



Behavioral Health Department

April, 2024 NEWSLETTER



April is National Alcohol Awareness Month

What is Alcohol Awareness Month?

The purpose of this public health outreach campaign is to raise public awareness, along with educating about alcohol, including the dangers dependence on the substance could result in: alcohol use disorder (AUD), for example.

Several topics are given the spotlight during this month, such as the risks associated with alcohol use, AUD treatments, AUD prevention efforts, and the large scale impact alcohol misuse not only has on an individual, but on families and communities as well.

Events that occur during this month are done for a variety of reasons, whether it be to raise awareness about the subject, collecting funds to donate towards rehabilitation centers and their services, or as a way to fight the stigma those with addiction face.

How You Can Support Alcohol Awareness Month

Be on the lookout for events on Alcohol Awareness Month in your area that you can participate in. Even if there are no local events happening in your community, there are several ways you could go about raising awareness for it.

To support Alcohol Awareness Month, consider trying out some of the following suggestions, featured here:

- **Wear a red ribbon pin:** Red is the official color of Alcohol Awareness Month, show your support by making your own or buying one online.
- **Go alcohol-free for 72 hours:** The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) encourages people to celebrate Alcohol Awareness Month by being alcohol-free for the first weekend in April. The organization suggests that if you take on this challenge, do so with the help of friends and family, as you'll be able to support and rely on one another if anybody experiences any hardships. If it's difficult for you or a loved one to make it through the weekend, then this could be a sign to seek out professional treatment.
- **Host a dry party:** You can be supportive of Alcohol Awareness Month by hosting alcohol-free or "dry" parties anytime during the month of April.
- **Start a conversation with kids and teens about alcohol:** Taking the time to sit down and talk about alcohol is a preventive measure that helps build resilience towards underage drinking, and with April being Alcohol Awareness Month, it's a great time for this kind of discussion to take place. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has resources through it's "Talk. They Hear You." campaign that can help you begin conversations about alcohol with a variety of age groups from kids who are as young as 9 years old, up to college-aged individuals (<https://www.samhsa.gov/talk-they-hear-you>).
- **Talk to your family and friends about alcohol:** While it can be a tough endeavor to talk to a loved one about alcohol misuse, it also has the potential to be lifesaving. If you're worried about a loved one's dependence on alcohol, Alcohol Awareness Month is a good time to check in on them about their drinking.
- **Explore what your relationship with alcohol is:** Alcohol Awareness Month is a great time you could use for self-reflection, take the opportunity to be more aware of your drinking habits by monitoring and tracking your alcohol intake, as this can allow you to spot potential signs of overuse.

Source

"April is Alcohol Awareness Month" *healthline*, 3 May 2023. <https://www.healthline.com/health/alcohol/alcohol-awareness-month>. Web. 28 March 2024.

Youth: A Resource Guide for Professionals, Families and Communities

If you or a loved one are experiencing a crisis, or any other problems, contact us at (715) 779-3741 to begin services or to help answer any questions you may have. Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00am -4:30pm

If this is an emergency, call 911, or if you are experiencing a mental health crisis, call the Bayfield County Mental Health Crisis Line 24 hours a day at 1 (866) 317-9362.



Dial 988

If you are facing a suicidal crisis or are in emotional distress, dial 988 to contact the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. The lifeline will connect you to a local crisis center, where you'll talk to a crisis counselor who can provide emotional support and can help find crisis resources for you as well. This lifeline offers free, confidential support—24 hours a day, 7 days a week

CERTIFIED PEER SPECIALIST SERVICES

A Peer Specialist is an individual with lived recovery experience who has been trained and certified to help their peers gain hope and move forward in their own recovery. By sharing experiences, peers bring hope to people in recovery and promote a sense of belonging within the community (SAMSHA)

PEER SUPPORT IS..

- Delivered by individuals who have common lived experiences.
- People with mental health and/or substance use disorders have a unique power to help one another based on shared connection and deep understanding of this experience.
- Peer Specialists offer support, strength, and hope to their peers, which allows for personal growth, wellness, and recovery. (SAMSHA)
- Peer support is ongoing, available, and flexible.
- Peer support enhances other health care services by creating emotional, social and practical assistance necessary for staying healthy and managing. (Peers for Progress)

WHAT SERVICES DO PEER SPECIALISTS PROVIDE?

Peer specialists support their peers both individually and in small groups.

- Help peers create individual service plans based on recovery goals and steps to achieve those goals
- Use recovery-oriented tools to help their peers address challenges
- Assist others to build their own self-directed wellness plans
- Support peers in their decision-making
- Offer a sounding board and a shoulder to lean on...and more!

