

NEWSLETTER

I will remember and recover, not forgive and forget. – Unknown



PREPARING FOR THE HOLIDAYS DURING COVID-19

For many people, the holiday season will look different this year. Often, the last few months of the year are busy with parties and visiting family and friends. But due to COVID-19, things like traveling and gathering in large groups may not be possible.

Many people have lost loved ones and will be missing someone's presence during the festivities, and even more have lost their jobs and are dealing with financial stress. Others, like healthcare workers, may be working overtime and unable to take as much time off around the holidays as they usually can. It can be hard to cope with these kinds of changes, especially if certain holidays are the only time you see some of your loved ones.

If you live with a mental health condition, you

may have an especially difficult time with the uncertainty and the change of plans this year. Many people with mental health conditions find consistency important in their recovery, especially during times of high stress - like both the pandemic and the holiday season. A sudden shift in tradition may have you feeling an extreme loss of control on top of disappointment.

Change is difficult for most people, especially when you didn't ask for or even expect these changes. But that doesn't mean that the holidays are destined to be a disappointment this year. There are plenty of ways to cope with the tough feelings you're having while still enjoying the holidays. Just See page 10 for details.

From MHA

KLEPTOMANIA & SHOPLIFTING ADDICTION

Compulsive or addictive stealing, also known as kleptomania, is an addiction that often leads to legal consequences. Those with kleptomania don't often need the items that they steal, differentiating stealing addiction from stealing for survival. The individual often does not plan to steal and gives away or discards the item after taking it. Those with kleptomania steal on impulse but typically feel depressed or guilty afterwards, although they are not able to control their tendency to steal in the future despite knowing that it's wrong.

What Is Kleptomania?

Kleptomania is a rare condition. It is an impulse-control condition that causes the affected person to be unable to resist stealing objects even if the objects are unneeded. A person with kleptomania does not plan to steal items in advance. He or she often feels great remorse after the anxiety and lots of anxiety before and during. There is a great deal of tension before committing theft and a sense of relief after the theft is complete. However this relief is often tempered by guilt and regret.

Like other mental health disorders, kleptomania may be accompanied by a substance use disorder as a person tries to relieve pre-theft anxiety or post-theft guilt. This isn't a real solution to any problem and complicates mental health and treatment. Although individuals with kleptomania may not initially be able to control their impulses to steal, they can make the choice to get professional help and change these automatic behaviors. Kleptomania doesn't have to rule a person's actions, emotions or life.

What Is Shoplifting Addiction?

A shoplifting addiction is similar to kleptomania. A person with a shoplifting addiction will experience the following:

- An overwhelming desire to shoplift items
- A constant tension and pressure to shoplift with repetitive thoughts about shoplifting
- A very brief time of relief after shoplifting

This is because, for some people, shoplifting

provides a rush or "high." They experience a flood of feel-good chemicals similar to what occurs when a person uses drugs or alcohol. They begin to seek this experience again and again, looking for the "high" rather than the merchandise they are taking. As with any addiction, a primary symptom is continuing to use a substance or engage in a behavior despite experiencing negative consequences. The action begins to grow beyond a person's control. However as with kleptomania, professional treatment and support provides real avenues for healing and recovery.

Should I Seek Professional Help for Shoplifting Addiction or Kleptomania?

No matter the reason for shoplifting, it isn't fun. Even people who experience temporary relief from anxiety or feel "high" after the act find themselves trapped by negative emotions and the need to shoplift again. Neither shoplifting addiction nor kleptomania get better on their own. So when is it time to get help?

You may be afraid to seek help for your compulsive shoplifting, drug use or mental health concern. Don't let stigma hold you back. Millions of people shoplift, and millions more struggling with addiction and mental health issues. Treatment is compassionate and confidential, and it works.

By Alanna Hilbink



DID YOU KNOW: You can still make an appointment at our behavioral health center located at 853 Battle Creek Road in Jonesboro by calling the centralized scheduling department at 1.844.438.2778. Just let them know what you need and they will let you know what to bring.

COMPULSIVE HOARDING & ADDICTION

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) estimates that two to five percent of the population suffers from hoarding disorder. The sense of distress, shame and social isolation which accompanies this condition often causes a person to turn to drugs or alcohol as a means of escape.

Individuals facing both conditions, termed a co-occurring disorder, witness better treatment outcomes within an individualized, dual diagnosis treatment program. This multidisciplinary approach combines behavioral therapies, counseling and medications (when needed), to facilitate emotional, mental and physical healing.

Is Hoarding An Addiction?

Though hoarding bears certain similarities to addiction, it isn't classified as such. Despite this, hoarding, like addiction, can cause a massively declining quality of life, creating a need for comprehensive treatment.

