member to a "device-free" activity or day. By setting intentional time and device boundaries, you will encourage deeper and more spontaneous conversation. If you have been struggling or if you have a loved one who seems to be struggling, this is the best way to start to move toward more open communication about these issues.

Regardless of where one starts, the most important thing is to start. Even a simple "I'm thinking of you" phone call or taking an unin-

daily basis. Starting small and making this a habit will lead to a natural tendency to share about the bigger challenges or issues when they may arise. Inviting connection with open-ended questions, focusing your sharing on your internal processes and feelings, and asking follow-up questions will create




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errupted moment to ask someone how they are doing will often be enough effort to bridge a more serious conversation. For more immediate or urgent assistance for yourself, or someone you love, reach out to the 24/7 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline which can be reached by texting or calling 988.

Michelle holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and a Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management and Leadership from ASU. Since 2017, she has worked in the behavioral health field. Michelle brings a comprehensive understanding of patient-centered care and evidence-based practices to her interactions with professional referral partners and clients. She adheres to a philosophy of compassion, integrity and service when working with individuals facing challenges related to substance use, trauma, or mental health concerns. Scottsdale Providence 480-210-1734.



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of our brain are ever present and influence our behavior. The same pattern recognition skills that our brains used for survival are active in today's modern world, but in different ways; "Something seems off about my partner. I wonder what's wrong?" "The price of food and other goods seems to be rising. Will my salary cover my living expenses?" "Something must be wrong with the car. It doesn't sound right, and I think it's making a strange sound!" And "My boss wants to have a meeting with me. Will I lose my job? Did I do something wrong?"

To be fair, there are the adrenaline seekers and risk-takers among us who ride the waves of chaos like master surfboarders who eagerly glide through thundering channels of water. Thrill seekers and risk-takers thrive on uncertainty and risk.

Most humans want to experience thrills within a comfort range. When "thrill" spills outside our established comfort zone, our brains immediately signal threat and sends us into high alert or panic. This is when our fear and anxiety surfaces and alarm bells ring.

That need for consistency is primal and harkens back to evolution. Consistency in behavior helped us build trust which ultimately increased our chances of survival and reproduction. Fast forward to today and few events can undermine trust and security like a frolicking stock market that is taking our money (today's version of safety) for a harrowing ride. Thrilling for some and anxiety provoking for most. It's times like this that Promise 10 ("Fear of people and economic insecurity will leave us." and Promise 11 ("We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us." from the big book of Alcoholics Anonymous are tough to hold onto. It's doable; one day at a time.

Survival in today's world can mobilize obsessional thinking, "What happens if it rains tomorrow?" "Will there be traffic when I drive to the airport? I might miss the plane!" "I'm worried the refrigerator is about to break down and I'll need to replace it." And so on. We worry...a lot! Which brings us back to how many of us are coping with the current social, political and financial upheavals of our time.

Pain Avoiding and Pleasure Seeking

I'm a therapist. I specialize in trauma, addictions and financial well-being. I help individuals and couples navigate the journey from addiction to recovery as well as helping clients create healthy intimacy in relationships.

I have noticed an uptick in many clients' levels of anxiety. Their internal emotional dis-ease is amplified by the uncertainty and chaos in the world. Understandably, the current state of upheaval has led many people to want to "numb out" with money, spending, sex, food or online internet use.

Consider the following statements:

- "I am buying more 'stuff' online that I don't need."
- "I swore I wouldn't max out my credit cards and rack up new debt. It's freaking me out."
- "I'm on multiple dating apps for fun. It's a thrill to see who is interested in me."
- "I've spent more time online doom scrolling and I'm depressed."
- "I'm eating a lot, especially a lot of junk food."
- "I'm all over my kids and telling them what they need to do. Even more than usual."
- "I'm binge-watching episodes of my favorite series until late and night."
- "I am working longer hours because I don't like idle time on my hands. It's hard for me to relax."

While these behaviors are efforts to self-soothe and escape pain, they don't help us create healthy coping mechanisms, certainly during times of higher stress and fear. Over time these escape behaviors can become compulsive or addictive. There are healthier ways to off-load our discomfort to feel more in-control, or perhaps, less out-of-control.

