

Ask the Expert

Rachel Kennedy writes about how mediation can be an important tool in recovery / pgs. 10-11

CELEBRATING

40

YEARS

From the State of MN

Kristine Preston shares how treating the whole person is necessary in recovery / pg. 9

Recovery,
Renewal and
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HIGH STAKES OF GAMBLING

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BLINDSIDED

Minnesota's Next Problem Gambling Addiction Wave

by Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling

One of the challenges of addiction recovery is the risk of exchanging one dependence for another. Individuals in recovery from substance and alcohol abuse sometimes seek new highs in other activities, such as gambling. Providers and individuals within the recovery space stand to gain valuable insights by expanding their understanding of problem gambling — considering what may be on Minnesota's horizon.

While gambling has always been risky, the wide availability of illegal sports betting only adds to these concerns. As the state considers legalizing sports betting, it's important to be aware of the various discussions taking place. Lawmakers are reintroducing legislation to broker a path forward for implementation, striking up conversations about what sportsbooks would look like for fans statewide. As these statewide discussions on accountability and trans-

parency gain momentum this spring, it's crucial for us to recognize that any form of gambling poses negative harms to those in recovery.

Minnesota is a long-time leader in public health, but the potential expansion of sports betting exposes several deficits of its existing program. For example, the state falls short in providing sufficient education, prevention, and intervention strategies to at-risk individuals and those in need.

We must prioritize a comprehensive, community-driven response to this burgeoning crisis. This strategy begins with dispelling the myths about gambling disorder, recognizing its connection with other addictions, previewing the stakes of legalizing sports betting, and developing effective tools for us to equip and empower our communities.

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IN MEMORIAM

Pat Samples

(October 24, 1945 - January 13, 2024)

On January 13, we lost a wonderful person and writer in Pat Samples. She had such a way with words that made the people and places that she wrote about "more real." By telling their stories, she became their voice, bringing to light many important conversations, people, and organizations. Pat had edited, and written for *The Phoenix Spirit* for over three decades.

Read more about Pat on page 5

Letting Other People Love You

It might seem like the easiest thing in the world to accept hugs, kindness and caring from another person but in fact many of us have the hardest time doing that and we may shun people who are loving to us. Most of us actually need warmth and compassion from others especially when it is lacking in our life. Some of us use alcohol and drugs to cover up this missing need and the hurt of what we don't have. Others simply become numb over time to the real caring that other people offer and we are hardly aware of when we have been cared for or when we ourselves have been caring to others. It's like we live in a lonely world without love. The worst part is that we lose the facility to love and be loved and we lose our humanity.

*Pushing love away is
just not in our nature.
When we do so,
life is grim.*

There is a big price to pay for such losses. Even when we are pretty good people, we become robots, connecting to others in mechanical and superficial ways. We lose a lot of our spontaneity and sense of humor. We become depressed without knowing why we are depressed. It feels that something is very missing in our life, and we may not know what it is. Even when our life is good there is a certain unexplained emptiness in it. We may become codependent with others, hoping to care for someone else instead of ourselves. Despite our best efforts there seems no way to escape it. Every day feels very much like the same. There are reasons for this. As humans, we are social creatures, much like the chimpanzees, whose DNA resembles ours to a large extent. We are not like snakes, spiders, alligators and other solitary animals. We like to cuddle with others, suckle our young and hang out in groups to feel secure and content. Pushing love away is just not in our nature. When we do so, life is grim.

If life is so grim without love, we might ask ourselves why would we ever want to push love away? It just doesn't make sense, does it? Well in fact there are good reasons why we avoid people being kind to us, complimenting us or avoiding

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Gambling on the Perfect Chair

by Louise Elowen



"The further you get into technology, the further you get into gaming."
NICK JOHNSON

I was recently in the market for a new chair for my office. It's been a while. My old chair was big and clunky, "executive" style, designed for the "old days" in the office (which is actually not that long ago) where comfort took priority over the practicality of being able to slide a chair under the desk and get up close and personal in Zoom calls. In fact, I don't think that Zoom calls even existed when I purchased this particular archaic chair.

So, I went online and started looking for an "office chair." My mind was blown with all the options that came up. However, in my search the worrying phrase "gaming chair" kept popping up. I know that gaming is big these days but, given that gaming comes with addiction problems, the fact that these chairs with the perfect "bells and whistles" exist is troublesome.

The latest in gaming chairs basically entice you to stay in the chair for as many hours as possible. Want lumbar support for back problems? *We got ya!* Want a footrest and comfy material that is so *luxurious* you can just curl up in it and never want to leave? *Got that, too.* And some even come with a **built-in** wired sound system in the head rest and connect all your gaming consoles to your controller direct from the chair. In fact, there is probably no reason to leave this chair for *hours* at a time. Let

me revisit that statement – *days* is probably more accurate.

The gaming industry has seen the potential in making chairs as attractive as possible to gamers, so that they spend the maximum amount of time in the chair, and consequently on games. Is this a problem? And is it contributing to gaming as an addiction? Although the chair itself does not cause an addiction to gaming (there are other factors at play), making the chair **the** most desirable place in the world in which to game doesn't negate the effects it may have on the gamer as part of the overall picture.

Gaming addiction research dates back to the 1980's which isn't that long when compared to other addiction causes. However, in the increasingly online environment in which we live, gaming addiction is primed for an increase in numbers, given the availability of games. And that comfy chair.

Sometimes it is not the product itself but the accessories which go with it that increase addiction. Something to think about the next time that you compulsively check your social media for the tenth time today. Another worrying trend in our online world.

Playing the game of life one day at a time,

Louise



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Every trial, and every issue we find and face holds within it the seeds of healing, health, wisdom, growth and prosperity. We hope you find a seed in every issue.

The Phoenix Spirit is a bi-monthly publication for people actively working on their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. We are committed to providing articles, advertising, and information about recovery, renewal, and personal growth to help people experience life in a balanced, meaningful way.

The opinions and facts presented in this publication are intended to be diverse and represent those of the writers and/or contributors, and are not necessarily those of The Phoenix Spirit. We seek writers and interview subjects who are willing to gift you with their honestly held convictions and insights. We seek to attract advertisers who offer products and services of integrity. But we urge our readers to research, and trust their instincts.

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I'm a Recovering Alcoholic / Addict

by **Ryan J.**

I'm Ryan J, a recovering alcoholic/addict.

Born and raised in Minnesota. Raised by both father and mother and with a younger sister. In the suburbs of the Twin Cities.

My childhood was a loving, secure and supportive family. No dysfunction to speak of. Supportive and given freedoms that a typical child should have. Breakfast, lunch and dinner. Saturday cartoons. Riding a BMX in the neighborhood with friends to be home when the streetlights came on. Both parents worked to provide for us. There were "wants," of course! But NEEDS were met. Education was a priority and encouraged.

My addiction started to show up in high school. With the Friday night partying. Innocent enough. This continued and progressed to college. True weekend warrior style. This is when my alcohol addiction started causing trouble, disruption and legal consequences.

Dropping out of college after 3 years. Due to lack of focus, bad grades, and really wasting time and resources. Plus, the addiction. Shortly after this came my first DWI. Then after that was a recommendation for treatment. A 30 day outpatient program that I completed to satisfy the courts and for no other reason. Fast forward to a broken up mistake of a marriage to an addict. She recently has died of a fentanyl overdose. 6 DWI's, 10 plus treatments later. Add in depression, resentment, shame, guilt, embarrassment, loss of friends, relationships (romantic and family), trucks, homes, money in the 100's of thousands, plus self-confidence and self-respect. I hit rock bottom. This would be the bedrock and foundation for my growth.

I self-admitted into Transformation House in Anoka, MN. Right on the Mississippi River. It's a dual diagnosis treatment program. This was different than all the other programs I had completed in the past. This program focuses on the addiction but introduced a new approach to me. Focus on mental health and thoughts and feelings and why they are important for recovery. This was a breakthrough! Because I was used to traditional methods of recovery being 30 days and then you're



cured! Congratulations, you graduate! Now, go get a Sponsor and go to meetings.

The structure and staff truly made a difference for me in sustaining lifesaving recovery. All the counselors are compassionate, fair and hold you accountable. The programs were flexible and my recovery plan was custom made for me. One of the homework packets (so much homework!) I asked for was a spirituality packet. This was a game changer for me. I learned the process of FORGIVENESS. This is where I found what they describe in the Big Book 'as having a

Forgiving myself has increased my self-esteem, confidence and self-worth. I now can say I love myself.

spiritual awakening. I learned to process and practice forgiveness with myself and with others. A burden had been lifted that I didn't know I was carrying around with me. I have since forgiven myself and others. This has strengthened relationships with family. More importantly, forgiving myself has increased my self-esteem, confidence and self-worth. I now can say I love myself. The depression, self-loathing, resentment, and isolation are gone. I have a new sense of purpose in my life. Now I have the confidence, motivation and drive to look forward to the future (one day at a time of course!). So much so that now I feel it is my duty and obligation

to give back to the program and community and be an advocate for sobriety and the sober lifestyle. This is often the case when a person fully understands and embodies their new and improved sober life. It's now part of my core values and in line with the universe. It feels right. I'll forever have Gratitude towards the staff at Transformation House.

I was asked to help develop an Alumni/Recovery Hub at Transformation House as part of the expansion of programs. I jumped at the opportunity and am excited and honored to be a part of something bigger than me.

Here is our Recovery Hub Mission Statement:

Creating a community of significance and belonging. Providing services and resources in an inclusive recovery environment for any and all seeking growth mindset to continue to make a difference in their lives and others. By collaborating with others consistently expanding thought, action and goals.

