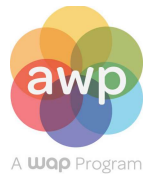


Balanced Living

November 2023



Helping the Body and Mind Recover from a Chemical Dependency

If you or a loved one is chemically dependent, the first step to recovery is accepting that there is a problem and making the decision to get help. From there, the journey has just begun. Being addicted to a substance affects the body and the mind, and in order to fully recover, you'll have to address all of the physical, behavioral, and mental patterns that have developed over the course of your addiction.

Given that taking the first step is always the hardest, once you decide to seek help there is hope; success can be achieved through determination. When you restore your physical and mental self, you will get more of your life back, chemical-free. Read on for information on how you or a loved one can make a full recovery.

Treating the Body Right

When quitting a substance, it will take time for the body to adjust back to life without the substance. Your doctor will know if you should have medical help while quitting the drug, or if it is safe to quit "cold turkey" without any medical assistance.

Exercise can be a valuable part of recovery. Engaging in exercise helps to release stress and also to strengthen and return your body back to health. Endorphins are released through exercise; these natural chemicals generate positive feelings that can further assist your recovery. When you begin an exercise routine, start small and build up from there. Be careful not to overwork your body limits; use exercise to release stress, not build up stress.

In addition to exercise, good nutrition is important. Make sure you have plenty of fresh vegetables, fruits, and whole grains in your diet. Work to remove processed foods, additives, refined sugar, caffeine, and high-fat foods. Note that sugar and caffeine can actually increase cravings for drugs or alcohol.

Eating right and exercising will help you sleep better during this difficult time. Make sure you take time to rest, as it will be an essential part of your recovery.

Healing the Mind

Oftentimes, chemical dependency develops as a means to cover or numb the emotional pain one is feeling. When the substance is no longer part of their unhealthy coping mechanisms, people may feel the emotions they have masked for the first time. This is when the person has to put their energy towards learning healthy coping skills to work through and manage the emotional pain. Below are some activities that can help restore the mind to a healthy state:

- Write down situations or people in your life that trigger you to take the substance. Avoid them the best you can.
- Seek out a therapist who specializes in addiction and recovery.
- Surround yourself with people who respect and support your sobriety.
- Develop a routine of meditation, visualization, or other relaxation techniques.
- Meet and communicate with others at a 12-step program. The phone book or your employee assistance program can help you find groups in your area that can support you on your journey.

Written by Life Advantages - Author Dr. Delvina Miremadi ©2023



Allyship: Becoming an Accepting and Supportive Person

It's a good idea to occasionally self-reflect on our own beliefs and actions, as well as how they affect those around us. As the Greek philosopher Socrates once said, "An unexamined life is not worth living." Though we should always treat others with respect and kindness, we might fall short at times or not realize how exactly to show support. If you would like to work on being an accepting and supportive ally, here are some points to consider.

Individuality Makes Us Human

It takes all different types of people to make the world go round. As long as one's actions don't harm others, no one should be shamed or threatened for expressing their uniqueness. You can still respect and support someone else even if you don't agree with everything they believe or do.

Expand Your Horizons

Try being more receptive to new people. If you tend to interact with the same people in your daily routine, challenge yourself to say hello to someone new. Maybe it's someone you cross paths with on a regular basis but have never really talked with. Could you be more open to having dialogue with people who have different beliefs and points of view? Think of it as an opportunity to grow and expand your own perspective. Make sure to be respectful when engaging in dialogue with others, even if your points of view differ.

Be Mindful of Your Own Judgments or Assumptions

We all make judgments, and sometimes it can feel like an automatic process in our brain. If you notice that you jump to immediate judgments about others, practice shifting your brain to simply making observations.

Also, avoid making assumptions about others. We might do this when we are out in public observing strangers or with people we know in our daily lives. However, we can never know the inner workings of someone else unless they tell us. As Don Miguel Ruiz wrote in his book *The Four Agreements*, "It is always better to ask questions than to make an assumption."

Take the Time to Listen

Challenge yourself to truly listen when conversing with others, rather than just waiting for your turn to talk. As the Dalai Lama once said, "When you talk, you are only repeating what you know. But when you listen, you learn something new."

