

Community Partners Informer

Volume 220

The Mental Health Newsletter for Pope County's Drop-In Center

February 2019

CENTER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Conversations will be meeting on Tuesday, February 12th, at **9:30** at the Hoffman Community Center. **They have changed the meeting time to 9:30-11:30** Everyone is welcome to attend! Anyone with a Mental Health diagnosis receives a \$35 stipend and is reimbursed mileage for participating. Please feel free to call the Center for more information.

The Pope County Local Advisory Council on Mental Health (LAC) will meet at **9:30 on Thursday, February 14th**. Shelly Leonard was elected LAC Chair and Jeri Lange Co-Chair

The Pope County **Food Drop** takes place at United Parish Church on **Tuesday, February 12th**. Registration begins at 11:00.

CARDS AND GAMES! Every Tuesday at 2:00 at the Center. Get in on the action!

LUNCHTIME SUPPORT GROUP – First and third Friday of the month at 12:00. Please call the Center (320-634-0888) if you're coming so we can order lunch for you. We are open to any and ALL topics!

POTLUCK – Friday, February 8th. We get together the 2nd Friday of each month for fantastic food and great conversation!

Please join us in celebrating **February birthdays!** There will be cake and ice cream for the Birthday Party on Tuesday, February 19th, at 3:00 p.m. Those celebrating birthdays in February are Bob, Tracy, Nate and Jennie. Let's gather to help them celebrate!

COFFEE TALK is the last Friday of the month at 10:00 (February 22nd). Join us for bakery treats and great conversation. This is a Support Group of your peers!

NEW PEER SUPPORT GROUP starting March 6th and meeting every Wednesday at 1:00 through April 24th!! Shelly, a Certified Peer Support Specialist, will facilitate the group focusing on **"Defining Recovery Through Peer Support"**. See the attached flyer to **register by February 15th!**

Coming up in March, Sharon is hosting the 6th annual St. Paddy's Day Meal on Thursday, March 14th at noon at the Center!!

(Friends United Networking) FUN Bunch

The next **FUN Bunch/Drop-In Center planning meeting** is **Wednesday, February 6th at 11:00** at the Center. Help us plan for upcoming events – we need your input on what you want to do for fun! We always have pizza and pop at noon!

February's activity is dinner at Duffy's! We will be meeting there on Wednesday, February 13th at 5:30.

Jennie is hosting a Valentine's Party on February 18th from 1:00-3:00 pm at the Center.

As we plan ahead, we will be going to lunch at the new Glenwood hotspot in March. We will meet at 11:00 at GATHER Coffee and Bistro on March 14th. In April we'll be going to the Movies and dinner at Boulder Tap House in Alex. Date to be determined.

Please sign up at the Center or give us a call to sign up for all events.

Community Partners Board of Directors:

President: Open Vice President: Cody Rogahn, Recorder: Open, Wayne Zimmerman, Clarissa Freese, Sharon Breen, Lucille Tullis, Gloria Johnson, Pastor Laura Nordstrom, Ex-Officio Members: Jane Ofsstad, Shelly Leonard, Jeff James (Solutions)

Community Partners Drop-In Center

Open Monday through Friday
9:00 am to 4:00 pm
125 E. Minnesota Ave
Glenwood, MN 56334
320-634-0888

For information on local mental health services, go to the Region IV South Mental Health Initiative website:
www.r4s.conversations.org

7 Tools For Managing Traumatic Stress

By Adena Barak Lee | Jan 18, 2019

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other forms of [traumatic stress](#) can make life incredibly difficult and unpredictable. Intrusive thoughts and flashbacks can just show up without a moment's notice, affecting your ability to function. Staying away from the people, places and situations that trigger these thoughts and memories can be appropriate and helpful at times. However, using avoidance as your only strategy can cause more problems than it attempts to solve. These symptoms can't be avoided all the time, and trying to may cause you to close yourself off to opportunities, create anxiety or feel even more restrained by your traumatic experience.

It may also be harmful to only have one method of coping because it may not help you every time. Rather it's better to have an abundance of tools at the ready for when you're feeling the scary reach of traumatic stress. So, here are some diverse coping methods to add to your toolbox.

Use The "Window Of Tolerance"

The "Window of Tolerance" (WoT) concept is a way to identify and talk about your current mental state. Being inside your window means that you're doing okay and can function effectively. When you're outside of the window, it means you have been triggered and you are experiencing a traumatic-stress response.

Initially, you might have a small window which means you have a limited capacity to process and stabilize when presented with difficult information or reminders of traumatic events. You are easily triggered to flashbacks, intrusive thoughts, high anxiety, emotional shut down/numbing, panic/anxiety attacks, dissociation and overwhelmed.