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We're all really excited to make this available to current clients, alumni and soon to the public. Offering AA, NA, Wellbriety meetings. A Sunday General session for Enhanced Life Skills. Plus yoga classes. Our grand opening kicks off March 1st of '24!

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IN MEMORIAM

Pat Samples

October 24, 1945 - January 13, 2024



With a heavy heart, we regret to share with our readers that beloved writer Pat Samples passed away while vacationing in Mexico in early January of this year.

Many of you will know Pat through her writing with *The Phoenix Spirit*. She had such a way with words that made the people and places that she wrote about “more real.” By telling their stories, she became their voice, bringing to light many important conversations, people, and organizations. Pat had written for *The Phoenix Spirit* for over three decades. She became Editor in 1996, a position that she held until 2003. Pat was an amazing, intelligent individual. She authored eight books about aging, the body, and caregiving.

Pat was a “champion for creative aging.” She worked with various organizations to develop their creative aging programs such as Vitality Aging Network. She also gave talks on the topic of creative aging, including a significantly viewed TEDx Talk, “Your Aging Body is a Great Read,” at Hamline University in 2019.

“We are heartbroken to lose Pat. She was a wonderful person and writer. She enjoyed interviewing different people and organizations we featured in *The Phoenix Spirit*. She always responded with thankfulness after interviewing a new person for an article that she had researched and written,” said Publisher Aaron Shepherd.

“Many of the people she interviewed were in-turn, grateful for the way in which she handled their story. KSTP-TV Chief Meteorologist Ken Barlow said that Pat’s feature (on his bi-polar disorder) was ‘the best that anyone has ever done.’”

Longtime *The Phoenix Spirit* writer, John Driggs wrote, “Pat was a one of a kind woman, writer and editor. I always admired her. She seemed like a sparkling stone—a meteorite—mysterious entity that came to earth from the heavens. Her writing was very unique to her—spiritual, almost otherworldly, and very forgiving of herself and others. It was a dream to have her as an Editor of the *Phoenix*. She was authentic—she did what she wrote—and had a lot of fun doing it. She was a strong woman, although ap-



Top: Pat with her son and granddaughter / Photos provided by Andre Samples

pearing fragile. She expressed what she wanted and was in command of her own life. She loved to be adventurous and inspiring others to do the same. She often encouraged me in my own writing. Later in her life she went back to school to be a professional helper. She wrote a wonderful book—*Self-care for Caregivers: A Twelve Step Approach*, which paralleled how she cared for herself. Mostly what I liked about her was that she was a fantastic listener and made me feel like in her embrace I had something important to say. She is one giant whose shoulders I stand on today. I think she did this for everybody. I will never forget her.”

Pat is survived by her son, Andre, and daughter-in-law, Lindsey.

The Phoenix Spirit staff contributed to this article.

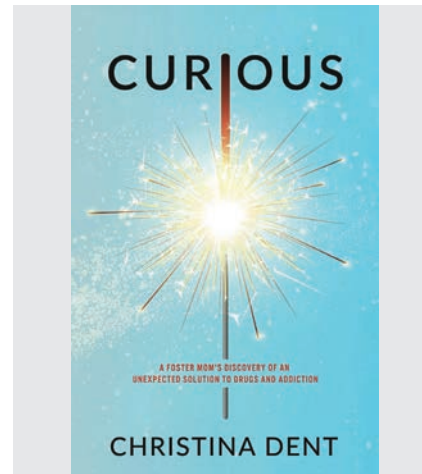
A memorial service for Pat was held on Wednesday, February 21st at Unity Minneapolis.

A GoFundMe fundraiser has been setup to cover funeral and living expenses.

www.gofundme.com/f/pat-samples



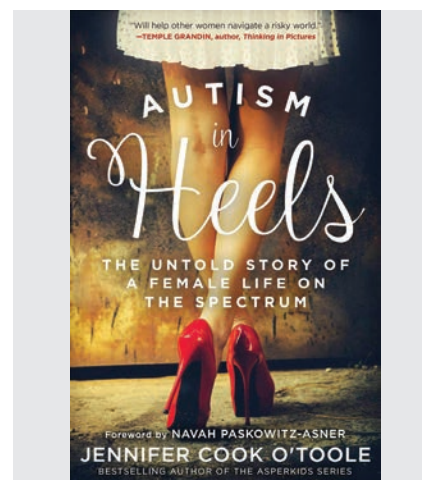
Books

**Curious**

A Foster Mom's Discovery of an Unexpected Solution to Drugs and Addiction

By Christina Dent
THRONE PUBLISHING GROUP

Curious is the story of Christina Dent's learning journey after a life-changing experience with the mother of her foster son sparks curiosity about the best way to reduce harm from drugs. With addiction touching many families and potent drugs available almost everywhere, better solutions are needed. *Curious* offers one.

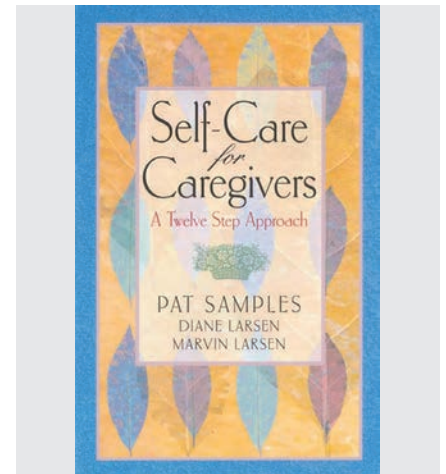
**Autism in Heels**

The Untold Story of a Female Life on the Spectrum

By Jennifer Cook O'Toole
SKYHORSE

Autism in Heels, an intimate memoir, reveals the woman inside one of autism's most prominent figures, Jennifer O'Toole. At the age of thirty-five, Jennifer was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, and for the first time in her life, things made sense. Now, Jennifer exposes the constant struggle between carefully crafted persona and authentic existence, editing the autism script with wit, candor, passion, and power. Her journey is one of reverse-self-discovery not only as an Aspie but—more importantly—as a thoroughly modern woman.

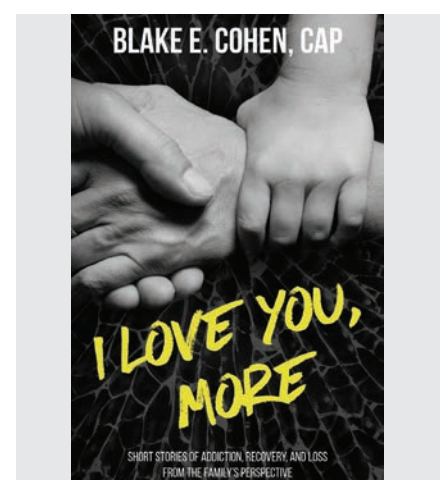
Many of the book descriptions are taken from the publishers or promotional releases. If you have a book you'd like featured or have an old favorite you'd like to share with others, please contact us at phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com and we may include it in an upcoming issue.

**Self-care for Caregivers**

A Twelve Step Approach

By Pat Samples, Diane & Marvin Larsen
HAZELDEN PUBLISHING

Are you one of the growing number of people who serves as a caregiver for an aging or chronically ill friend or family member? If so, you probably struggle to meet both their special needs and still find time and resources for yourself. But now there is reason to take heart. The authors of this down-to-earth, encouraging book can help you make the most of the experience without losing yourself in the process. Using the Twelve Steps as a guide, the authors conduct readers through the pitfalls of caregiving--the emotional snarls and strains, daily struggles, competing needs, and questions about confronting pain--providing hope and tangible suggestions on how to stay strong and sane while providing healthy support and love.

**I Love You, More**

Short Stories of Addiction, Recovery, and Loss

By Blake E. Cohen
SELF-PUBLISHED

I Love You More is distinct and unique from other books on the market on addiction as it is meant to be an emotional education on the family systems affected by addiction using three, fictional short stories, all with very different endings.

from page 1

DISPELLING THE MYTHS

Whether Minnesotans are betting on pull-tabs, playoff games or poker, gambling addiction, also known as gambling disorder, remains shrouded in stigma and silence. Gambling disorder is questioned as a legitimate addiction even in clinical settings. While two-thirds of Minnesotans reported placing a bet last year, only 20% of individuals facing gambling problems seek recovery.

Individuals experiencing gambling disorder exhibit similar cognitive patterns to those dealing with substance abuse addiction. A person’s “reward hub,” the ventral striatum, fires up when it anticipates a reward, such as winning money from gambling. This moment is like a gas pedal in a car, pushing a driver toward where they want to go. The “control network,” or prefrontal cortex, is the brake in the car, urging drivers to stop.

Addiction occurs when there is a disconnect between these two parts of the brain. Individuals with addiction exhibit less activity in their control network during a signal to stop. In this extended metaphor, they may also keep pressing the gas (e.g. placing bets, drinking, smoking), only to find that their brakes do not work. Over time, the control network or brakes of individuals addicted to gambling gradually erode, making it challenging to stop in an instant. It’s not a matter of willpower. An individual may want to stop betting, but these intricate neurological processes can override their conscious intentions.

The widespread acceptance of gambling in our modern culture, along with misconceptions about gambling problems, create additional barriers for those looking for help. An estimated 250,000 Minnesota adults struggle with a gambling problem. That’s equivalent to filling every seat at Xcel Energy Center for over 12 games.

INTERCONNECTED RISKS: GAMBLING DISORDER AND OTHER ADDICTIONS

Like anyone experiencing addiction, problem gamblers will push the gas pedal in pursuit of greater thrills. The reduced activity in a person’s control network can make it challenging to identify brain signals prompting one to stop. These overlaps can cause some individuals who successfully stop one addiction to switch to another. When a person stops smoking, they may find themselves drinking more or gambling excessively.