Ask Others How You Can Support Them

Don't be afraid to be direct and ask your friends, family, or others in your life how you can best support them.

Show Your Support on Social Media

You could show your social media network that you are an ally through your posts, as well as hashtags. For example, during Pride Month, research which hashtags are trending and join in the conversation. Some examples are #pride, #pridemonth, and #lgbtq.

Not Everyone Will Agree on Some Things

Try not to let others' opinions and beliefs affect you negatively. Instead, focus on what you can do. Continue to spread positivity and maintain an open mindset even when others are not. If you see someone getting bullied or harassed at school or in the workplace, offer your support, help them get to a safe space, and report the behavior through the appropriate channels. Remember to stay in control of your emotions, as this can help de-escalate the situation.

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Receiving and Responding to Employee Feedback

Constructive feedback is a valuable necessity in the workplace. It can help people develop as a professional and become more effective employees. Below are some guidelines to help you receive feedback from your staff as well as learn skills to respond to it in positive ways.

Receiving Feedback from Employees

Surveys

Surveys are great because they can be filled out anonymously. Employees may feel more open to respond if they don't fear repercussions for their input. Create surveys on your own or ask your human resources department if there are ready-made surveys available.

Giving Yourself Feedback

It is common for other people to give you feedback, but you can also analyze your own work behavior and management techniques. Doing this can offer some valuable insight into what you're doing correctly and what may need some improvement. Look for patterns. Is there something you are doing that consistently isn't showing progress or success? What are you doing that is consistently gaining ground? Take time to reflect on your actions.

Watch How Employees Behave

Are employees tentative to approach you, or do they seem nervous when speaking to you? Think about employee behavior as a means to discovering your own style. Perhaps you are sending signals that are making you unapproachable. Try to pay close attention to your eye contact and body language.

Brainstorming at a Meeting

Holding a brainstorming meeting is a great way to open the lines of communication within a group. In group settings, people may feel more comfortable sharing their ideas or issues (versus approaching a supervisor on their own).

When You Get Negative Feedback

Criticism is inevitable, and sometimes it can be negative. When you get negative feedback, follow these tips to use it constructively:

- Accept it. Don't get defensive or destructive. Don't yell or fight back, employees will be more hesitant to be honest with you in the future.
- Ask questions and get examples so you can put it into context. Is there a common thread or pattern? See if many employees feel this way.
- Consider if a change is advisable and best for everyone involved. Then, decide what action to take, start planning for it, and move forward.

Written by Life Advantages - Author Dr. Delvina Miremadi ©2023

Webinar Now Available:

Supporting a Loved One with Substance Misuse

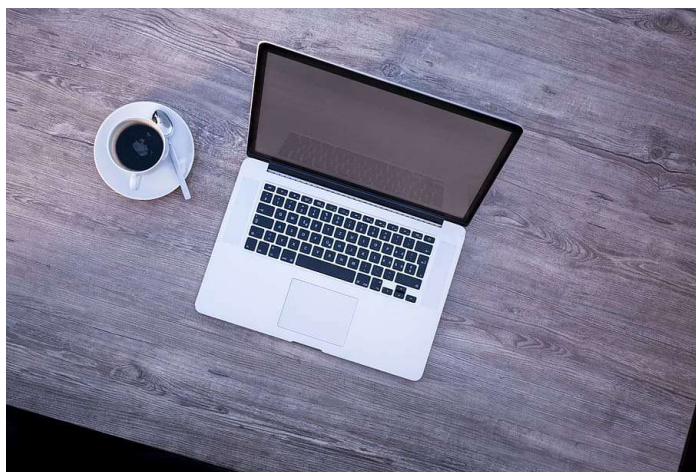
Having a loved one with addiction can be heartbreaking, frustrating, and terrifying. Choosing how to support them can be confusing—the right choice is not always obvious. In this webinar, we will discuss recognizing signs of addiction and review choices of how to support your loved one. We will also review concepts such as enabling and codependency. You will walk away from this webinar with a clearer idea of how to support both yourself and your loved one.