Creating Healthy Habits and Coping Mechanisms

It is easy to overlook the many ways we can create calm amidst the chaos. The other day a client said to me, "I feel so out of control." I didn't try to talk them out of their belief because they are experiencing uncertainty and insecurity. I asked them to entertain an additional prompt. Is feeling out of control the same as being out of control? Their feelings were their truth, but the reality wasn't true.

Mindful Breathing and Meditation

Work on limbic grounding and breathing meditations to create calm and regulate your nervous system; even brief moments are a win. Overtime practice stringing together longer moments of calm to create sustaining serenity. Achieving brief moments of calm is a noble goal.

12-Step Practice

Those who are in recovery know to lean on their recovery tools and fellowship community for support. If you need support but don't know where to turn, the 12-Step programs of recovery are a strong resource for almost all compulsive behaviors. For example:

- Sex Addicts Anonymous
- Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous
- Gamblers Anonymous
- Debtors Anonymous

Financial Therapy

Financial therapy is a process that combines therapeutic and financial competencies to help people improve their financial well-being and relationship with money.

Recognize that the current financial turmoil may be agitating underlying financial trauma or trauma related to money. Seek out a financial therapist or other financial professionals who can provide much needed support. Our ability to think clearly diminishes when we are wracked with anxiety and overwhelm. A professional can provide information and different perspectives.

I'm reluctant to end this article with a pithy saying or with one of the many AA slogans (and boy are there some good ones). But I will:

"A burden shared is a burden halved"

is not only wise but vital to remember. It's easy to fall into overwhelm or despair and forget we are not alone. Some of the best advice that I give my clients, and that I follow as well, is learning how to reach out for support. To do so is an act of courage that builds emotional muscles and becomes easier overtime.

Debra Kaplan, MA, MBA, LPC specializes in trauma, sex addiction, finance and relationships.

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(No AI used to create this article.)



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31

Days for Mental Health Awareness

By Dr. Marlo Archer www.drmarlo.com



Did you know Mental Health Awareness Month was established in 1949? Seventy-Six years ago!

May has been Mental Health Awareness Month not only for my whole life, but for my parents' whole lives, and yet, I really don't think I even heard of it until maybe 15-20 years ago.


The 2025 Mental Health Awareness Month theme is "Turn Awareness into Action."

Well, now that we're all aware, what are we going to do about it?

Here is a list of 31 things you can do during this month, to keep Mental Health a top priority. Help raise both the awareness and the actual mental health of those around you — as well as yourself:

1. Look people in the face.
2. Smile.
3. Wave a merging car in ahead of you.
4. Listen to uplifting music.
5. Drink enough water.
6. Eat nutritious food.
7. Take a co-worker out to lunch.
8. Bring a bowl of fruit to the office.
9. Offer a pack of gum to front desk workers.
10. Compliment someone's shoes.
11. Tell someone you're glad to see them.
12. Ask a disheveled person if they are okay.
13. Greet the unhoused.
14. Wave.
15. Go outside.
16. Wear a shirt with an uplifting message.
17. Support online purveyors of mental health information.
18. Check in on quiet friends.
19. Look for any "regulars" who are missing from your groups.
20. Sit quietly near someone crying.
21. Hold a hand.
22. Send a card.
23. Reach out to relapsers.
24. Make or buy art.
25. Volunteer time.
26. Listen.
27. Give reassurance.
28. Tell a joke.
29. Share a good book.
30. Give away excess.
31. Meditate.

Try one of these every day. Repeat the ones that you like. See if you can keep your awareness up for the whole month. Then try it in June and July as well. Let's keep it rolling in August and we may have less of a need for Suicide Awareness Month in September.



Empowering women in recovery for a healthy family and hopeful future

AZWRC is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing substance abuse treatment to women through a variety of programs to address family sustainability. All programs focus on providing the tools and resources to assist women in living financially independent, drug and alcohol-free lives.