This switch, substitution, or cross-addiction contributes to the heightened risk that individuals in recovery face for developing a gambling addiction or having a recurrence.

Unsurprisingly, gambling disorder intertwines with other addictions and mental health issues. Seventy-two percent of people with a gambling disorder also have an alcohol use disorder. Higher rates of substance abuse, depression and suicide are also apparent. Overlaps are even seen among young players, including those in the growing sports betting demographic. College students with gambling problems are more likely to smoke, binge drink and use illegal drugs.

While these overlaps are worrisome, they’re also an entry point for collaboration. In the Minnesota recovery community, we have an opportunity to leverage our expertise and lived experiences to support those struggling with gambling

and sports betting. The federal government has not allocated funds to address gambling disorder. Minnesota’s county-operated behavioral health clinics do not provide problem gambling services.

THE STAKES OF SPORTS BETTING

We can’t forecast the future to determine what legalized sports betting would look like in Minnesota. Looking at the 38 states and the District of Columbia that have legalized sports gambling provides vital insights into the impact on players, emphasizing the necessity for a community-driven response. Gambling can be easy, enticing, and deceptive. Sports betting is no exception.

Here’s what we’ve seen: Sports bettors are increasingly younger players with the largest group of the 50 million Americans regularly wagering on sports being men under the age of 35. Promotions offering “risk-free” or “bonus bets”

Sports bettors are increasingly younger players with the largest group of the 50 million Americans regularly wagering on sports being men under the age of 35.

to kick off their play lure many in. Bettors are not just wagering on a final score, either. Sportsbooks offer avenues to gamble on every throw, pass, and kick.

Here in Minnesota, sports fans are finding illegal ways to participate. Dozens of unregulated, offshore websites and apps offer Minnesotans ways to place bets — at risky costs. These sites do not hold a license from any U.S. jurisdiction to legally accept bets and can’t be counted on to pay out winnings. Access to sports betting content is moving mainstream. Covers.com and Legal Sports Report promotes “sports betting alternatives,” including daily fantasy sport (DFS) leagues, which permit bets. Readers will soon be able to scan point spreads and parlays from these offshore platforms in digital versions of the Star Tribune. It’s the product of XLMedia’s exclusive partnership with the newspaper.

The fast-paced nature of sports bet-

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from page 6



Young man placing bets via his phone / Image istockphoto.com

ting, compared frequently to day trading, can cause individuals to get sucked into complex gambling without knowing their odds or the damage to their wallets. In a short span of time, this betting spirals; nearly half of these young men report that they are betting more than they would like. Providers report clients who gamble in the shower or while driving; the cravings can feel inescapable.

The gas pedal and brake problems of addiction extend to why sports betting can be so addictive. Compared to casino players, sports bettors believe they have more control over their wins and losses. Fans with in-depth knowledge of a given team or sport may think they can place smarter, more strategic bets. This approach mirrors a troublesome pattern of gambling disorder and other addictive behaviors: Overestimating the probability of winning. In the car metaphor, a person may know a given route well or even shortcuts. Their brakes are still faulty.

We have a responsibility in our communities to change the narrative and broaden public knowledge around gambling addiction. Before any sports betting legalization, here are four ways we can build Minnesota's playbook to support individuals impacted by gambling problems.

1. Become a community leader. Local and spiritual leaders are well positioned to identify and share resources to those at risk of or experiencing gambling problems. Non-clinical professionals in finance, human resources, corrections, and various other industries also interface with individuals at an increased risk and may be the first to spot warning spots.

MNAPG is launching an inaugural statewide problem for leaders interested in building grassroots infrastructure aimed at reducing stigma and broadening understanding on problem gambling. Learn more and apply at MNAPG.org.

2. Get resources for providers. Gambling disorder co-occurs at high rates

with other mental health issues. It's important to screen and make referrals when a client is experiencing signs of problem gambling.

Providers and addiction counselors can access free screening and normative feedback tools, along with a directory of approved statewide providers. Minnesota residents struggling with gambling and sports betting, along with their family members, can access counseling, usually at no cost. In-person and telehealth options are available. Discover provider resources at MNAPG.org under the Professionals tab.

3. Spread the word among young people. Minnesota schools don't offer public health education on problem gambling awareness and treatment services. Yet in the 2022 Minnesota Student Survey, over 6,000 high schoolers indicated they're having gambling problems.

In response, MNAPG is developing a digital toolkit geared to teens and college students. Share this news with parents and educators, and follow MNAPG's Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and LinkedIn social media pages to receive updates on the toolkit.

4. Reach out. Virtually anyone — men or women, young or old, and those from every religion, race, and socio-economic background — is at risk for developing a gambling problem.

Anyone experiencing the negative impacts of a gambling problem, including sports betting, can reach out 24/7 to the Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline. Calls are free and confidential. Call the Minnesota Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-333-HOPE or text HOPE to 53342.

TO LEARN MORE (OR RECEIVE HELP)
ABOUT PROBLEM GAMBLING AND SPORTS
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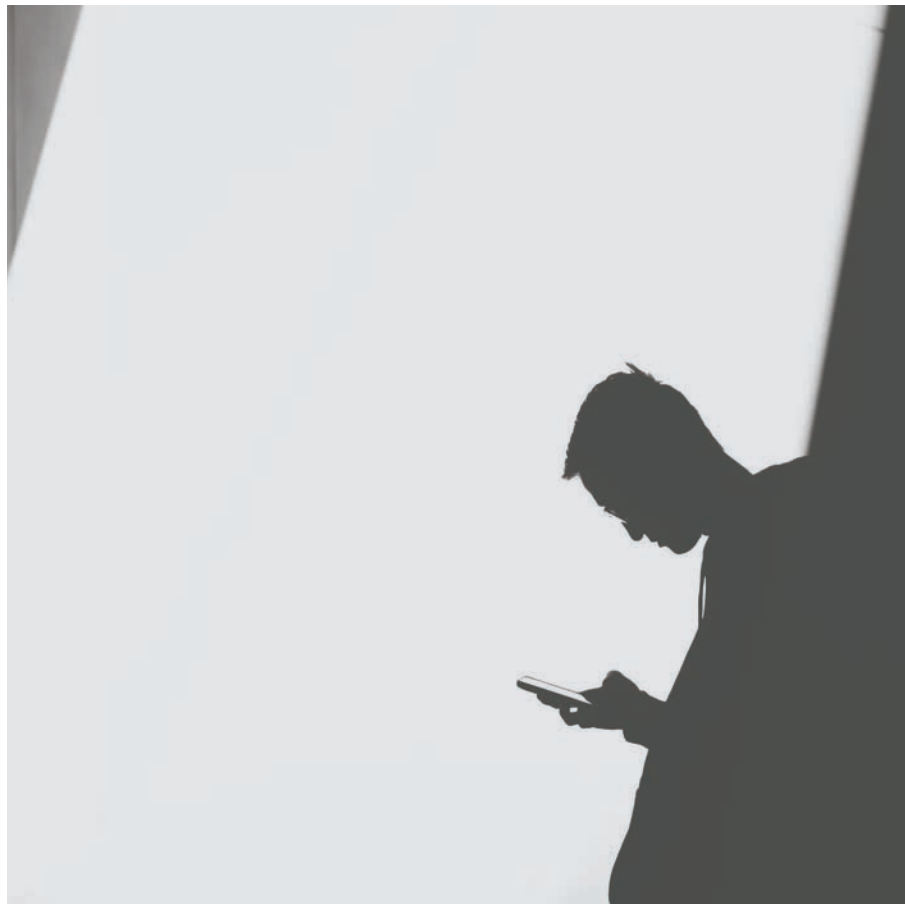
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HIGH STAKES OF GAMBLING

The Secret World of Online Gambling

Interview with a Recovering Problem Gambler

Photo illustration / Unsplash



This is an exclusive interview with a problem gambler, now in active recovery from his addiction. We want to thank Tim for his candor and willingness to share.

CAN YOU SHARE A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELF?

I grew up in Eagan to loving parents with two siblings. Like most boys growing up, I was very into sports. I played hockey, football, and baseball and when I wasn't doing that, I was playing video games or wiffle ball with my buddies. As I got older, I shifted my sports obsession (as far as playing) to golf. I graduated from Minnesota-Duluth in 2011 and began work in sales. I currently work for my father in industrial sales. I got married in September 2023 and live with my wife and our two cats in Richfield.

WOULD YOU MIND GOING INTO YOUR GAMBLING JOURNEY? HOW DID YOU GET INTO IT AND WHAT DID YOU ENJOY ABOUT GAMBLING?

I started gambling probably in 8th grade or so when I would play poker with my friends. I didn't really gamble as I went through high school or during college. I would maybe make two casino trips in a year after I turned 18 and would typically stick to a lower \$ amount. I got in to sports gambling around 2015-2016 but kept it to a reasonable amount just because it was kind of a pain to take screen shots of my bets and send them into a bookie. My betting began to become more frequent around 2018 when I found a new bookie that had a website where I could log in and place my own bets (and where I could settle up weekly or at certain \$ amounts). The sports betting from there slightly progressed through COVID-19 when I switched to online gambling. From that point on I was pretty much either gambling on sports

with my bookie or playing online casino games when I had free time. All the way up to the point I needed to seek treatment.

HOW DID YOU FIRST COME TO SEE THAT YOU HAD AN ISSUE WITH YOUR GAMBLING?

Probably around that time COVID-19 hit, and sports shut down. I knew I liked gambling but without sports to bet on I turned to online gambling as well as obscure sports that were still being played (horse racing, video games etc.). That was when I knew I was in trouble and quitting was going to be difficult.