The similarities between hoarding and addiction are as follows:

- compulsive behaviors
- preoccupation with finding and obtaining possessions (vs a substance)
- denial about the behaviors and their impact
- isolation
- making excuses for the behavior
- self-neglect
- continuing behaviors despite adverse mental and physical health effects

Even though both disorders are marked by debilitating, compulsive behaviors, there are some key differences which make hoarding disorder stand apart from addiction. Addiction is marked by long-term changes to the brain's structure and molecular form, alterations which haven't yet been shown to occur from hoarding.

How Hoarding Is Linked To Drug Addiction

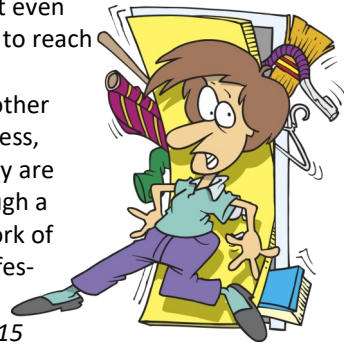
Hoarding disorder can lead to or worsen any form of drug abuse, however, alcohol use disorders are witnessed more frequently than other substance use disorders in this way.

Mental health disorders are frequently linked to addiction. Many individuals with these diagnoses frequently self-medicate the symptoms of their mental illness with drugs or alcohol. The same holds true for hoarding disorder. Drugs and alcohol alter a person's cognitive functions, impairing their ability to make sound judgements and to effectively reason. For a person with a hoarding disorder, this can intensify already existent problems, making the hoarding behaviors more severe.

Substance abuse often intensifies the shame and isolation which already exists from hoarding. This can make it even harder for a person to reach out for help.

Like addiction and other forms of mental illness, healing and recovery are best achieved through a solid support network of loved ones and professionals.

Continued on page 15



DID YOU KNOW: Hoarding had long been considered a sub type of obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), however, the updated official diagnosis now makes hoarding its own disorder. According to TIME, only 18 percent of people with a hoarding disorder meet the full criteria of OCD. Research has found that people with hoarding disorders have distinct patterns of brain activity which differ from healthy individuals and those with OCD.

NO, NOT ME....TRUE STORIES

I'M NOT AN ADDICT

How could I be an addict? My life is great. I live in a very good area of Los Angeles, drive a nice sports car, have a good job, pay all my bills, and have a wonderful family. This is not the kind of person I grew up believing an addict was. So I smoke pot every day. I still take care of business when it needs to be done. I just use marijuana to relax when I get home from work. I never smoke before or during my job. So I smoke from 4 p.m. 'til midnight every night and do nothing but watch television. It's not a problem; I have nothing else to do anyway.

Then one of those nights hit when I ran out of pot. I was climbing the walls. I went crazy. I called everyone I knew to score even a roach. I remember one night driving 39 miles in a bad storm to get a half a joint from a complete stranger just to get through the night. I remember calling my dealer every hour on the hour to see if it had come in yet. I bought pot from people I normally wouldn't have even talked to much less done business with. What had happened to me? I thought I was using because I wanted to. Now I found that I was using because I had to. I had become an addict!

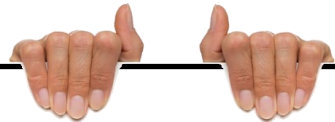


I NEEDED IT TO FEEL OKAY

I remember seeing my sister being taken away on a stretcher while she was overdosing on LSD and thinking that I never wanted to be like that. That happened when I was in the 8th grade. By the end of the 9th grade I had started to smoke pot and drink wine to feel accepted by the other kids in the neighborhood. By the end of high school, I had lied and stolen to be able to get weed. I had also sold pot and other drugs at school for my sister, in order to get my drugs. I tried other drugs while in school. I eventually dropped out of school in my senior year to join the Army, get married, and get away from home.



While in the Army, I used and sold pot and other drugs. I eventually turned myself in to a drug program to keep from going to Europe. The program was for one year, and I ended up an outcast from the rest of my company. It was difficult to cheat the program due to testing, but I still managed to get loaded. After the year was over, I received a certificate of rehabilitation, so I figured I had no real problem with drugs.



FREEDOM TO BE ME

I swore I would never become an alcoholic like my father. But I started drinking alcohol at 16 years old and smoking pot at 17. I remember stealing drugs from the veterinarian I worked for, and taking those pills even though I had no idea what they would do. The pills had no noticeable effect.

