

ROAD TO RECOVERY NEWSLETTER

Created by Dual Recovery at Warren Washington Association for Mental Health to support individuals in recovery

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A Woman in Recovery

BY AMY JOHNSON

When I began my recovery journey one of the biggest questions I had to ask myself was, who am I? This may seem like a strange question to a lot of people, but if you have ever struggled with a substance use disorder than you probably know how easily you can lose your sense of self, or who you were before drugs and/or alcohol took over your life. Where my addiction caused me to disconnect from who I was and what mattered most in my life, my recovery has been all about self-discovery and focusing on what I am passionate about and what brings purpose to my life. And unlike my addiction, my recovery journey has been positive and empowering. When I got sober, I started getting into things I loved again, like reading and cooking. I had forgotten how much joy these simple hobbies used to bring me. I also started focusing on my health and nutrition, which made me feel better about myself too. I also began trying new things and found I am really interested in beauty and skincare. I hope to someday start a YouTube channel. The passion and joy I feel when I invest my time into doing something I love is something I have not felt in a very long time. I am excited about life and what my future holds for the first time in years. My days were previously so consumed with chasing the high that there was no room for anything else. My recovery has also given me the opportunity to work with and support individuals who have similar struggles as myself. And I was completely taken aback by how much this has positively affected my life and given me a purpose. When you can wake up in the morning and know your day is going to be filled with helping others and doing things you love, it gives you a new appreciation for life. It is important to me to talk about these things because I want others to know that even though your addiction can cause you to lose yourself, there is hope and you can find your way back too.

**INTERESTED IN SHARING A PIECE OF YOUR RECOVERY STORY?
PLEASE CONTACT REBECCA RYAN AT RRYAN@WWAMH.ORG**



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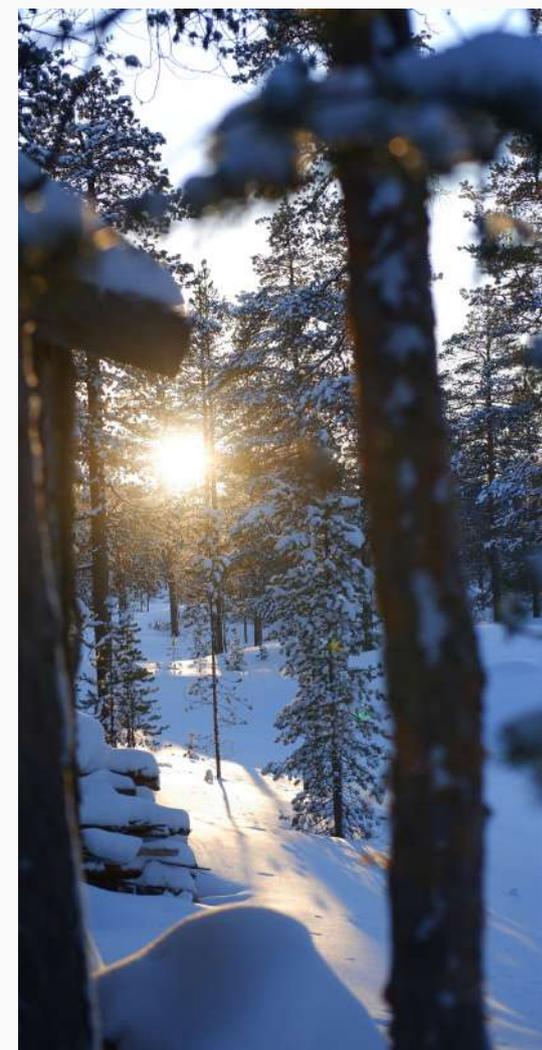


HEALTH & WELLNESS

Healthy Eating and Recovery

BY AMY JOHNSON

Active addiction of any kind can take a huge toll on the human body. If you have ever been in the throes of addiction before, than you probably know eating a well-balanced diet was not in the forefront of your mind. Recovering from drug and/or alcohol use is a gradual, multifaceted process, and focusing on nutrition is an important part of it. Incorporating a well-balanced diet will help replenish nutrients, heal the body, restore energy, and improve mood and emotional well-being. I know from my own personal experience that changing your eating habits can be difficult and overwhelming, especially in early recovery when you are already facing difficult changes and increased stress. So, here are some tips that I found helpful to get you started.



START SLOWLY

If you go into this with strict rules about what you should or should not eat, you are most likely going to set yourself up for failure. Instead, try focusing on a wide variety of healthy foods like richly colored fruits and vegetables. And don't forget to have fun! I love trying new, healthy recipes that I can add into my rotation.

FOCUS ON FIBER

Several studies have shown that there is a link between gut health and mental health. Properly nourishing your microbiome (the healthy bacteria in the gut) starts with a well-balanced diet of high-fiber foods. According to the American Heart Association, you should aim to get between 21 to 25 grams of fiber per day.

DRINK PLENTY OF WATER

Most experts agree that you should drink about eight glasses of water every day. Whenever I drink enough water and properly hydrate myself, not only do I feel better overall, but I am less likely to overeat. Our bodies are made up of 60% water that we are constantly excreting through bodily functions and drinking enough water is an essential part of any healthy approach.