[Log-in](#) any time this month to watch the webinar!

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Maintaining Balance During the Holiday Season

While the holidays can bring a lot of excitement, they also include various other emotions that can leave us feeling like our cup is empty. Before this holiday season begins, take some time to think about things that fill your cup and can help you feel balanced and at peace this holiday season.

Take time for yourself. The holidays often include larger get-togethers and more time with friends, family, and loved ones. Make sure you are also carving out time for yourself this season, whether for a solo walk, yoga class, afternoon baking or reading, or running errands alone.

Keep elements of your routine consistent. Our routines can help us feel grounded and balanced. While you may be traveling or watching your schedule fill this season, try to keep critical parts of your routine consistent, such as keeping your exercise routine, fueling your body with similar foods, or keeping your same bedtime ritual. This can help us feel like ourselves and that our schedule is still within our control.

Rethink the concept of holiday gift-giving. Gifts don't have to be grand or expensive to be meaningful. To help you feel emotionally and financially balanced, try rethinking how you're giving gifts and what type of gifts others would like. Gifts that can be just as meaningful include handwritten cards, baked goods, and quality time spent together. Cookie exchanges can also be a great idea for larger groups.

Be cautious of comparing yourself to others. We all may be more active on social media throughout the holidays, allowing space to compare ourselves to others. Try to remember that social media is often a highlight reel. Staying off technology and soaking up time with others can help you ditch the comparison.

Practice gratitude. Try recognizing what you are grateful for even during more events, such as extra time off work and more time with loved ones.

Overall, remember to give yourself grace throughout this busy time regarding balance. Remember that you can still meet some of your goals in different ways, such as switching up your exercise routine to play pickleball with your family or staying consistent with meal prepping but perhaps in a separate kitchen surrounded by other people.



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Diabetes Awareness

November is Diabetes Awareness Month. This annual observance is dedicated to spreading knowledge about diabetes, raising awareness of the disease, and promoting healthy lifestyles to prevent and manage it effectively. Diabetes is a chronic condition that affects how the body processes glucose, a vital energy source.

There are two main types of diabetes:

Type 1: Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune condition where the body's immune system attacks insulin-producing cells.

Type 2: Type 2 diabetes is a condition that happens because of a problem in how the body regulates and uses sugar, or glucose, as a fuel. This long-term condition results in too much sugar circulating in the blood. Eventually high blood sugar levels can eventually lead to circulatory, nervous, and immune disorders.

Diabetes Awareness Month is dedicated to educating communities about the importance of early detection, healthy eating, regular exercise, and proper management of diabetes. It is also a time to celebrate the strength and resilience of those living with diabetes and to support them in their journey.

One of the key messages of Diabetes Awareness Month is that diabetes can often be prevented or delayed through simple lifestyle changes such as adopting a balanced diet and maintaining an active lifestyle. By understanding the risk factors and early warning signs, individuals can take proactive steps to protect their health.

November is a reminder that knowledge is power regarding diabetes. By promoting awareness and empowering individuals with the tools they need to make healthier choices, we can collectively work towards reducing the impact of diabetes and improving the quality of life for those affected by this condition.

Source: [What is diabetes? | CDC](#)

We know it is not always easy to juggle everything & realize simple tips can help provide a different approach.
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Winterizing Your Yard and Garden A Recipe for Health and Happiness

As winter's frosty embrace approaches, it's time to don your gardening gloves and prepare your yard and garden for the chilly season ahead. Not only will you be nurturing your outdoor oasis, but you'll also be tending to your own physical and mental wellbeing. So, grab your spade, and let's dive into the joys of winter garden prep!

The Physical Perks of Winter Gardening. First and foremost, winter gardening is a fantastic way to stay physically active during the colder months. Digging, raking, and pruning are all great exercises that keep your muscles toned and your joints flexible. The fresh air and natural light can work wonders for your immune system and overall health.