But the alcohol and marijuana worked. I liked the effects, especially when I combined them. I felt more confident, more popular, and less worried about what other people thought of me. My inhibitions melted away and I felt I could be who I wanted to be, that I fit into the world and somehow belonged. Music sounded better and women were more attracted to me. I also started getting into trouble when I was high, but I figured it was just a matter of controlling how much I drank and used. This illusion that I could learn to control my addictions lasted over two and a half decades....



ROCKS, PEBBLES, AND SAND

The Story:

A philosophy professor once stood up before his class with a large empty mayonnaise jar. He filled the jar to the top with large rocks and asked his students if the jar was full.

His students all agreed the jar was full.

He then added small pebbles to the jar, and gave the jar a bit of a shake so the pebbles could disperse themselves among the larger rocks. Then he asked again, "Is the jar full now?"

The students agreed that the jar was still full.

The professor then poured sand into the jar to fill up all the remaining empty space.

The students then agreed again that the jar was full.

The Metaphor:

In this story, the jar represents your life and the rocks, pebbles, and sand are the things that fill up your life. The rocks represent the most important projects and things you have going on, such as spending time with your family and maintaining proper health. This means that if the pebbles and the sand were lost, the jar would still be full and your life would still have meaning.

The pebbles represent the things in your life

that matter, but that you could live without. The pebbles are certainly things that give your life meaning (such as your job, house, hobbies, and friendships), but they are not critical for you to have a meaningful life. These things often come and go, and are not permanent or essential to your overall well-being.

Finally, the sand represents the remaining filler things in your life, and material possessions. This could be small things such as watching television, browsing through your favorite social media site, or running errands. These things don't mean much to your life as a whole, and are likely only done to waste time or get small tasks accomplished.

The Moral:

The metaphor here is that if you start with putting sand into the jar, you will not have room for rocks or pebbles. This holds true with the things you let into your life. If you spend all of your time on the small and insignificant things, you will run out of room for the things that are actually important. In order to have a more effective and efficient life, pay attention to the "rocks," because they are critical to your long-term well-being.



BERNICE'S CORNER

The hope that I have in God is timeless and always worth waiting for. If we look to him for help, He will rescue us from destruction and despair and from the things that hold us down. He will also bring stability to our life so we can move forward again with confidence and joy. If we are to experience God's best for our life, (which far exceeds anything we can imagine), we need to rely on him alone and avoid any entanglements with those who could lead us away from God and his plan for us.

By Bernice T. Davis



DID YOU KNOW:

Human Rights Day is observed by the international community every year on the 10th of December. It commemorates the day in 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

THIS IS SERIOUS!!



I have been wearing a mask in stores (and limiting my trips) since March when this whole thing went down. I'm not sure how being considerate to others for the common good is

now being mocked by some who are calling it "Living in Fear" but it needs to stop!!! When I wear a mask over my nose and mouth in public and in the stores/supermarkets/offices. I want you to know the following.:

(1) I'm educated enough to know that I could be asymptomatic and still give you the virus.

(2) No I don't "Live in fear" of the virus; I just want to be part of the solution and not the problem. (3) I don't feel like the "government controls me." I feel like I'm an adult contributing to the security of our society and I want to teach others the same. (4) If we could all live with the consideration of others in mind, the whole world be a better place. (5) Wearing a mask doesn't make me weak, scared, stupid or even "controlled." It makes me caring and responsible. (6) When you think about your appearance, discomfort, or other people's opinion of you, imagine a love one, a child, father, mother, grandparent, aunt, uncle or even a stranger placed on a ventilator, along without you or any family member allowed at their bedside. Ask yourself if you could have helped them a little, simply by wearing a mask.

Submitted by Donald Moye

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO SMILE

On The Rocks

Sally didn't know I was in recovery when she asked "Have you got anything to drink?"

I replied, "Yes, Water."

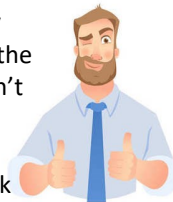
She rebutted, "I meant something harder?"

I replied, "Yes, Ice."



Collateral

My 35-year-old son and I had just finished our meal when I realized I'd left my wallet in my truck. As I headed out the door, I told the waitress what had happened. "But don't worry," I said with a grin. "I'm leaving my son for collateral." She looked at him. He winked at her. She turned back to me. "What else you got?"



Insight

I've always thought I will discover my inner self through some eastern philosophies, not because of a stupid single-ply toilet paper from Walmart!



Improvising

Scene: With a patient in my medical exam room **Me:** How old are your kids? **Patient:** Forty-four and 39 from my wife who passed away, and from my second wife, 15 and 13. **Me:** That's quite the age difference!

Patient: Well, the older ones didn't give me any grandkids, so I made my own.