WELDON HOUSE For women in recovery and their children	SALLY'S PLACE For pregnant women and infants	LEGACY HOUSE Short-term, supportive housing for women in outpatient treatment program	HER HOUSE For women in recovery
TERRY'S PLACE Coparenting women	THELMA'S HOUSE Transitional housing for women and children		

Treatment | Housing | Education
602-264-6214 azwomensrecoverycenter.org

Ice Bucket Challenge raising awareness for youth mental health


Lasting change can only happen when *we prioritize mental health*. The #SpeakYourMIND Ice Bucket Challenge is a launching point for us all to proudly commit our support to changing how mental health is viewed and prioritized in society and supporting the young people leading this crucial movement. This is how we create a new era of mental health. Active Minds is encouraging youth and young adults across the country to keep the momentum going. Both the USC MIND club founder and Active Minds emphasized the power of youth in driving this impactful movement, and Active Minds is now calling for continued engagement.

The challenge is simple—and meaningful: **Grab a bucket, some ice, and a friend.** The viral #SpeakYourMIND campaign has already garnered substantial support. Learn more <https://www.activeminds.org>

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Honoring Culture and Healing

A New Chapter for Native American Mental Health at Via Linda Behavioral Hospital

By Jaclyn Hull, CEO,
Via Linda Behavioral Hospital

At Via Linda Behavioral Hospital, we are proud to announce the official launch of our Native American Program—an initiative that reflects our commitment to providing culturally relevant and respectful mental health care to Indigenous communities. This new inpatient program is designed specifically to meet the unique needs of Native American individuals by incorporating traditional healing practices into a clinical setting.

Nearly three years ago, we opened our doors with a vision of serving the Scottsdale and greater Phoenix region with quality behavioral health care. Since then, we have expanded our services in many important directions, but the unveiling of this program holds a special place in our journey. It is not simply a new service—it is a meaningful partnership and a tribute to the traditions and healing practices of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and other Indigenous Nations we are honored to serve.

The Native American Program at Via Linda integrates a culturally adapted twelve-step model within a holistic treatment framework. This model embraces a traditional healing curriculum that promotes cultural reconnection, resilience-building, and the restoration of supportive relationships. It is our way of acknowledging the deeply rooted effects of generational trauma and the historical lack of access to quality mental health care among Native peoples.

We believe healing must honor the individual's culture, identity, and community. For too long, mental health care has been delivered with a one-size-fits-all approach. Our new program moves beyond that, blending modern therapeutic interventions with traditional practices such as smudging, cornmeal prayer, and storytelling. This hybrid approach helps patients not only address their mental health challenges but also reconnect with their heritage and the strength that lies within it.

We are incredibly grateful for the support of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. Their partnership and warm welcome have affirmed that healing is not something anyone should have to do alone. As our Chief Nursing Officer, Claire Romero, eloquently stated, "The understanding that no one individual is alone and we all face challenges in our lives has truly been embraced through this program."



Left to right: UHS Divisional Senior Vice President, Kerry Knott, SRPMIC District Rep. Su:k Fulwilder, CEO of Via Linda, Jaclyn Hull, City of Scottsdale, Vice Mayor Jan Dubasuskas, Paradise Valley Mayor, Mark Stanton, Honor Health CEO, Todd Laporte, Via Linda CMO, Dr. Aaron Wilson

"We believe healing must honor the individual's culture, identity, and community."

Her words capture the spirit of unity and compassion that guides our work every day.

In addition to the spiritual and cultural components, the program includes evidence-based therapies such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), art therapy, and pet therapy. Patients also have access to Alcoholics Anonymous® meetings that are structured with cultural sensitivity in mind. Our multidisciplinary team is trained to understand and respect cultural nuances while delivering high-quality care.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the potential to expand these services at an outpatient level. We envision a continuum of care that meets patients where they are—whether that means support during a crisis or resources for long-term wellness.

This is just the beginning

The Native American Program represents more than a treatment model—it's a living, evolving commitment to doing better for communities that have historically been underserved. We are humbled by the trust placed in us and remain dedicated to delivering care that not only treats symptoms but uplifts spirits and honors tradition.

As we continue this important work, we invite patients, families, and community partners to walk alongside us in healing. Together, we can reimagine mental health care—one that is inclusive, respectful, and rooted in culture.

To learn more about Via Linda Behavioral Hospital and their specialized programs, visit vialindabehavioral.com



Your treatment needs are as unique as you are.