WHAT DID YOUR RECOVERY JOURNEY LOOK LIKE?

It began in November 2022 when I pretty much ran out of money and options and didn't know what else to do. I went to my parents and my fiancé at the time. I had great support from them, maybe too much when it came to financial support from my parents. I started doing outpatient treatment at the end of 2022 but within a few weeks I was gambling again and hiding it from others. Things quickly spiraled out of control again and in early April 2023 I came clean again and decided to go to inpatient treatment.

WHAT HELPED YOU MOST IN TREATMENT?

I would say the biggest thing that helped me going to treatment was the time away to disconnect from the world I had known. Unlike a lot of people that struggle with gambling, I hardly ever went to casinos but would do it all from the phone or computer. Going to treatment and not having a casino (phone/computer) at my disposal at all times was a huge first step for me. While I was in treatment, I had a lot of time to think about what was really important in life and how sad was the life that I had been living when I was gambling all the time. I really needed that time to give me a springboard into recovery.

Unlike a lot of people that struggle with gambling, I hardly ever went to casinos but would do it all from the phone or computer.

WHAT DOES YOUR RECOVERY LOOK LIKE TODAY?

I finished my outpatient program in January and now I attend a weekly Gamblers Anonymous meeting. This helps me keep my addiction at the forefront of my mind and keeps me grounded. It is nice having a community of people who understand the struggles of addictive gambling.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR THOSE CURRENTLY STRUGGLING?

Take it one day at a time. Along with that mantra there were a few tools that I leaned on heavily in the early days of my clean time:

1. Installing a gambling blocker on all of my devices (Gamban)
2. Turning over my finances to my wife. She sees any purchases that hit my card, so I am not tempted to get back into online gambling.
3. Reach out to resources at Gamblers Anonymous. The people there are helpful and do not judge you no matter where you are at in your addiction or recovery.

The Phoenix Spirit staff have contributed to this article.

You can't go back and make a new start, but you can start right now and make a brand new ending.

JAMES R. SHERMAN

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FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Addressing Problem Gambling Requires a Whole Person Approach

by Kristine Preston

The impacts of problem gambling can be devastating. And the effects of a gambling disorder are not only economic – it can lead to damaged relationships and high rates of substance abuse, depression, and suicide. In fact, studies show problem gambling has the highest rate of suicide of any addiction.

That's why it's essential for people who struggle with gambling to have access to high-quality, culturally relevant mental health care.

In some cases, problem gambling itself is the cause of anxiety and depression. But many times, problem gambling is a manifestation of underlying mental health issues. For some, the constant dopamine chase is a response to a brain that doesn't produce the right balance of chemicals on its own. For others, gambling is a distraction that helps them dissociate – keeping at bay intrusive or anxious thoughts.

Data shows just how intertwined these behavioral health issues are. According to data from the National Comorbidity Study, 96% of individuals with gambling disorder have one or more co-occurring psychiatric disorders. This

includes post-traumatic stress, attention-deficit, substance use, mood, and personality disorders.

This is why integrated health care is so important. Behavioral health issues are rarely experienced in a silo – they are typically experienced in conjunction with physical and mental health issues and should be treated holistically. It's often said in the medical field that if you are not treating *all* disorders, you're not really treating *any* disorders.

Thankfully, Minnesota's problem gambling treatment programs are well prepared to treat the whole person. A problem gambling treatment provider can perform a diagnostic assessment and work collaboratively with someone to determine an individualized treatment plan. They work to get people any kind of help they may need.

If you or someone who you care about is in need of problem gambling services, you can find a treatment provider near you by visiting getgamblinghelp.com. Treatment is available free of charge for qualifying individuals throughout Minnesota. The website also has a wide variety of problem gambling resources, including educational materials and suc-

cess stories of Minnesotans who have battled gambling disorders.

Not sure if treatment is the best option? That's OK. There is a broad continuum of support available, including therapy and self-help groups.

Maybe you don't know where to start, or just need someone to talk to. You can call a free, confidential problem gambling helpline at 1-800-333-HOPE, or text HOPE to 61222. This DHS-funded 24/7 helpline will help guide individuals to available problem gambling supports and resources in their community.

Managing a gambling disorder can feel very isolating. It's important to remember that you do not have to go through it alone. There are people and programs who are ready and downright excited to help you – with no shame and no judgement. Together, you can figure out the “why” behind your gambling disorder, and the plan for treating any underlying issues that may be driving your addiction.

You deserve to live a full life that is free from the stresses and heartbreak that problem gambling brings. But you also deserve to live a life that is free from the anxiety, trauma or grief that drove you to gamble in the first place. Recovery from problem gambling is more than just quitting the behavior, it's about getting your life back and finding some semblance of serenity in your mind, body, and soul. Holistic treatment can help to get you there.

Kristine Preston is the deputy assistant commissioner of the Behavioral Health Division at the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

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of individuals with gambling disorder have one or more co-occurring psychiatric disorders. This includes post-traumatic stress, attention-deficit, substance use, mood, and personality disorders. It's often said in the medical field that if you are not treating all disorders, you're not really treating any disorders.

Gambling addiction is real.
So is recovery.
Ask Jean.



Read Her Story



For every gambler, seven to ten others experience gambling-related harms. It's not just the gambler with the problem who's at risk. Families suffer in silence, often too ashamed to confront the issue.

If you are in recovery for substance use disorder or have depression/anxiety, you are at greater risk of developing a gambling addiction.



Most Minnesotans can receive no-cost treatment if you or someone you know is struggling with a gambling problem. For a list of providers call 1-800-333-4673(HOPE) or visit mnapg.org



Rachel Kennedy

Rachel is a Rule 114 Qualified Neutral through the Minnesota Courts as well as a founder and the current president of Gathering Hope MN, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting women and children leaving domestic violence. Rachel lives in the Twin Cities with her children and adorable cat Juniper. Outside of work she enjoys going out with friends to watch live music, learning everything about everything through podcasts and audiobooks, and playing with yarn. She sees clients in her office in Minnetonka and online. You can find more information about Rachel's work at RachelKennedyMediation.com and GatheringHopeMN.org.

USING MEDIATION IN RECOVERY

Ask the Expert

We feature an expert in the mental health and/or substance use disorder fields to answer questions

the court would decide.” I’m much more interested in truly listening to what the parties want and guiding them toward a resolution that is in the best interest of the whole family rather than trying to rush an agreement where one or both parties feel unheard and unsure.

This method is especially important in the recovery space. So often families struggling with substance use disorders have already experienced a huge loss of control, and they sometimes have legal entities involved in various ways. My goal in mediation, whether it is for divorce, paternity, the Family Recovery Support Program, or any another family conflict, is to place that decision making power back in the hands of the individuals and support them in their journey to restore peace and come to mutual agreements. In some cases, the agreements can be used in cases with legal involvement as well.

Q In what ways does restorative mediation address the unique challenges faced by families navigating both substance use disorders and mental health issues?

This can look many ways in many circumstances, depending on the dynamics of each specific family. Some couples divorce in these situations, and there is support for those families which I discuss in other questions. In other families, the person with these struggles is a teen or young adult child living with their parents or a spouse in a situation where both parties wish to stay married, but they need extra support. For these families, I have created the Family Recovery Support Program. This is mainly aimed at clients who are coming out of treatment and returning home, but it can be used at any stage of the recovery process. This is a program where we gather anyone in the client’s personal or professional support circle (family members, close friends, case managers, sponsors, etc.) and facilitate a circle process where the client and others in the home can each have the space and the safety to share their needs, how the other members of the circle can support them, and what they will be accountable for. At the end of this process, I will provide the client and any relevant support people with a Safety and Accountability Plan to support a healthy and sober future, with contingencies for if things do not go as planned, all based on the support of the person’s community. I am passionate about this program, as it is born out of the recent loss of my sister to a drug overdose after a decades-long struggle with substance use.

Q Are there specific techniques or strategies employed in restorative mediation that are particularly effective when dealing with



the complexities of substance use disorders within a family context?

Absolutely. A big piece of restorative mediation is that we utilize an ancient Native American practice called “the circle process” as much as possible to facilitate conversations. Briefly, this means that we sit in a literal circle in my office (or recreate it the best we can when we meet virtually) and we use a talking piece, or a talking order when meeting online. The talking piece is a visual and tactile indication of when we each have the opportunity to speak and the opportunity to listen. It slows down the conversation and allows each person to say what they need to say in a safe and respectful manner. This is helpful in a variety of conflicts, and it can be particularly useful when a family is dealing with substance use disorder. Substance use can bring significant chaos to families and can sometimes cause discussions to become tense, agitated, and loud. Slowing down the conversation and working with the family to re-imagine what positive conversation can look like can be life changing and can positively change the family dynamic.

Q Can you discuss the importance of including mental health professionals in the restorative mediation process, and how their expertise enhances the overall outcomes for families in recovery?

I’m a huge fan of each of us having a supportive community around us, both personally and professionally. Many of my clients, regardless of the reason they are seeking mediation, are in personal therapy. In my opinion, this is only a good thing. Mediation is so different

than therapy, though that is not always well understood, which is why I teach an entire class on it. I often have clients come to mediation sessions and share a bit of what they have been working on in therapy since our last mediation session in relation to the mediation process, and I am always so grateful that my clients have that support elsewhere in their lives that allows them to show up as their best and most authentic selves in the mediation space.

Q In your experience, what are common misconceptions about restorative mediation, and how can these be addressed to encourage more families to consider this approach?