"Has your son decided what he wants to be when he grows up?" I asked my friend. "He wants to be a garbageman," he replied. "That's an unusual ambition to have at such a young age." "Not really. He thinks that garbagemen work only on Tuesdays."



9 WAYS TO MANAGE THE HOLIDAY BLUES



There are many things that can contribute to the holiday blues.

Whether it's something as simple as overscheduling yourself or a deeper emotional need, it's possible to work through your

feelings and start anew.

Here are nine ways to deal with the holiday blues:

- **LIMIT ALCOHOL** – Limit your alcohol intake, and try not to keep it readily available around your house. If you're attending a party and you know alcohol will be accessible, limit yourself to one or two drinks. Drinking to excess can affect your mood and amplify any negative feelings that you may have.
- **GET PLENTY OF SLEEP** – Try to go to bed at a specific time each night. Being well-rested can improve your mood and help you feel ready to take on the day.
- **LEARN TO SAY "NO"** – Overscheduling and not making time for yourself can lead to emotional breakdowns. Learn how to say "no," and stay firm on your decision.
- **BE OPEN TO NEW TRADITIONS** – You may have an image of what you think the holiday should consist of, and this may not be what's actually happening. Instead of holding on to what the holiday should have been, allow new traditions to unfold.
- **GET SUPPORT WHEN MOURNING A LOVED ONE** – If you've experienced the loss of a loved one, the holidays can be especially tough. Although it can be tempting to isolate yourself and grieve, it can be beneficial to spend time with your friends and family. They can support you through this difficult time.
- **EXERCISE REGULARLY** – Plug in your headphones and pop out for a walk around the block a couple of times a day. A quick 10-minute walk will get your heart rate up and release mood-boosting endorphins.
- **DO SOMETHING FUN TO GET OVER A RECENT BREAKUP** – It can be difficult to be alone when you're nursing an aching heart. Instead of sitting at home, fill up your calendar with activities. Websites such as [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) offer group outings, such as dinners and dancing, almost every night of the week.
- **AVOID OVEREATING** – Before heading out to social events, fill up on veggies. You can even fill up a small sandwich bag and snack in the car. Holiday outings can often lead to overeating, which can affect your mood and overall well-being.

The holidays can be an especially difficult time for older adults. If you're unable to be with friends or family this holiday, look for volunteer opportunities that allow you to be around others. Some non-profits will even come pick you up if you're unable to drive.

From Healthline

FACEMASK WAIVERS & EXEMPTION CARDS

As we know, at first researchers and scientists did not know how necessary mask wearing would be among the general public. Now we are aware that wearing masks is an effective way to help prevent the spread of the virus. Some people still resist, stating that they have a facemask exemption or waiver. The truth is, actually you **cannot** get a waiver or exemption from wearing a face mask. Recently, fake cards and flyers claiming the bearer is exempt from mask-wearing regulations have shown up in some areas. They claim the person carrying them has a physical or mental condition covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that makes them unable to wear a face mask or covering. The United States Department of Justice issued a statement about these fake mask exemptions, explaining that the cards and flyers are **fraudulent**.

THE YARD SALE CHRISTMAS

A mom felt she'd been overspending on family Christmas gifts, so one year she decided to try something different. For a few months before the holiday, she scrounged through yard sales for inexpensive, used items. She bought more than usual but for far less money. On Christmas Eve, her children excitedly opened gift after gift after gift. The next day there were more! Mom had felt guilty about not getting new gifts so she had additional gifts for Christmas morning. The kids began opening them but quickly complained, "We're too tired to open any more! You've given us so much!" That's not a typical response from children on a Christmas morning!



God has blessed us with so much, but it seems we're always looking for more: a bigger house, a better car, a larger bank account, or [fill in the blank]. Paul encouraged Timothy to remind people in his congregation that "we brought nothing into this world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that" (1 Timothy 6:7–8).

God has given us our very breath and life—besides providing for our needs. How refreshing it might be to enjoy and be content with His gifts and to say, You've given us so much! We don't need more. "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (v. 6).

By Anne Cetas

AUNT BETTY'S WAY

When I was young, whenever my doting Aunt Betty visited, it felt like Christmas. She'd bring Star Wars toys and slip me cash on her way out the door. Whenever I stayed with her, she filled the freezer with ice cream and never cooked vegetables. She had few rules and let me stay up late. My aunt was marvelous, reflecting God's generosity. However, to grow up healthy, I needed more than only Aunt Betty's way. I also needed my parents to place expectations on me and my behavior and hold me to them. God asks more of me than Aunt Betty. While He floods us with relentless love, a love that never wavers even when we resist or run away, He does expect something of us. When God instructed Israel how to live, He provided Ten Commandments, not ten suggestions (Exodus 20:1–17). Aware of our self-deception, God offers clear expectations: we're to "[love] God and [carry] out his commands" (1 John 5:2).