PROVIDING HOPE

Modeling recovery, engaging, and connecting are just some of the ways peers make a difference in the lives of others. The bond that is essential in peer support means that both the person giving support and the person receiving support benefit from the relationship. (MHA)

SERVICES INCLUDE:

Education and skill- building

- ⇒ Wellness planning
- ⇒ Crisis planning
- ⇒ Self- advocacy skills
- ⇒ Budgeting

Services that help

- ⇒ Identify strengths and use the strengths to reach goals
- ⇒ Identify and overcome barriers to participate in community resources

Connect with resources

- ⇒ Visiting community resources to familiarize
- ⇒ Teaching and modeling skills needed to utilize resources
- ⇒ Wrap around services
- ⇒ Cultural wellness and healing

Building relationships and encouraging community based activities

- ⇒ Employment
- ⇒ Relationships
- ⇒ Physical activity
- ⇒ Self- directed hobbies

Using SAMHSA's Eight Dimensions of Wellness to guide a holistic approach to recovery, a Certified Peer Specialist will work with you to discuss meaningful goals in one or more of these important dimensions; financial, social, spiritual, occupational, physical, intellectual, and emotional. Each of the dimensions contribute to your overall wellness and individual recovery.

Emotional Eating

Emotional eating is when a person overeats due to stress or on account of other negative emotions. Generally, people turn to emotional eating in an attempt to deal with an array of difficult feelings, such as anger, sadness, anxiety, or boredom. The issues typically seen in this behavior can include weight gain, depression, binge eating, and development of other eating disorders.

In celebration of April being Emotional Overeating Awareness Month, below is information on what emotional eating is and 7 tips to discourage a person from continuing to rely on emotional eating; the content featured here comes from the website, choosing therapy (<https://www.choosingtherapy.com/emotional-eating/>).

What Exactly is Emotional Eating?

The main difference between normal eating habits and emotional eating is what influences them, hunger cues are the main driving force behind normal eating habits, while emotional eating can be set off by a variety of different factors including a person's feelings, mood, or stress levels. Another name commonly used for emotional eating is "stress eating". Unhealthy eating patterns are most often triggered by negative emotions, but there are times that positive emotions can result in bouts of excessive or unnecessary food choices, as well.

While appetite suppression does occur for some people when they're either overly upset, sad, or stressed, this isn't usually the case for many emotional eaters. Instead when these individuals are emotionally dysregulated, they find themselves overeating as a coping mechanism, in comparison to others who eat less. The food that emotional eaters typically turn to when trying to forget about their difficulties are "comfort foods," which tend to contain high levels of salt, fat, and sugar, as opposed to healthier food options that may be available.

Triggers that may result in emotional eating, include the following:

- The need to try being more in control of one's emotions
- Making an effort to suppress negative emotions from bubbling over
- Attempting to feel positive emotions
- Lacks control over their own actions; emotional eating is a habit they do without much thought
- Eating to enhance already existing emotions

How Emotional Hunger Differs From Physical Hunger

Physical hunger is a primal sensation felt when the body needs nourishment and the solution to make the sensation go away is simply to eat. Certain cues can indicate physical hunger like when your stomach growls, feeling lightheaded, and not being able to concentrate. On the other hand, emotional hunger is the result of emotional cues and this urge to eat doesn't always align with the need to consume food.

Key differences do exist between physical hunger and emotional hunger, such as:

- Emotional hunger can happen unexpectedly: This type of hunger can appear quite rapidly and is often brought on by intense emotions including sadness, anger, boredom, and this outcome can even occur because of positive feeling too, like joy.
- Emotional hunger indulges in comfort foods: The types of food that emotional eaters crave are comfort foods, these foods are ones that they've grown up eating and have fond memories of.
- Emotional hunger can lead to mindless eating: People whose emotions drive them to eat may do so, while distracted or preoccupied by something else.
- Emotional hunger can continue to persist, even after you're physically full: You may eat enough food, but emotional hunger can cause you to eat past that point, since you aren't eating to simply feel full, but to indirectly fill a "void" you have yet to satiate.
- Emotional hunger leaves people struggling with feelings of shame and guilt: After emotional eating, a person may feel ashamed or guilty after engaging in the behavior. Emotions like these are heightened when the person has a more chronic eating disorder affecting their life.

7 Tips to Stop Emotional Eating

When you emotionally eat, you may find yourself dealing with complicated feelings such as uneasiness, guilt, and self-hatred. Emotional eating can also result in health issues down the line like obesity. However, this behavior has the capability to be changed and altered for the better either by doing so on your own or with the help from a professional medical provider/therapist. If you are interested in changing your eating habits on your own, you can start by identifying what your triggers are, switch out emotional eating for healthier coping mechanisms, and keeping a journal to track what foods you eat.