I wouldn’t say there are misconceptions, as much as there is a lack of knowledge that the restorative approach even exists. It is newer to the scene as far as mediation goes, and part of my mission is to spread the word that it exists, and it is a peaceful and effective way to resolve conflict. As someone who is divorced myself, I have often wished we would have had these practices available to us in our divorce process. I truly believe it would have led to a smoother divorce process and a kinder and healthier post decree experience for my ex-spouse and myself, as well as our children.

Q How does restorative mediation contribute to easing the emotional and psychological impact on individuals going through a divorce, especially when there is substance use disorders or mental health issues involved?

Q What is mediation?

Broadly, mediation is a way to resolve conflict, often after harm has already occurred. There are many ways this can be done, and not all mediation is created equal, which we will discuss below.

Q How does restorative mediation differ from traditional conflict resolution methods, and how can it benefit individuals in recovery and their families?

With my experience in mediation, both personally and professionally, the biggest differences I see with the restorative approach compared with more well-known mediation methods are as follows: 1) Typical (“facilitative”) mediation can often feel scary and like an extension of the court room with adversarial undertones. In contrast, restorative mediators go to great lengths to create a comfortable and respectful environment. We promote the values of respect, relationship, and responsibility. Many of us have comfy couches with fuzzy blankets in our offices. Many of us will offer you a cookie or other treat when you walk through our door. We want mediation to feel like a respectful conversation with trusted people rather than an adversarial approach with a “winner” and a “loser.” 2) Restorative mediation places a very high value on autonomy. My view is that the parties have been making decisions for a long time and should continue to do so, rather than turning that decision-making power over to judges, lawyers or others who have no vested interest in your family. I never coerce clients into decisions one way or the other, and I rarely say, “this is what

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Restorative mediation is a great option for many people going through a divorce. Mediators are able to help people avoid the stress and costs associated with hiring attorneys while walking the parties through all of the statutory requirements the court needs to see in a compassionate and knowledgeable way. In my opinion, experiencing divorce both personally and professionally, this is an incredible benefit to people in terms of supporting them emotionally and psychologically in what can be one of the biggest and most difficult transitions in their life. Divorce is scary enough in the best of circumstances. Having a professional on that journey in a kind and respectful way, particularly when there are additional difficulties like substance use disorders or mental illnesses, is such a supportive way to make that transition.

Q In what ways does restorative mediation address the unique complexities of co-parenting arrangements when one or both parents are in recovery or managing mental health issues?

This can be a tricky subject to navigate at times. That said, if both parents

are willing to engage with the mediation process and come up with a safety and accountability plan that they will both follow, children can really thrive while both parents work together for the good of their children.

Q Are there specific guidelines or practices within restorative mediation that can assist divorcing couples in reaching agreements related to custody, support, and property division, especially in the context of substance use disorders or mental health struggles?

There are not practices specifically related to divorce in the context of substance use disorders or mental health struggles within the framework of restorative mediation. However, I and some of my colleagues have taken trainings on high conflict mediation through the High Conflict Institute and safety planning in situations of both substance use and domestic violence through the Collaborative Law Institute. In addition, I have an educational and professional background in psychology and working with adults with mental illnesses in a

social services setting. The disclaimer is that not all cases can be mediated in a safe and healthy way, and at the same time my history and experience have given me many additional tools in my mediation toolbox to allow me to safely mediate a wide variety of cases. When there are cases that can be mediated but may present more components than a single mediator can handle individually, I have created and trained a team of mediators to handle higher conflict cases in a co-mediation setting.

Q What are some resources that you can offer to our readers for learning more about the process and finding the right restorative mediator?

I am a part of the Restoring Home cooperative, run by Lisa Welter of The Katallasso Group, which is the home of restorative mediation. Here is some more information to read about restorative mediation: www.restoring-home.com/conflict
In addition, we at Restoring Home are holding a conference on April 26, 2024. Some colleagues and I will be presenting on the various ways restorative mediation can be used in our community, including domestic violence, truancy, child welfare,

and others. I would like to extend a personal invitation to all Phoenix Spirit readers to attend our conference. Please come up and introduce yourself! www.thekatallassogroup.com/conference.

If you have a question for the experts, or you are an expert interested in being featured, please email phoenix@the phoenixspirit.com. Experts have not been compensated for their advice.

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Stillwater, MN	1825 Curve Crest Blvd #103
St Paul, MN	1821 University Ave West #385
Elk River, MN	19230 Evans St NW #203
Litchfield, MN	114 North Holcombe
Olivia, MN	104 So. 4 th Street
St Peter, MN	320 Sunrise Drive #B

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Driggs from page 1

affection from others. Here are some signals of how we push love away from us:

- When others become more personal with us, we write it off as sentiment and nothing more or we see it as manipulation.
- We hardly ever feel worthy of others being kind to us unless we pay them back.
- The words “Thank you” are a rare part of our vocabulary.
- We become uncomfortable with being openly personal with others.
- Direct eye-to-eye contact freaks us out or makes us look weak.

WHY ARE WE SO AFRAID TO LET OTHERS LOVE US?

Many of us don’t accept gifts from others because deep down we don’t feel that we deserve such caring or else we don’t want to be obligated to those who are nice to us. Most of these attitudes derive from unconscious childhood harm where someone was nice to us and there was a price to pay. So shunning love is our faulty way of protecting ourselves. Some of us are limited in our own ability to be kind to others, so we would rather not receive caring and see our own deficits. Learning to love is a delicate art that requires practice and learning. Some of us know that we ourselves aren’t generous and we’d rather not feel our own deficits. Some of us simply don’t know what to say to others who are kind to us. Perhaps we feel that what we say has to be perfect and don’t realize that it is the thought or effort to acknowledge caring from others that really counts. Our society as a whole tends to monetize caring

so acknowledging caring has to be done by giving some else a diamond ring or some other trinket. It would be unthinkable to send someone a simple message of care, without enclosing a gift card. The materialism of our culture diminishes the simple tender gifts of caring, which are often quite powerful. Often saying less while being sincere is the best gift to others. A good book to read on this topic is *Receiving Love: Transform Your Relationship by Letting Yourself Be Loved* by Harville Hendrix, Ph.D. and Helen LaKelly Hunt, Ph.D., Simon and Schuster, 2006.

When you let other people love you, your whole life will change for the better. You will feel less lonely, your mood will glow with brightness, and your body and health will magically improve. It does take effort and courage to let this happen.

HOW WE CAN LEARN TO ACCEPT LOVE IN ALL OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS

Receiving caring is not just something reserved for boyfriend/girlfriend relationships. You can receive and offer love in all of your relationships. Although many of us miss when other people are being kind to us, the fact is that many people hold us in positive regard a lot more than we realize during our day. For example, the bus driver who slows down so that we don’t miss their bus is showing regard for us. When you offer your seat to an older person on that same bus, you may be doing the nicest thing for someone that they received that day. If you called your mother today for no particular reason, she may tell her friends and relish your generosity

Shunning love is our faulty way of protecting ourselves. When you let other people love you, your whole life will change for the better.

ty for many days afterwards. You know it’s the small things that mean a lot to others. The more that you do kind things for others, the more apt you are to recognize when others are being kind to you. You may even develop a sixth sense of when people are wanting to love you. Then you will realize just how lovable you really are! Being open to love should not surprise you, especially if you get in the habit of recognizing strengths or difficulties in people you meet. Most of us tend to disown gifts we offer others.

I remember a client of mine who said he felt like such a failure around his daughter. She would open her heart to tell him how much it hurt to have nothing to say to a friend whose dog just died. He said he never wanted to be like his father who’d never responded to his feelings. I said that he had nothing to worry about because his daughter knew he would likely not have words for her since that’s why she opened up to him. She just wanted to read his mind

to know that he cares about her. He said that even without words he was caring for her. I said that she probably read your facial expressions and got support that way. Many times other people read our minds just to know that we care. And that’s enough to know that we care!

*John H. Driggs, LICSW, is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice in St. Paul and co-author of *Intimacy Between Men*.*

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PROGRAMS

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Bridge Recovery - Sauk Rapids, MN
Cedar Ridge - Stillwater, MN
Douglas Place - East Grand Forks, MN
Lake Shore - Mahtomedi, MN
Latitudes - St. Paul, MN
Meadow Creek - Pine City, MN
New Beginnings - Waverly, MN
Tapestry - St. Paul, MN
Twin Town - St. Paul, MN
New Beginnings IOP - 8 Locations

CALENDAR

MARCO RECOVERY DAY AT THE HILL

When: Thursday, March 14 from 9:30am to 11:30am
Where: Minnesota State Capitol or via Facebook Live
Cost: FREE
Info / register: marco.org

MARCO invites you to Recovery Day on the Hill event on March 14th, 2024 at the State Capitol! Join MARCO as they rally the recovery community to show Minnesota that recovery is possible.

AIM FOR AMES ROUNDUP

When: March 22 to 24
Where: Quality Inn & Suites, Ames, IA
Cost: \$26.50 / \$99 (hotel)
Info: aimforames.org

AA and Al-Anon speakers, with socials, meetings and dance. Pre-registrations must be received by March 13.



RECOVERY BASKETBALL LEAGUE (RBL)

When: Every Saturday until tournament begins April 20, from 2:00 to 4:00pm
Where: Colin Powell Center, Mpls.
Cost: FREE
Info: minnesotahopeddealerz.org

Free Open Gym until the Tournament starts on April 20th. Contact Jay Pee for more info or possible sponsorship at jaypee@minnesotahopeddealerz.org.

41ST ANNUAL GRATITUDE NIGHT

When: Saturday, April 6 from 6:30pm to 12:00am
Where: Minneapolis Convention Center, Ballroom A
Cost: \$15
Info: aaminneapolis.org

Also known as the AA Prom, Greater Minneapolis Intergroup's 41st annual, Gratitude Night will include AA speaker, Kent C. (Sandusky, OH) and Al-Anon speaker, Lisa D. (Minneapolis), DJ, dancing, photo booth. Tickets are \$15 at the door.