Thankfully, "[God's] commands are not burdensome" (v. 3). By the Holy Spirit's power, we can live them out as we experience God's love and joy. His love for us is unceasing. But the Scriptures offer a question to help us know if we love God in return: Are we obeying His commands as the Spirit guides us? We can say we love God, but what we do in His strength tells the real story.

By Winn Collier



DID YOU KNOW: Contrary to popular belief, marijuana is addictive. Research shows that:

- 1-in-6 people who start using the drug before the age of 18 can become addicted.
- 1-in-10 adults who use the drug can become addicted.

Over the past few decades, the amount of THC in marijuana has steadily climbed; today's marijuana has three times the concentration of THC compared to 25 years ago. The higher the THC amount, the stronger the effects on the brain—likely contributing to increased rates of marijuana-related emergency room visits.



TIPS FOR DECKING THE HALLS

It's that time of year where the halls are decked with holly and the smell of fresh fir pulsates through the air wherever you go! We're here to give you some tips to incorporate that will be sure to get you in the mood of the season.

Tip #1: Plan ahead.

You can't do everything so make a plan that is realistic with your life. The major component for me during the holiday season is to enjoy it. If I feel overwhelmed or not prepared, the enjoyment goes out the window.

Tip #2: Don't stop at the entry.

Take your holiday decor throughout the entire home. Simple small touches in other rooms of your home make a huge difference in the way the whole house feels, especially when you're entertaining.

Tip #3: Cookies are essential.

The holidays are all about the treats. Even if you can't bake, slice up pre-made cookie dough and stick it in the oven. The smell of cookies baking is enough to put the anyone in the holiday mood.

Tip #4: It doesn't have to be expensive.

Inexpensive ornaments from a discount store can look elegant and festive when grouped

together. For instance, decorate a mantel with various sizes of clear or colored glass containers filled with similar colored glass ornaments for a stunning holiday display.

Tip #5: Less really is more.

The holidays can be about extravagance, but if you overwhelm your home with too much decor it can compete for attention and distract you from some really beautiful and special pieces.

Tip #6: Plan for the unexpected.

If you have a lot of people coming in and out for your home for the holidays, fill a large bowl or decorative box with simple, inexpensive, individually wrapped gifts. Give yourself a dollar amount limit for each gift and go to town. Your unexpected party guest will be thrilled to receive a unique gift from you.

Tip #7: Breathe and have fun.

Like most of us, I tend to stop breathing when I'm feeling stressed. I am always reminding myself that this time of year is really about getting to see the people I love, having a great time together and counting our blessings. Take a deep breath and enjoy.

From Trakell & Angelo

PREPARING FOR THE HOLIDAYS DURING COVID-19

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Identify How You're Feeling.

Figuring out your emotions about the upcoming holidays can make things feel less overwhelming. Most people are feeling a lot of different ways at once right now, which is hard for our brains to process and understand. This year has been a difficult year for many reasons. That means that some of your distress is likely related to things other than the holidays. It is completely normal for you to be feeling a bit more emotional than usual right now. Take some time to sort through your emotions in whatever way is most productive for you - you can journal, talk to a friend, or just spend some quiet time alone thinking. Once you have a better idea of the specific feelings you're experiencing, you can start making plans to cope with them.

Acknowledge What You've Lost.

While the holidays are mainly about gratefulness and celebration, this can also be a really hard time of year, even during normal circumstances. If you're missing a loved one, think of ways to honor them during your festivities. If you've lost a job or had to drop out of school, take the time to recognize the challenges that came with that. Even if you haven't lost anything concrete, we've all lost our sense of normalcy this year - it's okay to grieve that during this time.

Make The Most Of It.

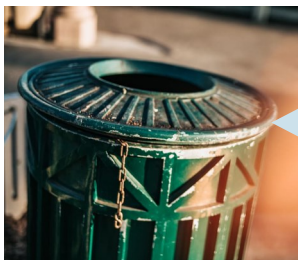
There's no denying that things will be different this year, but holidays don't need to be canceled (or even minimized). There will be some things that you can't do right now, but there

are surely some that you can. You can still make your favorite meal, light the menorah, decorate gingerbread houses, and break out confetti poppers for New Year's Eve. For the things you can't do - brainstorm how to adapt them for COVID times. Feeling lonely because you won't get to see your extended family? Round up your cousins for a fun video chat.

Practice Gratitude.