Here are 7 tips to decrease your dependence on emotional eating, as a way to console your feelings:

1. Identify Your Emotional Eating Triggers

To stop the cycle of compulsive or emotional eating from continuing, it's important to uncover what triggers you to overeat in the first place. A good place to start is by finding out what your daily sources of stress are. Also, you may want to consider thinking about which emotions have most prominently caused you to rely on emotional eating for comfort. While the most common triggers are stress, sadness, and boredom, some people overeat when they are happy and filled with joy.

Upon determining the factors that fuel your emotional eating habits, the next step you'll need to do is identify which situations the triggers occur in. For example, if you overeat when you feel bored, the reason could be due to having a large amount of free time on your hands. This could be because of a multitude of reasons like excessive time spent in front of a screen, spending too much time stuck at home, or having no weekend plans. Once you know what triggers you, you can make plans to prevent opportunities for emotional eating by picking other activities to do instead.

2. Be More Cautious Around Your Triggers

To overcome emotional eating, the key is to first recognize when you come across one of your triggers, then be self-aware and intentional in how you choose to react to the encounter. Instead of fighting the urge to overeat using sheer willpower, oftentimes the best solution is to proactively try and make good choices. Putting in the effort to be more intentional about your eating habits can help you make some progress with being able to break the emotional eating cycle.

If you are someone who gets fastfood after a long day at work, consider driving an alternative route that doesn't go by those fastfood locations, so you don't get tempted. However, when a trigger is unavoidable, remember to stay vigilant and maintain control over your actions. For example, make it a priority not to eat while you are distracted, this includes multi-tasking and being preoccupied with screen time.

3. Start a Food Diary

Emotional eating can be similar to dissociation in the sense that emotional eaters tend to "zone out" as they engage in this behavior, meaning they often aren't aware or notice when they start to feel full. To discourage this habit from continuing, an excellent tool for you to consider using is a food diary. The ability to monitor and record your food intake allows you to have more awareness of what kinds of food you eat and how much. As a result, this practice of maintaining an eye on your eating habits will help deter you from mindlessly bingeing.

To keep a food diary, there are electronic media apps available that can perform this function; otherwise, you could use a physical journal to start up a written log. Something important to remember, the purpose of a food diary isn't for obsessively tracking food calories, but to learn of eating habits, in order to adjust as needed and become more intentional when it comes to adopting a healthier way of eating.

4. Keep Track of Your Mood

Alongside keeping tabs of the food you eat, you should also consider making an effort to take note of how you feel, especially since many people who are emotional eaters also experience difficulty when it comes to emotional awareness and regulation. For better control when it comes to managing eating habits, it's best you get started on improving your ability to identify and understand what you are feeling. This will help you to not be caught off-guard by sudden emotions and you'll be less likely to give in to the urge to overindulge yourself on food.

To practice this, start a mood log. If you don't know where to get started, make an effort to write down your feelings and try to do this practice, at least three times a day, if possible.

For your mood log, make sure your entries contain these elements:

- Logistics—day and time of when you are logging in the entry
- Most prominent mood you feel (for example: happy, annoyed, bored)
- Any noticeable sensations that you feel in your body (for example: your chest tightening)
- Urges to overeat

5. Practice Intuitive Eating

The purpose of intuitive eating is to change your relationship when it comes to food and to become more intentional with how you choose to eat. Intuitive eating is a mindful eating practice, where you let your body take the reins on making decisions regarding food, determining things like what to eat, how much, and when to stop. If you decide to do this yourself, eating in this way will help you to enjoy food, instead of you feeling controlled by it.

To begin intuitive eating, follow these steps:

- Eat when your body signals its hungry and stop when you feel full
- Listen to your body, eat what it wants and what will help it to feel good
- Nourish your body by eating food and to replenish your physical energy
- Avoid strict diet rules, don't restrict yourself from any foods
- Eat slowly, don't eat too fast

6. Pause and Reflect When You Experience a Food Craving

Stop to listen to your body and use this opportunity to think over what its trying to tell you. Sometimes a food craving is for something else entirely like rest, companionship, or love. It's important to know that in these situations, food won't fulfill your needs, as it only provides a temporary satisfaction, but will fade and won't resolve what's really the issue at hand.

7. Turn to Other Activities When You Feel Emotionally Hungry

Put together a list of coping skills or activities you could do when you feel the urge to partake in emotional eating. Make sure some of your ideas can be done easily on the fly and don't require planning, money, or the participation of other people. Examples of some activities you could easily do on your own include going for a walk, listening to music, or writing down the things you are grateful for.

5 Tips to Prevent Against Distracted Driving and Pay Attention to the Road

Everyone had been guilty of some form of distracted driving at least one time or another.