To let us know about your upcoming event, please email us at phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com. We also post events at our website, thephoenixspirit.com/calendar. Thank you.

Resource Directory

Counseling

Lehmann Counseling
Help for individuals and families dealing with addiction. Kate Lehmann is an experienced professional offering client-centered substance use counseling. Discrete, flexible, private pay. www.katelehmann.com for more information.

Eating Disorders

Melrose Center
Melrose's experienced team provides specialized care for those struggling with an eating disorder and substance use disorder – whether currently in treatment or recovery. Melrose Center has five Twin City metro locations. Visit melroseheals.com or call 952-993-6200.

Seniors

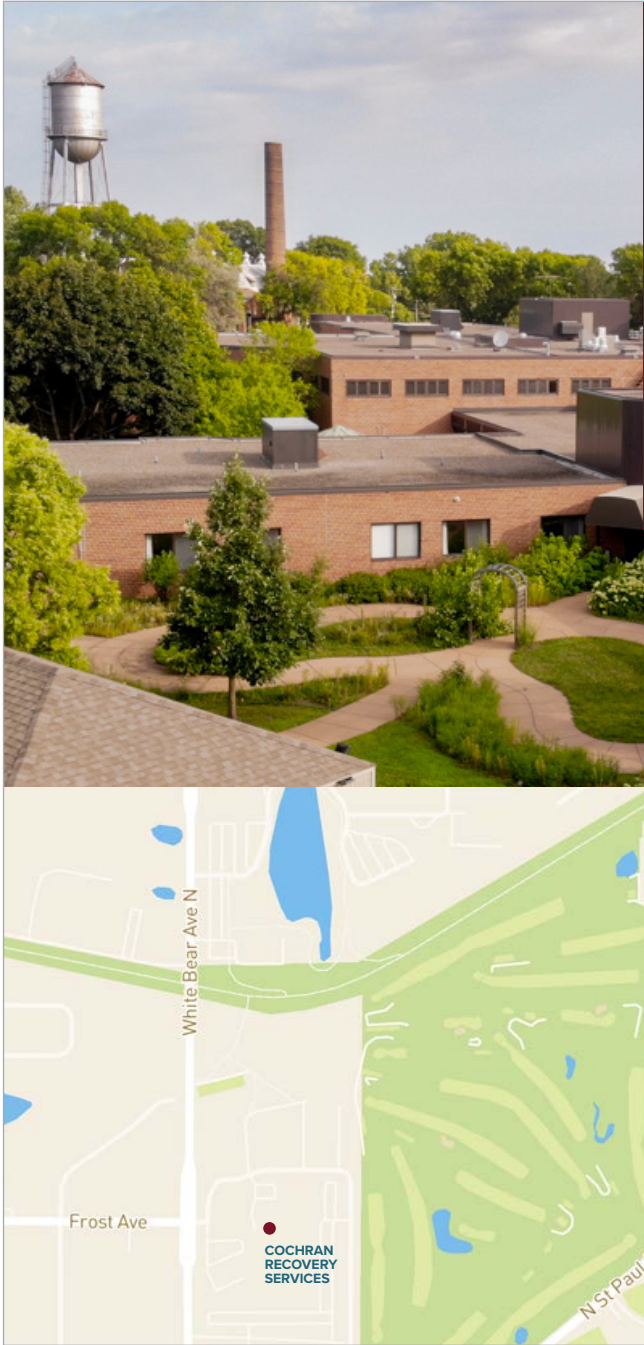
Silver Sobriety “Rebuilding Lives, One Senior at a Time!”
Silver Sobriety is a treatment facility specifically for seniors over age 55. Getting sober with a group of peers you can relate to is a better treatment option. Based on the twelve step Program, we focus on strategies to handle issues facing seniors, along with abstinence from alcohol and drugs. Contact us for a free confidential conversation. www.silversobriety.org info@silversobriety.org. 651-431-8308.

Substance Use Disorders

Minnesota Teen Challenge
If you or a loved one is struggling with drugs or alcohol, we're here to help. In addition to our effective and affordable residential Licensed Treatment, faith-based Long-Term Recovery and convenient Outpatient program, we have extensive prevention and transitional/aftercare services. Freedom from addiction starts here. 612-FREEDOM or mntc.org

Workaholics Anonymous Meeting

Burning out? Workaholics Anonymous provides steps and tools to break free from non-stop work and activity — or work avoidance. Meeting is currently online via Zoom. Call Pat for link to the meeting or questions: 763-560-5199. www.workaholics-anonymous.org.



OPEN HOUSE

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For questions, please contact
Crystal Caruso at 651-204-3433
or Crystal.Caruso@nuway.org

RECOVERY SPOTLIGHT

From Newsstands to Life Savers: Our Mission to Combat Opioid Overdoses

by *Jim Barrett*



The familiar green boxes that once dotted Minneapolis streets, delivering daily news, are undergoing a transformation. In a fight against the opioid crisis, we are repurposing *Star Tribune* news boxes into Save a Life Stations.

Since August 2023, Andrew Kamin-Lyndgaard and I have been on a mission to bridge the gap in readily available overdose prevention resources. We knew that the current approach wasn't enough, so we sought an innovative solution.

We transformed the boxes into life-saving stations, stocked with Naloxone and Fentanyl testing strips. Strategically placed in public spaces and other high-traffic areas, they offer a critical lifeline in communities affected by the opioid crisis.

In 2021, the CDC reported that bystanders were present in 46 percent of fatal opioid overdoses. It's disheartening to note that if these individuals had been equipped with Naloxone and knew how to use it, lives could have been saved.

It's essential to emphasize that 70% of overdose deaths occur within private residences, not on the streets. Just as fire extinguishers and AED (Automated External Defibrillator) machines are readily accessible for emergencies, we believe that Naloxone should be equally available to the public.

But Save a Life Stations are about more than just immediate intervention. They're about breaking down stigma. By

making these resources easily accessible, we aim to normalize conversations about addiction and empower communities to take action. The stigma surrounding addiction is a powerful roadblock to recovery, and we're determined to dismantle it one Naloxone kit at a time.

We've already seen the positive impact firsthand. Pilot programs at East Side Neighborhood Services and the Jordan Area Community Council have been met with overwhelming support. People understand the need, they see the hope, and they want to be part of the solution.

This is a grassroots effort. We are just two guys trying to change a bad situation; we've put our own time and resources into this project. We believe that everyone can make a difference in this fight.

We're seeking partners to host Save a Life Stations at their locations. Whether you're a bar, restaurant, library, gym or community center, every station placed is a potential life saved. Join us in creating a network of Save a Life Stations. Together, let's turn tragedy into hope.

Jim Barrett is the founder of Save a Life Stations. Connect with him at jim4hueman@gmail.com to find out how your organization can become a host location. More information at <http://bit.ly/SaveALifeStation>.

Your past mistakes are meant to guide you, not define you.

ANONYMOUS



CLUB RECOVERY
OUTPATIENT TREATMENT PROGRAMS

GAMBLING CLINIC

Gambling Disorder is a progressive, potentially destructive life-threatening disease that can eventually disrupt all areas of normal life. Gambling Disorder has the highest instance of the affected individuals either attempting or, in fact, committing suicide among all addictive behaviors.

At Club Recovery, we offer a variety of services to help individuals, families, and individual family members heal.

- 16-week Primary Group Therapy Program via Telehealth
- 12-week Continuing Care Program via Telehealth
- Individual Therapy Sessions in Person or Telehealth
- Focus on Cognitive Change connected to Gambling Disorder
- Co-Occurring Mental Health Therapy
- Access to Financial Planning and Consultation
- Stress Management Techniques.
- State Gambling Fund covers most services are at no charge to the client
- Court Ordered "Rule 82" Assessments

Group Sessions Mondays and Thursdays 6-9 PM

All Gambling Counselors Certified by the International Gambling Counselors Certification Board (IGCCB)



**SCHEDULE AN ASSESSMENT
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SUPPORT GROUPS

MONDAYS

1900 Mens Al-anon, Monday 5:45-7:15pm, 12-Step meeting, step presentation and small groups, fellowship. 1900 Nicollet Ave., Plymouth Congregational Church. Tom W., 612-281-5230. Enter at parking lot.

CHOW – Culinary Hospitality Outreach and Wellness: Monday (also Tuesday & Wednesdays) at 7pm CST. CHOW is an organization led by culinary and hospitality peers. We believe in a future where our community never loses another person to addiction, burnout, or mental health concerns. We create safe and supportive opportunities for the industry to connect and discuss problems they're facing with others who "get it." Working in the hospitality industry is tough. Let's talk about it. Meetings are currently in virtual format via Zoom. Please visit our website or Facebook page for codes to join in or contact: outreach@chowco.org.

Overeaters Anonymous: Monday mornings, 10-11am. 3rd floor, handicapped accessible. Minnehaha United Methodist Church, 3701 50th St Mpls 55407. For more info call Ana 651-592-7510

Online Gamers Anonymous and Olganon: Mondays at 6:30 at the Cavalier Club, 7179 Washington Ave. South, Edina. Cavalier Club is located on the corner of Valley View and HWY 169.. Plenty of free parking! If video games or other excessive tech use is making your life unmanageable or if someone you care about is gaming excessively, we'd love to meet you. More info on this emerging 12 Step Movement at www.olganon.org

Understanding Eating Disorders, Treatment, and Recovery: Second Monday of each month, 6-8:30 p.m. The Emily Program staff provides answers to common questions and concerns of families and friends "new" to eating disorders, treatment and recovery. 2265 Como Ave, St. Paul, 55108. Free, drop in. Visit www.emilyprogram.com or call 651.645.5323.