Gratitude is a major focus this time of year, and while it may seem harder to find things to appreciate, there is still plenty to be thankful for. Make a conscious effort to regularly identify some things that you're grateful for. It can be something as broad as your health, or something as specific as your favorite song playing on the radio the last time you got in the car. Change is hard, but it isn't always bad. There are still ways to celebrate the season with your loved ones, even if you must give up some of your favorite traditions. Find creative ways to adapt. Or start new traditions - they may even add more meaning to your holiday season.

If you're still finding yourself sad, hopeless, or unable to enjoy the holidays this year, you may be struggling with a mental health condition. Contact our mental health specialists of Clayton Center for an appointment by calling 1.844.438.2778



DID YOU KNOW: When Heroin went from legal to requiring a doctor's prescription in 1914, desperate users began scavenging junk metal to support their habit and hence the term "junkies" was born.

DID YOU KNOW: The government spends almost \$500 billion every year on addiction and substance use, but only 2 cents of each dollar actually goes towards programs or prevention and treatment.

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

I hope you are doing your D.E.W., keeping mentally strong, persevering, healthy, and spiritually ept. Today I want to share about an breathe of fresh air. Something so little as a deep breathe of fresh air, can help you stay healthy. Fresh air cleans your lungs. "Fresh air helps your lungs to dilate more fully and improves the cleansing action of your lungs. When you breathe in fresh air and exhale through your lungs, you release airborne toxins from your body." A breathe of fresh air can also help you have more energy and a sharper mind. Research shows that "spending time in fresh air, increases energy in 90 percent of people", says Abigail Wise, The Huffington Post (huffingtonpost.com). There is also a positive impact from being outdoors breathing fresh air and around natural elements on subjective vitality, above and beyond the effects of physical activities or social interactions that can take place outdoors in natural settings." During this time of corona pandemic, many of us have not been getting our healthy dose of "fresh air". Start today getting your daily dose of "breathe of fresh air".

By Dathon Brown



and tribulations she endured to make it to where she is today.

"In 2005, I was out getting high and fell 20 feet and broke my back and my wrist, but I stayed out in my addiction. I was only 70 pounds at that point. My family had to prepare my funeral. I told my mom I was going to die from this disease, that it was my destiny.

"In addiction, you live in the past of what it was like when you were a kid, standing on the corner drinking 40s or hanging out in the bar. It's the only disease that convinces you that you don't have a disease. It's cunning, baffling, and powerful."

Like too many people, substance use disorder had taken over Gina's life – that is, until one day when she found the inner strength to ask for help.

"I was hanging out in Kensington in the freezing cold, and I suddenly had a moment of sanity. It was like my head and my heart were both suddenly on the same exact page, and I thought, "What are you doing? This isn't good...."

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ELECTION DATES

Unless you've lived under a rock for the last few weeks or peeking from a bush, nearly everyone in the nation and certainly everyone in Georgia knows that all eyes are on them, as they hold the power as to the balance of power of the US Senate. Below are important dates that you need to know of:

Election day: The actual day for election is Jan. 5

Registration Deadlines: Online: Dec. 7,
By mail: Postmarked by Dec. 7,

Absentee Ballot Deadlines Request: Jan. 1

Return by mail: Received by Jan. 5 by 7:00 p.m.

Return in person: Jan. 5 by 7:00 p.m.

Early voting: Dec. 14 - Jan. 1, but dates and hours may vary based on where you live, so please check and make a plan to vote!!

A TRUE STORY OF ADDICTION: GINA'S STORY

"I was in active addiction since I was 13. I started doing heroin and continued using until I was 33." Gina is an outgoing person, hence, her soul shines through her eyes. Without hearing her story, you would never understand the trials



WHAT'S COMING UP AT THE CRANE?

ALL DECEMBER

Education Registration has been suspended until January. Virtual Classes are still available for all Individuals that have already registered

ALL DECEMBER

HIV Appointments

Call for an Appointment, or Book Online

Resume Building

Monday - Friday, Call or visit website to book appointment With Certified Write

Peer Groups

2:30 pm ▪ M-F

Virtual on Zoom

One On One Appointments

Monday - Friday, Call or visit website to book appointment With CARES Specialists

All Meetings on Zoom:
Member ID: 838.951.2807
No Password Required!!

For Schedule Changes or
Updates Follow us At thecrane.org;
All Services Free of Charge!!

For more on what we're planning, sign up for notifications on our webpage: thecrane.org or follow us on Instagram at The Paula Crane Center!!

AM I ADDICTED TO SCRATCH OFFS??



Do you find yourself pinning your hopes and dreams on the lottery? Perhaps you visit the gas station every couple of days, unable to resist the thought that maybe this time you'll win something big and improve your life. You may wonder, "I am addicted to scratch-offs. How can that be?"