In celebration of April being Distracted Driving Awareness Month, below is some tips on what you can do to avoid distracted driving; the content featured here comes from the GEICO insurance website, (<https://www.geico.com/information/safety/auto/teendriving/distracted-driving/>).

To drive more safely, consider trying out the following ideas for yourself:

1. Put Your Cell Phone Away While Driving

The only exception to this rule is in response to an emergency; however, even then, the best course of action is to pull over on the right shoulder of the road beforehand, so you can safely use your cell phone to report the emergency without endangering yourself or others.

Even hands-free devices can be distracting and affect your ability to drive, as they can impede one's awareness to visual and audio cues, which are indicators you need to be looking out for, otherwise it's possible you could find yourself in a car crash.

Do not use cell phones to have social conversations with others while you drive. It's actually against the law to do this sort of thing in several jurisdictions, as it could lead to you being ticketed and fined.

2. Pull Off to the Side, If You are Feeling Drowsy

Crashes are four times more likely to occur due to drowsy driving. If you are driving and begin to feel tired, don't push yourself to keep going, instead get off the road when your eyes start to get heavy and you have a hard time keeping them open.

3. Passengers Can Distract Your Attention Away From the Road

Most states have driver licensing laws that prohibit teens from driving around exclusively with other adolescents during the first few months of getting their driver's license. This is because having a friend present sabotages a novice driver's focus on the road, as they instead are preoccupied with having a conversation and interacting with their passenger.

4. Don't Eat While You Drive

Distracted driving can result from a person being busy and trying to multitask. On your way to school or work, you may decide to eat while driving as a time-saver, but this can take away from your ability to be attentive and makes you less mindful of the other drivers on the road. Additionally, food spills can be a major distraction.

5. Just Concentrate on Driving; Don't Multi-task

As you are in your vehicle, you may think it's a good time to get a few things done like making phone calls, searching for music on the radio, or maybe even sending out text messages. Don't do these things. Instead focus on your own driving and be aware of the other vehicles you share the road with. Get some tasks you are able to do out of the way first, before you drive.

Be patient when you drive. The main objective you should focus on when driving is keeping yourself and any passengers with you safe from the dangers of the road.

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•EMBARRASSMENT• *Name it to Tame it*



If you have ever seen the movie, "Chicken Little" you probably know what "embarrassment" is. This movie centers around Chicken Little, who warns everyone about the sky falling; however, no one believes him and thinks he simply imagined the whole thing up due to an acorn falling on his head. A year later passes in the movie and the citizens of the town that Chicken Little lives in still believe his statement about the sky falling was false and treat him negatively as a result, this includes his schoolmates bullying him and the townspeople actively avoiding him at all costs. Undoubtedly this is a difficult time in Chicken Little's life, as he feels he doesn't have many people he can turn to for support and on top of this, he also has a strained relationship with his father, Buck Cluck. The aftermath of the "sky is falling" fiasco, embarrassed Buck Cluck, leaving him wary of other people's thoughts on the whole situation and being dismissive of the endeavors his son expresses interest in pursuing, instead feeling it would be best if Chicken Little laid low and stayed out of the public's gaze.

Despite this, Chicken Little decides he's going to join his school's baseball team, in hopes this will result in some positive attention from his dad, since Buck Cluck used to be the town's baseball star. The opportunity arises for Chicken Little to gain back some respect from his dad and the rest of the town, when he's played for the ninth inning of the last baseball game of the season. Everyone believes Chicken Little will strike out and lose the game, including the opposing team who pay little attention to him when he's up to bat, so when he does hit the ball, he's able to make it all the way to homebase and win the game for his town, since the other team wasn't prepared and assumed Chicken Little would be an easy "out". This does temporarily win back his dad's approval; however, when the sky does fall on him again, he discovers that "the sky" is actually tied to aliens. Upon Chicken Little going with his friends to investigate the aliens further, they find themselves in danger and are forced to alert the rest of the town about the imminent threat the aliens pose, but by the time the townspeople arrive the aliens have already retreated. With no aliens in sight, the town doesn't believe Chicken Little and his friends. For Buck Cluck, he sees this as being a repeat of last year's "the sky falling" incident and upon being blamed by the town for this son's actions, out of embarrassment he chooses not to believe Chicken Little's story and sides with the town.

The movie, "Chicken Little" showcases how embarrassment can result in people choosing self preservation, as a way to save face when they feel others are judging or criticizing them.

To learn more about embarrassment, including what you can do to overcome this emotion and what second-hand embarrassment is, visit the links below:

<https://psychcentral.com/blog/how-to-overcome-embarrassment>

And

<https://www.choosingtherapy.com/second-hand-embarrassment/>