Friends and Families of Suicide: a place of support and comfort where those that have lost a loved one to suicide will be comfortable talking about their own loss as well as hearing about the losses of others. Meets the 3rd Monday of every month 7-9pm, Twin Cities Friends Meeting, 1725 Grand Ave., St Paul, 55105. For info email ffosmn@yahoo.com or call Tracy at 651-587-8006.

Debtors Anonymous: Offers hope for people whose use of unsecured debt causes problems and suffering. See debtorsanonymous.org or www.danorthernplains.org to find a meeting online, in person or hybrid (both online and in person).

Anonymous: Alanon 12-Step Group. We meet Mondays at 1:30pm in person at Minneapolis United Methodist Church at 3701 E. 50th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55417. Open to men and women. We are a kind, compassionate group and welcome all. Questions? Please contact Susan at 651-587-2356.

TUESDAYS

Recovering Couples Anonymous: 7pm. We are a 12 step group for couples wanting to find new ways to communicate. The only requirement for membership is a desire to maintain a committed relationship and develop new intimacy. We provide strong couple support and model healthy couple-ships. Currently meeting via zoom only. Contact Allan at 651-295-9268 or Diane at 651-295-8179 for details

Families Anonymous (FA): First and third Tuesday evening of each month, 7pm. Support group for families and friends of those dealing with drug, alcohol or other behavioral issues. Is someone you love destroying family harmony by using drugs or alcohol? Free help exists! Join us at St. Timothy Lutheran Church: 1465 N. Victoria Street, St. Paul, MN 55117, or contact Dave E: 612-701-5575.

Recovery International Meeting at Mary Mother of the Church, 3333 Cliff Road, Burnsville, rm 9 at 3pm. It is a proven self help method to deal with mental illness including depression, anxiety, anger, mood disorders and fears using cognitive behavior therapy. Contact Rita at 952-890-7623.

Emotions Anonymous: For those dealing with emotional stress, depression, etc. 7:30pm at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Room 106, 8600 Fremont Ave., Bloomington. Take Penn Ave. south to 86th. Turn left and go to Fremont, just east of 35W. Brian at 952-888-6029.

Nicotine Anonymous: No Tuesday or Saturday in-person meetings yet. More details: www.nicotine-anonymous.org.

Overeaters Anonymous Roseville: Meetings are held from 10–11am (and Saturday's from 8-9) at St.

Christopher's Episcopal Church, 2300 N. Hamline Ave., Roseville, Room 218 Call Janie 651-639-4246 for more info.

A.C.A., 5:30-7 pm, Dakota Alano House, 3920 Rahn Rd, Eagan (Hwy 13 & Cedarvale Shop Ctr). 651-452-2921.www.dasinc.org/

A.C.A. 7pm, Saint Michael's Lutheran Church 1660 W City Rd B (at Fry). Roseville. Open to all. Step and Traditions meeting.

Get a Fresh Start! 12-Step AA group, open meeting Tues., 7pm, at Kingswill Church, 1264 109th Ave NE, Blaine. Denny, 763-757-6512.

Adult Survivors of Child Abuse -Anonymous Peer Support Group Online: Meets 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7PM CST. Speaker topic and time for discussion. All may listen and/or share. Email knestingen@earthlink.net for the meeting link if you are a survivor.

WEDNESDAYS

AA Meeting, 6:30 – 8:30pm St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 2300 N. Hamline Ave., Roseville. Call 651-639-4246 for more info.

CHOW – Culinary Hospitality Outreach and Wellness: Wednesdays (also Monday & Tuesdays for Spanish speakers) at 8pm CST. CHOW is an organization led by culinary and hospitality peers. We believe in a future where our community never loses another person to addiction, burnout, or mental health concerns. We create safe and supportive opportunities for the industry to connect and discuss problems they're facing with others who "get it." Working in the hospitality industry is tough. Let's talk about it. Meetings are currently in virtual format via Zoom. Please visit our website or Facebook page for codes to join in or contact: outreach@chowco.org.

Overeaters Anonymous: St. Paul Midway: Wednesdays 7–8 PM, Hamline United Methodist Church. Two blocks east of Snelling & Minnehaha. Park in south parking lot, use south entrance to education building. Press buzzer. For more info contact Susan at 651-295-7854.

Adult Children of Alcoholics: Wednesdays @ 7 -8:30pm. St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 1895 Laurel Ave, St. Paul. Meets downstairs, sign in the lobby. For more information call Mary at 612-747-0709 or Tom 651-894-3523.

Transitions: 7:30 to 9:30pm Support to men and women who are transitioning from incarceration to living in the community. Trained facilitators and peers provide emotional support in a safe, openly honest environment to discuss discouragements, frustrations, temptations. One of the trained facilitators is a woman. The Men's Center, 3249 Hennepin Ave. S. Minneapolis, 612-822-5892. TCM.org

Women's CoDA Group: Women's Only Codependents Anonymous Group. Meets every Wednesday at noon at Colonial Church of Edina, 6200 Colonial Way (Fireside room, S. end of bldg). For more information, call Valerie at 612.741.5281

Co-dependents Anonymous (CoDA): Wednesdays 9:15am and 6:30pm, Macalester Plymouth United 1658 Lincoln Ave, St Paul 55105. These meetings are open to men and women. For more info contact Judith (9:15a.m. group) 651-757-5894 and Joe S (6:30pm group) 612-978-4698; www.MinnCoDA.org

Marijuana Anonymous, Bloomington, 6-7pm, Minnesota Valley Unitarian Universalist Church 10715 Zenith Ave S. (2 Blocks south of Old Shakopee Rd, on the East side of Zenith) Contact: bloomingtonma@hotmail.com

THURSDAYS

Co-dependents Anonymous (CoDA): Thursdays pm, Crown of Glory Church 1141 Cardinal St. Chaska 55318. Open to men and women. For more info contact Rita 952-334-9206; www.MinnCoDA.org

Co-dependents Anonymous (CoDA): Thursdays 7pm, Immanuel Lutheran Church 16515 Luther Way, Eden Prairie 55346. Open to men and women. For more info contact Judy M 612-400-2323; www.MinnCoDA.org

Co-dependents Anonymous (CoDA): Thursdays 7pm, NE Recovery Room at 520 NE Lowry Ave., Mpls 55418. Open to men and women. For more info contact Deirdre 612-619-7595; www.MinnCoDA.org

Workaholics Anonymous: 12 step group for finding balance between work, activity and fun. Meets

every Thur. 6-7:15 pm. We are currently meeting by Zoom. Contact us for link at Email: wafindingbalance@gmail.com.

Red Book ACA/ACOA: Recovery Church, 253 State, St. Paul, 7-8:30pm. For more info call Jacob at 612-819-9370 or Bruce at 651.407.6336.

New CoDa East Metro Group: Rasmussen College, 8565 Eagle Point Circle N, Lake Elmo (exit north to Radio Dr. on I-94 E). 6:30-7:30pm. Joseph H. at 715-497-6227 or La'Tosia 651-319-2554.

Recovery International Meeting, St Phillip Lutheran Church, 6180 Highway 65 N, Fridley at 7pm. It is a proven self help method to deal with mental illness including depression, anxiety, anger, mood disorders and fears using cognitive behavior therapy. Ken, 763-571-5199.

Recovery International Meeting at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 4100 Lyndale Ave S., Mpls at 7pm. It is a proven self help method to deal with mental illness including depression, anxiety, anger, mood disorders and fears using cognitive behavior therapy. Ruth 612-825-4779.

Adults with ADHD Support Groups: (first time free) Every Thursday morning 10am-noon and every Thursday evening (except last Thurs of the month) 7pm 8:30pm. LDA Minnesota, 6100 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley, MN 55422. Tel. 952-582-6000 or www.ldaminnesota.org.

FRIDAYS

Food Addicts Anonymous: a 12-step program dedicated to food addiction. Fridays 8-9pm, Living Table United Church of Christ, 3805 E 40th St., Mpls, 55406. LGBT friendly. For more info call Shea at 612-722-5064 or sheahnsn@gmail.com or www.foodaddictsanonymous.org.

Emotions Anonymous is a twelve-step program for emotional wellness and learning to live with unsolved problems. The meeting is at Twin Cities Friends Meetinghouse, 1725 Grand Ave. St. Paul at 7:00pm on Friday (or by phone at 240-591-0215#, then 722360#.). Members attend for various reasons, among them depression, anxiety, relationship problems and other emotional difficulties. Like AA, Emotions Anonymous is led by volunteers, and founded on the principle of anonymity. For information, contact Paul at 651-402-6774. Additional information, including other Twin Cities meetings, can be found at www.emotionsanonymous.org.

Recovering Couples Anonymous: Friday Night @ Minnehaha United Methodist Church, 3701 E 50th St, Mpls, 55417, 6:30 - 8pm. 12-Step couples group meets as couples in recovery from any addiction. The only requirement is the desire to remain committed to each other, and find better ways to communicate and develop intimacy. Call Kathy 612-545-6200 or Allan 612-309-5632.

SATURDAYS

Overeaters Anonymous Meeting: Saturday morning at 9:00 AM at Macallister-Plymouth Church. For those still suffering from compulsive overeating, bulimia and anorexia.