Lottery addiction is a real issue. Many people think of gambling addiction as something that occurs in a casino or at a poker game. Yet, scratch-off tickets are an ongoing threat to many who have a higher risk of developing an addiction. The figures for scratch-off tickets aren't readily available. However, according to the North American Association of State and Provincial Lotteries, Americans spent \$73.5 billion on lottery tickets annually and over \$6 billion more on electronic lottery games.

What's the Difference Between Occasional Purchases and Addiction?

Do you really need scratch-off addiction help if your sole goal is to improve your quality of life on a \$1 ticket? The answer may be no unless you have some of the symptoms of a lottery addiction such as these:

- You feel you need to stop at the gas station every day to get a scratch-off, even if you are late getting home or have other tasks that seem more important.
- You are buying lottery tickets even though you are behind on bills or need to use the cash for something else.
- You think about, plan for and even pray for

lottery winnings.

- You hide your addiction from your family and friends, often getting rid of the scratch-offs before anyone sees them.
- If you win something from the tickets, you immediately reinvest the funds into more tickets, never really walking away with money in your hand.
- You feel anxious, overwhelmed and even angry if you can't play the lottery.
- You've stolen money or borrowed funds to play the lottery.

The biggest difference in occasionally buying tickets and habitually doing so is frequency. It's okay to buy them if you want to, but doing so on a routine basis can lead to addiction. Addiction occurs when a person cannot avoid the purchase of scratch-off tickets. It is something they think about and plan for every day or as often as they can.

AM I ADDICTED TO SCRATCH OFFS??

Is Scratch-Off and Lottery Use the Same as Gambling Addiction?

Compulsive gambling is a type of emotional illness, a condition in which you cannot control your desire to gamble. In some people, scratch-off and lottery use become the same form of addiction. If you have a drawer full of lottery tickets, have spent too much money on them and still want to invest more, you may have a form of gambling addiction. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders from the American Psychiatric Association defines this type of addiction as including:

- A need to gamble in increasing amounts to get the same level of satisfaction from the process
- Unsuccessful attempts to control or stop gambling or buying lottery tickets
 - Preoccupation with gambling, watching for lottery numbers or purchasing scratch-off tickets in high amounts or very frequently
 - Gambling when stressed, anxious or depressed



- Lying to hide the purchases or the extent of the investment in scratch-off pieces
- Chasing losses with more investments the next day, especially when done routinely
- Seeks out money from other people to gamble and buy lottery tickets with
- Jeopardizes relationships due to investments in gambling activities

Does this sound like you? If you're facing scratch-off ticket addiction, it may be time to consider getting help.

Signs You May Need Help for Self-Control Addictions

Scratch-off addiction help is necessary for many people, most of whom have no idea they need it. Those who have this form of addiction may have other self-control-related addictions as well. For example, some people move addictive behaviors over various things to achieve the same sense of satisfaction or pleasure from the activity. This may include addictions to food, sex or pornography or substance abuse. If you believe you may need help, contact our treatment program at 1.844.438.2778.

From FHE Health

A TRUE STORY OF ADDICTION: GINA'S STORY

Continued from page 11: "I had been to 11 rehabs before that day. But that time, I walked into a crisis center, and it was the first time I finally said, 'I don't have a home and I haven't had one in four years. I'm dying and I need you to help me.' And they did.

"I had a social worker who really fought for me. People would treat me badly. In their terms, I was just a junkie. But my social worker told me, 'We're going to fight really hard for you. I need you to fight hard for you.' She sent me through detox. I started going to meetings and hanging out with girls who lived in the recovery house."

To Gina having a strong support system was crucial, most noteworthy was her family.

"Thank God for my family. One of the things that breaks my heart is that I was not always there for my family as much as I feel I should have been. I was really being driven by addiction. They supported me through my entire journey.

"Now, I'm going to college to get my associate's degree in social work. I don't really know what else I would do if I didn't work in the recovery field, my Sponsee calls me every day at 4:34pm, and I have a group of women in recovery who I know are always going to love me, who will always be there for me.

"I would say to anyone who thinks they have a problem: There is hope. Don't give up on it. You are loved. You are somebody."

RESOLUTIONS & WHY THEY FAIL

1. You're treating a marathon like a sprint.

Slow and steady habit change might not be sexy, but it's a lot more effective than the "I want it ALL and I want it NOW!" mentality.

Small changes stick better because they aren't intimidating (if

you do it right, you'll barely even notice them!).