We offer a variety of programs on both an Inpatient and Outpatient basis. Valley Hospital provides a full continuum of care to meet you where you are and help you get to where you want to be.

- Crisis Stabilization
- Detox/Chemical Dependency
- Adult Mental Health
- Rehabilitation Program
- Partial Hospitalization
- Intensive Outpatient

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Learn more at valleyhospital-phoenix.com

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**In an Emergency
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Resources & Support

**Suicide Crisis
Call 988**

Recovery Partners — Contributors

ACT Counseling & Education	602-569-4328	actcounseling.com
AZ Women's Recovery Center (AWRC)	602-264-6214	azwomensrecoverycenter.org
Aurora Behavioral Health	877-870-7012	auroraarizona.com
Birches Health	833-483-3838	bircheshealth.com
CBI, Inc.	877-931-9142	communitybridgesinc.org
Copper Springs	480-418-4367	coppersprings.com
The Crossroads	602-263-5242	thecrossroadsinc.org
DaVinci Consulting Services	480-606-8602	davinciconsultingservices.com
Desert Star Addiction Recovery Center	520-638-6000	desertstarARC.com
Dr. Marlo Archer	480-705-5007	DrMarlo.com
Gifts Anon	480-483-6006	
Hushabye Nursery	480-628-7500	hushabyenursery.org
The Meadows Behavioral Health	800-632-3697	meadowsBH.com
Mens Teen Challenge	520-792-1790	tcaz.org
Mercy Care	800-631-1314	602-222-9444
NotMYKid	602-652-0163	notmykid.org
Psychological Counseling Services (PCS)	480-947-5739	pcsintensive.com
Revive Recovery Center	480-405-5396	reviverecoverycenters.com
Scottsdale Providence	480-210-1734	scottsdaleprovidence.com
Scottsdale Recovery Center	888-663-7847	scottsdalerecovery.com
Sharon Youngblood	520-331-1483	
Sierra Tucson	800-842-4487	sierratucson.com
Brough Stewart, MC, LPC, NCC	602-316-3197	
Valley Hospital	602-952-3939	valleyhospital-phoenix.com
Virtue Recovery Center	866-338-6977	virtuerecoverycitywest.com
Teen Challenge AZ	602-708-9475	tcaz.org

Helplines

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)	602-264-1341
Al-Anon	602-249-1257
Tucson Al-Anon Information	520-323-2229
Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA)	aca-arizona.org
AZ Women's Recovery Center	602-264-6214
Bipolar Wellness	602-274-0068
Child Abuse Hotline – Support & Information	800-422-4453
Cocaine Anonymous	602-279-3838
Co-Anon	602-697-9550
CoDA	602-277-7991
COSA	480-385-8454
Crisis Help Line – For Any Kind of Crisis	800-233-4357
Crisis Text Line	Text HOME to 741741
Crystal Meth Anonymous	602-235-0955
Debtors Anonymous	800-421-2383
Domestic Violence	800-799-SAFE
Families Anonymous	602-647-5800
Food Addicts	foodaddicts.org
Gamblers Anonymous	602-266-9784
Grief Recovery	800-334-7606
Heroin Anonymous	602-870-3665
Marijuana Anonymous	800-766-6779
NDMDA Depression Hotline – Support Group	800-826-3632
Narcotics Anonymous/Phoenix	480-897-4636
Narcotics Anonymous/Casa Grande	520-426-0121
Narcotics Anonymous/Flagstaff	928-255-4655
Narcotics Anonymous/Prescott	928-458-7488
Narcotics Anonymous/Tucson	520-881-8381
Nar-Anon Family Groups	(800) 477-6291
National Youth Crisis Hotline	800-448-4663
Overeaters Anonymous	602-234-1195
PAL (Parents of Addicted Loved Ones)	480-300-4712
Parents Anonymous	602-248-0428
Phoenix Metro SAA	602-735-1681
RAINN (Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network)	RAINN.ORG
Rape Hotline (CASA)	602-241-9010
Sexaholics Anonymous	602-439-3000
Sexual Assault Hotline 24/7 English & Spanish	800-223-5001
Sex/Love Addicts	602-337-7117
Sex/Love Addicts Tucson	520-792-6450
Sex Addicts Anonymous	602-735-1681
S-ANON	480-545-0520
Teen Life Line	800-248-8336