Spenders Anonymous: Our purpose is to stop spending compulsively and work toward serenity in our relationship with money. 1-2 pm at Bethany Lutheran Church, 2511 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55406; street parking or in the church lot; enter through the gate on Franklin and ring the bell; www.spenders.org

Northeast Minneapolis CoDependents Anonymous (CoDA) Group: East Side Neighborhood Services, 1700 2nd Street NE, Mpls, 55413 (corner of 2nd Street NE & 17th Ave NE). Park in lot behind building, use rear entry door. Saturdays: 1-2pm. Contact Ralph W. at rrwink@aol.com or 612-382-0674.

CoDA Group: Saturdays 12pm-1:30pm, Suburban North Alano at 15486 Territorial Rd. Maple Grove 55369. Open to men and women. For more info contact Janine 763-458-0812; http://www.MinnCoDA.org

Overeaters Anonymous Courage to Change Meeting: Saturday mornings 8-9am at St Christopher's Episcopal Church, 2300 Hamline Ave N. Roseville. Contact Donna with questions at 651-633-3144.

Clutterers Anonymous: St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 2300 N. Hamline Ave., (Hwy 36) room 220, Roseville. 12 step support group meets the first, third and fifth Sat. of the month, 10–11:15am. www.clutterersanonymous.org

Debtors Anonymous: Offers hope for people whose use of unsecured debt causes problems and suffering. See www.debtorsanonymous.org or www.danorthernplains.org to find a meeting online, in person or hybrid (both online and in person).

Overeaters Anonymous: 8-9 am, Falcon Heights Community Church, 1795 Holton Street, Falcon Heights. Lisa 651-428-3484.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Support Group: 1st and 3rd Sat. of the month, 11am -1pm at Faith Mennonite Church, 2720 E. 22nd St, Minneapolis. Website: tinyurl.com/tcocsdg. Call before coming for direction. Burt at 612-547-6388.

Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families: Saturday at 10 a.m., St. Philip's Lutheran Church, 6180 Highway 65 NE, Fridley MN 55432-5106 (Enter at Door 3). Please see www.acafridley.com for info.

Men's & Women's Support Group: Meetings every Saturday (including holidays) at 9am. Prince of Peace Church, 7217 W. Broadway, Brooklyn Park. (north entrance.) Informal, safe place to share experiences of joy and concerns. We promote growth & positive change to meet the challenges of our lives. Call 763-443-4290.

Southside Men's Group: Saturdays, 8:30 to 10am Support for men working toward positive personal change. Saints Luke & James Episcopal Church, 4557 Colfax Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55419 (2nd floor). Visit www.southsidemensgroup.org.

SUNDAYS

Co-dependents Anonymous (CoDA): Sundays 6pm-7:30pm. Located at Unity Hospital 550 Osborne Rd. Fridley 55432. Held in the Boardroom on the lower level. Enter through main doors and take the West elevator down one floor. Open to men and women. For more info contact Aaron 763-670-4894; www.MinnCoDA.org.

Double Winners Anonymous: Closed meeting of alcoholic women who combine recovery with Alanon. 5:30pm. Wesley Rm, Lake Harriet United Methodist Church, 4901 Chowen Ave. S., Mpls. Take doors from pkg lot, turn left down the hall. LeeAnn J at 763-234-1054 or Margaret K at 612-823-8279.

Adult Children of Alcoholic/ Dysfunctional Families(ACA)-BigRed Book: . 11:15am-12:45pm at the Cavalier Club. 7179 Washington Ave S., Edina, MN 55439, voicemail: 507- 312-9423, aca1115sunday@gmail.com.

Calix Society: A group of Catholic Recovering Alcoholics and their family/significant others who desire to strengthen their spiritual growth, meets the 3rd Sun. of the month at Cathedral of St. Paul. Mass at 8am., breakfast/speaker meeting at 9am. Call Jim B. at 651-779-6828.

Eating Disorders Anonymous: 5-6:30pm in Eden Prairie at Wooddale Church, 6630 Shady Oak Road, 55344. Room 291. Contact Nikki: nikkihaven@gmail.com or call 612-227-4079.

Debtors Anonymous: a group of men and women who use the 12-Step program to solve problems of debt and other money issues: www.danorthernplains.org, 952-953-8438, 5:30 – 6:30 pm, Oak Knoll Lutheran Church, 600 County Rd 73, Minnetonka, MN, (Hopkins Crossroads, just north of 394, enter in rear of building, the Plymouth 2 Alanon).

Opiates Anonymous: Sunday Evenings at 7 pm at Unity of the Valley Spiritual Center, 4011 West Hwy 13, Savage, MN. OA is the first 12-step-based group in the state of Minnesota offering help and support for anyone with a desire to stop using opiates and all other mind altering substances. If you think that you may have a problem with opiates or other mind altering substances, attending one of our meetings may help you decide if you are an addict. If you want to tap into help and support from people and a program with proven success, this is the place for you. No sign up or registration is needed. Just show up at 7 pm on Sunday evenings. If questions contact Ron at 952-657-9119

ABOUT THE LISTINGS

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the support groups on this page. However, we recommend that you contact the group before attending. If you have a listing and need to make a change OR you would like your group included (and on our website), please reach out to us at phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com.

Sweet Dreams

by **Mary Lou Logsdon**



"All dreams reflect inborn creativity and ability to face and solve life's problems." — JEREMY TAYLOR

Do dreams come true? Or are dreams true? What do our dreams tell us?

We have all awakened with dreams that grabbed our attention. Some frighten us as when a beast pursues us or we careen down a mountain road with no brakes or free fall from a building, awakening just before smashing to the sidewalk below. Others are nested in beauty and serenity. Some revisit through the years.

All of us dream, even when we don't remember them. Sleep experts tell us there are cycles to our sleep. Each cycle has four stages: the transition between wakefulness and sleep, core sleep, deep sleep, and REM or rapid eye movement sleep. We dream during REM sleep. We go through between four and six cycles per night. We may have a short wakefulness between cycles.

As we move through these cycles, our time in REM sleep or dream sleep grows. In total, REM stages make up around 25% of sleep time in adults. According to the Sleep Foundation, the first REM stage may last only a few minutes while later stages can last up to an hour. This is why we tend to remember the dreams that we have later in the night as they are longer and closer to our waking.

Why might we want to explore our dreams? Nightly our unconscious speaks to us. Why would we not want to listen?

I have attended to my dreams intermit-

tently throughout my life. They have been helpful in discerning important decisions, new directions I feel called to, how to respond to a niggling problem. Sometimes they challenge me, at other times they reassure me.

There are a few things to keep in mind as we consider our dreams. First, all dreams come in the service of health and wholeness. This is true even of those nightmares that terrify us. Our unconscious is on our side. It simply wants to get our attention.

Secondly, only the dreamer can say with any certainty what meaning his or her dream may hold. It would be nice to find some expert that we could hand our dream over to for interpretation. It is not how it works. Carl Jung said, "No dream symbol can be separated from the individual who dreams it, and there is no definite or straightforward interpretation of any dream." We are the ones who have to wrestle with our dreams. Others can help, but only the dreamer is 'right' about the dream. A sense of "aha" tells us this is what our unconscious is trying to say.

Thirdly, dreams speak a universal language of metaphor and symbol. We will not get messages in script. We must lean into the symbolic language they speak. I remember a dream I had where someone sprayed bug spray in my eyes. The spray blinded me. I recognized that I was refusing to see what was right in front of my eyes.

If you want to attend to your dreams, start with keeping a dream journal by your bed. When you awaken with a dream, write it down. Notice the details, the people in the dream, and how you feel as you move through the dream. Keeping a dream journal can help you track the movement of your dreams over time.

Once you have captured a dream, here are some things you can do with it.

List the people in your dream and give five adjectives to each one. Let's say your high school friend Pat shows up. Write 5 words that describe Pat – funny, kind, gentle, cranky, hot headed. Then look at those same adjectives regarding you. Which of them fit? Maybe you have been cranky or hot-headed lately. Is that something you want to spend time reflecting on? Or maybe you have been kind or need to be kinder. What might that tell you? Do that with each of the characters. We can also look at what our life was like when that person was present to us. Is there something about that time that is similar to now? Is there something about that time that you miss? What might that tell you?

I have dreamt of people who have recently died. I ask, *what do they want to say to me? What do I want to say to them?* Sometimes that can be a precious visitation from someone we love.

If I don't know the dream character, what part of who they seem to be, might be something I don't want to see in myself? They can represent my shadow—the things I don't want to acknowledge about myself. Or it might be my golden shadow, the good things about me to which I am blind.

When I have a dream of an unknown baby, I ask myself, *where am I experiencing new life? Or where might I anticipate new life?*

After exploring the characters, pick an object in the dream, one that seems to carry energy. Imagine yourself as that object. For instance, a key shows up. I imagine myself as a key. What do I like about being a key? What don't I like about it? What do I fear most about being this object? What do I desire most about this object? Relate this to your current life. Do one or more of the statements sound like how you feel toward a situation in your waking life? What do you think you are trying to say to yourself?

Next, look at how you felt in the dream. Were you sad or mad or afraid or confident or joyful? Where in your waking life are you feeling that? Are you surprised to recognize those feelings? Is the dream trying to show you something you would rather not address?

Finally, is there a way that you can bring this dream into your life with a ritual or an object? Maybe you can draw a key or bring out a picture of the dream visitor or bless the people who came forward.

It can be helpful to share our dreams with another person – our spouse, a therapist, a good friend, a spiritual director. Often, others can help us see something we might otherwise miss. They can say, *if this were my dream, this is what I would ask or consider*. Remember, only we can interpret our dream.

Dreams are gifts to us from the spirit world, a letter from our unconscious. Dare we open them? Dare we not? You might not want to miss the message.

Mary Lou Logsdon is a spiritual director in the Twin Cities. She is on the faculty of the Sacred Ground Spiritual Direction Formation program. She can be reached at logsdon.marylou@gmail.com.

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