If you have a lot of bad habits today, the last thing you need to do is remodel your entire life overnight. Want to lose weight? Stop it with the crash diets and excessive exercise plans. Instead of following a super restrictive plan that bans anything fun, add one positive habit per week. For example, you could start with something easy like drinking more water during your first week. The following week, you could move on to eating 3 fruits and veggies every day. And the next week, you could aim to eat a fistful of protein at every meal.

2. You put the cart before the horse.

"Supplementing" a crappy diet is stupid, so don't even think about it. Focus on the actions that produce the overwhelming amount of results. If it's not important, don't worry about it.

3. You don't believe in yourself.

A failure to act can cripple you before you leave the starting line. If you've tried (and failed) to set a New Year's resolution (or several) in the past, I know it might be hard to believe in yourself. Doubt is a nagging voice in your head that will resist personal growth with every ounce of its being. The only way to defeat doubt is to believe in yourself. Who cares if you've failed a time or two? This year, you can try again (but better this time).

4. Too much thinking, not enough doing.

The best self-help book in the world can't save you if you fail to take action. Yes, seek

inspiration and knowledge, but only as much as you can realistically apply to your life. If you can put just one thing you learn from every book or article you read into practice, you'll be on the fast track to success.

5. You know your what but not your why.

The biggest reason why most New Year's resolutions fail: you know what you want but you not why you want it.

Yes: you want to get fit, lose weight, or be healthy... but why is your goal important to you? For example:

Do you want to be fit so you can be a positive example that your children can admire and look up to?

Do you want to lose fat so you'll feel more confident and sexy in your body than ever before?

Do you want to be healthy so you'll have increased clarity, energy, and focus that would carry over into every single aspect of your life?

Whether you're getting in shape because you want to live longer, be a good example, boost your energy, feel confident, have an excuse to buy hot new clothes, or increase your likelihood of getting laid (hey, I'm not here to judge) is up to you. Forget about any preconceived notions and be true to yourself.

- The more specific you can make your goal,
- The more vivid it will be in your imagination,
- The more encouraged you'll be,
- The more likely it is you will succeed (because yes, you CAN do this!).

I hope this guide to why New Year's resolutions fail helps you achieve your goals in the coming year. If you found this helpful, please pass it along to some friends so they can be successful just like you. What do you hope to accomplish next year?

By: Daniel Wallen



COMPULSIVE HOARDING & ADDICTION

Continued from page 3

What Is Hoarding Disorder?

Hoarding is a mental health disorder characterized by an excessive accumulation of possessions that have little to no value. Further, a person will have an inability to discard these items, despite the obvious toll they have on their life.

These behaviors are so extreme that a person suffers from high rates of distress and functional impairment. Hoarding can cause emotional, physical, mental, social, financial and/or legal instability. It's estimated that as high as 14 million Americans suffer from the debilitating effects of compulsive hoarding, according to Scientific American.

Because of these states, a person becomes unable to use areas of their home or other personal spaces, such as offices, vehicles or a garage. The most frequently hoarded items are:

- bills or statements
- books
- clothes
- letters or other paper goods
- magazines

Any item may be hoarded. Additional items include cardboard boxes, food, household supplies, paper and plastic bags and photographs. Some individuals even hoard animals, keeping dozens or even a hundred animals in unsanitary and unsafe conditions. Hoarding is different from collecting. Collectors are generally organized and feel a sense of pride and well-being from their collection, whereas a hoarder experiences shame and

detriment to their life.

When a person with a hoarding disorder is confronted with the possibility of throwing away their belongings (or giving away their animals) they typically experience a strong emotional reaction and intense anxiety.

Many people with hoarding disorder have other problems which make it difficult for them to function. These issues may be symptoms of another mental illness. The cumulative effects of these problems increase the severity of the hoarding disorder.

These problems may include:

- avoidance
- difficulty planning
- disorganization
- distractibility
- indecisiveness
- perfectionism
- procrastination



Further, a person may have obsessive thoughts or actions which fuel their hoarding behaviors. Some individuals may routinely check the garbage to make sure they didn't accidentally throw something away. A person may be intensely preoccupied with the thought of running out of an item or requiring it in the future, leading them to buy more or save what they already have.

For many, hoarding isn't just the compulsion to hold onto things, it's also fed by the overwhelming desire to acquire new things.

For more information visit vertavahealth.com

ADDICTION FACT 101

It's true that many species of animals seek out intoxicating substances. Humans are not the only ones who seek out mind-altering drugs. Several species purposefully seek out intoxicating substances. Some animals use rotting fermented fruit as a form of alcohol while others look for naturally hallucinogenic plants and animals to ingest simply for the mental effect they produce.

From monkeys to butterflies to domesticated dogs and cats, many animals to become intoxicated in one way or another.





Happy Holidays

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