Additional Resources

AZ. Dept. of Health	602-364-2086
Arizona Opioid Assistance Helpline	888-688-4222
Eric's House	855-894-5658
Desert Drug Dog	602-908-2042
Hunkapi Programs	480-393-0870
Kid in the Corner	kidinthecorner.org
EMPACT/La Frontera	800-273-8255
I Am Teen Strong	480-396-2409
Recovery Café	480-530-7090
Spiritually Fit Co-op	602-809-0854
TERROS Health	602-685-6000

TUCSON

ACA	aca-arizona.org
AA	520-624-4183
Al-Anon Info Service	520-323-2229
Anger Management	520-887-7079
Behavioral Awareness Center	520 629 9126
Co-Anon Family Groups	520-513-5028
Cocaine Anonymous	520-326-2211
Cornerstone Behavioral Health	520-222-8268
Cottonwood Tucson	800-877-4520
Crisis Intervention	520-323-9373
Narcotics Anonymous	520-881-8381
Nicotine Anonymous	520-299-7057
Overeaters Anonymous	520-733-0880
Recovery in Motion	520-975-2141
Sex Addicts Anonymous	520-745-0775
Sierra Tucson	800-842-4487
Suicide Prevention	520-323-9372
Teen Challenge	888-352-4940
The Mark Youth and Family Care	520-326-6182
Workaholics Anonymous	520-403-3559

In Tucson

Refuge Recovery

Wednesday, 6:00-7:00 pm, Red Tree Meditation Center, 1234 E 16th St. Tucson.
Saturday, 5:00- 6:30 pm,*Palo Verde room* Saint Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church, 4440 N Campbell Ave., Tucson.
Refuge recovery is a non-theistic alternative to 12 step programs.

EDA Meetings

Sat. 10:30 am New Freedom Meeting — Pigeon Coop, 4415 S Rural Rd, Ste 8, Tempe AZ. Step and big book study.

Thur. 7:00 pm, New Happiness Meeting Crossroads 2103 E Southern, Tempe. Rotating format - Step, Topic, Big book, Speaker.

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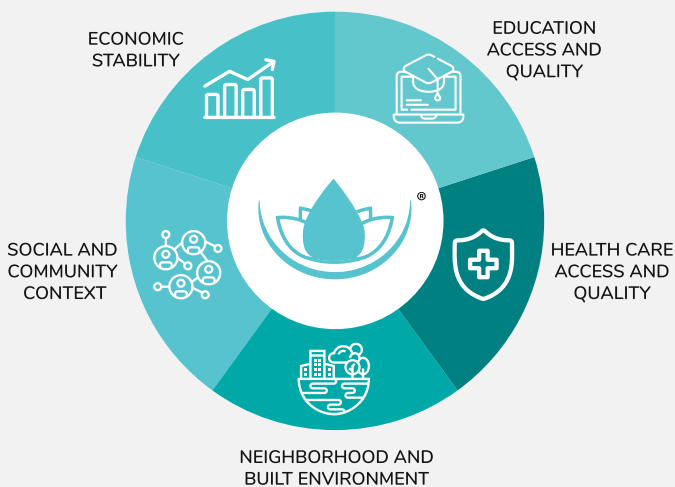
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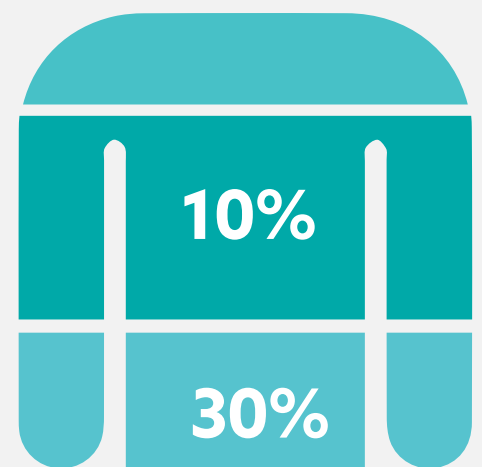


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