Your window expands as you develop tools to stabilize your feelings, which increases your capacity to handle more difficult information, emotions and physical stimuli/sensations. "Handle" means you can stay in the present moment, you know where you are, who you are with, what date and time it is, and are aware of all your five senses. This is coupled with being able to feel emotions and not be overwhelmed by them. You are present in the moment, you can think and feel at the same time.

Having the awareness of both the positive and negative states can help you identify and practice the tools necessary to either stay in your WoT, or return to your WoT if you find yourself outside of it. Being able to notify others of the size of your window, your triggers and your tools allows for realistic expectations of what you can handle and what you need to do to stay present and engaged.

Breathe Slowly And Deeply

This is a free and portable tool to use anytime and anywhere. Make sure you inhale through your nose and exhale for longer than you inhale, either through your nose or through pursed lips. A suggested rhythm is to inhale for four counts, hold for two and exhale for six to eight counts. By doing this you are activating the part of your nervous system that helps your body calm itself. This can help you to think clearly and return to the present moment.

Validate Your Experience

What you have experienced is real and hurtful. Having the name or context of traumatic stress/PTSD lets you know you that how you feel is not your fault. There is nothing "wrong" with you. What you're going through is actually a normal response to abnormal experiences. It's important to remind yourself of this as you go through challenging symptoms because self-validation is an important piece of healing.

Focus On Your Five Senses (5-4-3-2-1)

Start with five different things you see (the trees outside the window), hear (the buzzing of the air conditioner), sense with your skin (my collar on my neck or a warm breeze on my arms), taste (the lingering of coffee on my tongue), and smell (stale air or perfume). Then notice four of each, then three of each, and so on. Be as specific about these items as you can to make you really concentrate on external factors and to get out of your head. Pay attention to things like shape, scent, texture and color. You will probably be back to the present moment before you even realize it.

Think Positively For 12 Seconds

Bring to mind something positive. Such as a beautiful flower, a sunset, a smile on someone's face or a compliment from a friend or colleague. And really focus on it for 12 seconds. Breathe and notice its impact on your body and emotions. According to neuropsychologist Dr. Rick Hanson, it only takes 12 seconds for the creation of new neuron connections. These positive experiences have the ability to replace stress/fear based thinking and coping.

Use A Gravity Or Weighted Blanket

A symptom of PTSD is sleep disturbances (which includes insomnia), nightmares, flashbacks and high-anxiety. Not getting enough of the type of sleep you need can cause you to have problems concentrating, leading to difficulties at work and/or school. It can lead to irritability, negatively impacting important relationships. There is research to show that using a weighted blanket, which simulates being held or hugged safely and firmly, can assist in reducing anxiety and insomnia.

Laugh

According to recent research laughter really is medicine, and is now being used more commonly as a therapeutic method. It is proven to reduce stress by releasing specific hormones that boost your immune system and rewire your brain. So, have a go-to funny video to watch when you're feeling stressed or anxious. Or spend time with a friend or loved one you feel safe with who can make you laugh.

You have a right to feel calm and in the present moment. Practicing these tools is a good first step to managing your traumatic stress and getting on the road to recovery.

Adena is an internationally recognized speaker, author, trainer and consultant, providing a fresh and important look at traumatic stress, individual treatment and recovery. Her specialty is childhood sexual abuse. Adena has been providing premiere services around the globe for over 25 years. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Licensed Independent Substance Abuse Counselor, Board Certified Expert in Traumatic Stress, and a Certified Practitioner of Polyvagal Theory. Adena is the author of *Covert Emotional Abuse: The Hidden Sexual Abuse, A Story of Hope and Healing*, as well as *12 Healing Steps for Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse: A Practical Guide*.



Defining Recovery Through Peer Support

A Certified Peer Support Specialist[Shelly] led group with the goals of:

- *Educating about the recovery journey*
- *Empowering through identifying abilities, strengths and assets*
- *Identifying resources, providing encouragement and connecting with peers*
- *Supporting peers to identify needs and engage them in the recovery process*

Starting on Wednesday 3/6/19-4/24/19 from 1:00-2:00 with regular attendance encouraged!

Group will take place @ Community Partners Drop-In Center

Qualifications:

- *Members must have a current Diagnostic Assessment that recommends ARMHS or Peer Support*

Registration:

- ✓ *Deadline to register is 2/15/2019*
- ✓ *Return this form to SOLUTIONS:
512 30th Ave E, Ste 100
Alexandria, MN 56308
Fax: 320-762-0829*

Defining Recovery Through Peer Support

Deadline: 2/15/19

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Guardian(if applicable): _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Insurance/Policy# _____

Referring Agency/Phone Number: _____

Current Diagnostic Assessment: Yes or NO If Yes, where? _____

For more information contact Shelly Leonard at 320-634-0888 or 320-424-2716