DON'T SKIP BREAKFAST

There is an abundance of research that show how beneficial eating breakfast is to your health. It will increase energy levels, improve concentration, and decrease your risks for diabetes and heart disease. If you are not used to eating breakfast this may seem difficult at first but planning out your meals ahead of time can really help.





HOT TOPIC OF THE MONTH

Harm Reduction Saves Lives

BY AMY JOHNSON

Substance use disorder (SUD) is a disease that affects the brain, like any other chronic medical condition. It is not a moral failing or choice and every person experiences it differently. Some can effectively manage their disease on their own, while others may not have the support, resources, or even the desire to seek treatment. According to former Surgeon General Vivek Murty's landmark report, one in seven individuals will develop a SUD, yet only ten percent will receive treatment. This is where harm reduction comes in and hence, why it is so important. The whole philosophy behind harm reduction is grounded in justice and human rights and focuses on meeting people where they are at in a compassionate, nonjudgmental, and respectful way. And it does not require a person to stop using as a condition of support or treatment.

So, what exactly is harm reduction? Harm reduction is a broad term that refers to different policies and programs that strive to minimize the health, social, and economic consequences of SUD. The harm reduction approach does not necessarily aim to eliminate drug use but rather diminish the harmful effects that often accompany it. It realistically acknowledges the fact that many people will continue to use substances and engage in risky behavior regardless of prevention efforts. The main focus is keeping people safe and alive long enough to receive treatment if they desire to. A common misconception about harm reduction is that it condones or encourages drug use, however, many advocates work toward the individuals' ideals of recovery while also recognizing for a lot of people that recovery is a process that takes time. Harm reduction programs vary from state to state and community to community but often include programs like medication-assisted treatment (MAT), syringe exchange program (SEP), education on proper injection and wound care, safe sex, and many others.



LOOKING FOR RESOURCES ON HARM REDUCTION IN OUR COMMUNITY?

Contact Sabrina Herlick, Harm Reduction Coordinator, through the Alliance for Positive Health to learn more about harm reduction and what they offer. Here are some examples of what they offer:

- Testing for Hepatitis C and HIV
- Linkage to care/treatment for Hepatitis C and HIV
- Referral to Drug User Health Hub for MAT
- Education of 911 Good Samaritan Law
- Education regarding carrying needles
- Opioid Overdose Prevention Program: Access to free Narcan and education on the opioid crisis and how to administer Narcan
- Syringe Exchange Program: Anonymous, access to needles and clean works, syringe disposal, education on wound care and proper injection, and linkage to treatment if desired

SABRINA HERLICK
EMAIL: [SHERLICK@ALLIANCEFPH.ORG](mailto:sherlick@alliancefph.org)
CALL OR TEXT: 518-419-1578

COMMUNITY UPDATES & RESOURCES

FILE YOUR TAXES FOR FREE

Still need to file your taxes and don't want to be charged a fee? Taxpayers with an income of \$72,000 or less can complete and submit their federal and New York State income taxes online for free, as well as can schedule a virtual tax filing assistance session. For more information or to schedule a free session, visit the NYS Tax Department at tax.ny.gov. Looking for more assistance? Contact the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) at 1-800-211-5128 to make a tax appointment and a local volunteer will help families or individuals with an income of \$57,000 or less prepare their taxes. For more information, visit their website: www.tricountyunitedway.org.

LOCAL RECOVERY RESOURCES

Hope & Healing Center, Hudson Falls | Website: www.facebook.com/HopeAndHealingRCOC/ | Peer Support: 518-812-5813

Healing Springs, Saratoga | Website: www.sararecovery.org/healing-springs/ | Peer Support: 518-306-3048

AA Meeting Schedule: www.district13.aahmbny.org/ | AA Hotline: 518-793-1113

NA Meeting Schedule: www.abcdrna.org/ | NA Hotline: 888-399-5519

DUAL RECOVERY IS NOW OFFERING HYBRID SUPPORT GROUPS AT THE HOPE AND HEALING CENTER EVERY TUESDAY AT 4PM. ZOOM MEETING ID: 844-2214-0148

PLEASE VISIT WWW.WWAMH.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION & COPIES OF OUR NEWSLETTERS



THE DUAL RECOVERY TEAM



Amy Johnson



Amy began her journey with Warren Washington Association for Mental Health as a resident in treatment housing. Amy's experiences on her road to recovery led her to her current position as a Peer Specialist and she now celebrates over two years in recovery. Amy is very passionate about her role in supporting her peers in their recovery journeys and is excited to express some of that passion here within each newsletter. Amy has her bachelor degree in Childhood Education from SUNY Plattsburgh and she is also a Certified Recovery Coach. If you would like to get to know her more, or are in need of peer support, please feel free to reach out to her via email or phone.

 AJOHNSON@WWAMH.ORG
 518-401-5991

Rebecca Ryan



Rebecca is a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) and has been working for Warren Washington Association for Mental Health since 2014. Rebecca became the Director of Dual Recovery in September of 2019 and has been eagerly exploring new ways to serve and support not only members, but the community at large. The purpose of this monthly newsletter is to provide you with some fun articles, personal stories, seasonal updates, and more that can hopefully help in each of your recovery journeys. Please feel free to reach out to Rebecca with any thoughts or ideas for future newsletters, or if you are interested in learning more about Dual Recovery. Happy reading!

 RRYAN@WWAMH.ORG
 518-793-2352 X265