Nurturing Your Mental Health. Gardening has a profound impact on mental wellbeing. It's a meditative practice that allows you to connect with the earth, reducing stress and anxiety levels. The sense of accomplishment that comes from nurturing plants and watching them grow can boost your mood and self-esteem. Winter gardening helps beat the winter blues by providing a sense of purpose and a connection to the outdoors, even during the darkest months.

Don't Overdo the Pruning. While it's tempting to go all Edward Scissorhands on your garden in the fall, it's important to show some restraint. Remove some dead flowers and stems, providing essential winter shelter for birds and insects. Birds like finches and sparrows seek refuge among these plant remnants while insects hibernate in them. Your garden becomes a winter haven for these critters, and you get a front-row seat to the bustling wildlife show.

Springtime Bulb Bonanza. Fall isn't just about saying goodbye to your summer blooms; it's also the perfect time to welcome spring. Plant bulbs like tulips, daffodils, and crocuses now, and a burst of vibrant color will greet you in spring. Dig a hole, pop in those bulbs, and cover them with soil – it's like planting a surprise party for your future self!

Leaf Mulch Magic. Those fallen leaves aren't just yard clutter; they're also a valuable resource. Collect and mulch them to create nutrient-rich leaf mulch. Spread this mulch around your garden beds to insulate the soil and prevent weeds. Your garden will thank you when it awakens in the spring, ready for another season of beauty and growth.

So, as you gear up for winter, remember that gardening isn't just about nurturing your outdoor space but also about nourishing your wellbeing. By leaving some of your garden's wild side untouched, you're providing a haven for wildlife. And when you plant those spring bulbs and use those mulched leaves, you're investing in a beautiful and vibrant future for your garden. Gardening is a year-round adventure, so embrace it and enjoy the journey!



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30-Minute Roasted Salmon Tacos with Corn & Pepper Salsa

Ingredients

- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1 canned chipotle pepper in adobo, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon fresh lime juice plus 2 tablespoons, divided
- 1 ¼ pounds center-cut salmon fillet
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 1 ½ cups fresh corn kernels (from 3 ears)
- 1 red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced on the bias
- 1 small jalapeño pepper, seeded and finely diced
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 8 corn tortillas, warmed
- 1 avocado, sliced
- 1 lime, quartered

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with foil and coat lightly with cooking spray.
2. Combine honey, chipotle, mustard and 1 teaspoon lime juice in a small bowl.
3. Place salmon skin-side down on the prepared baking sheet; sprinkle with 1/4 teaspoon salt. Roast for 14 minutes. Remove from oven; spread the honey-chipotle glaze over the fish and continue roasting until cooked through, 2 to 4 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, combine corn, bell pepper, scallions, jalapeño, cilantro and the remaining 2 tablespoons lime juice and 1/4 teaspoon salt in a medium bowl; toss to combine.
5. Remove and discard salmon skin; flake the salmon. Serve in warmed tortillas, topped with avocado and the corn-and-pepper salsa. Serve with lime wedges.

Nutrition

Per Serving

Calories: 460 | Protein: 35g | Carbohydrates: 52g | Dietary Fiber: 9g | Fat: 51g | Saturated Fat: 3g | Calcium: 107mg | Magnesium: 82mg

Source: Roasted Salmon Tacos with Corn & Pepper Salsa (eatingwell.com)

Get Help for Complex Grief

Grief is a unique experience for everyone. There is no “right amount of time” to navigate grief, but some people do experience prolonged (complex) grief. It can be intense and debilitating. If you are struggling with the inability to move forward in your grief journey, consider professional counseling. There are peaks, valleys, and new horizons in overcoming grief, but taking this step to wellness can help protect your physical and mental health and relationships at home and at work. Learn more about complex grief with this resource: www.abct.org/wpcontent/uploads/2021/03/complicated-grief.pdf

Avoid Unconscious Bias in the Workplace

Our biases can undermine a positive workplace. A bias is a learned or acquired prejudice in favor of or against a particular thing or individual. A common distinction is that biases are usually not rational. Although diversity awareness and education can help us gain control over biases to prevent their harmful expression, unconscious expression often occurs. Do you recognize any of the following forms of unconscious bias in the workplace? *Confirmation bias*: the tendency to use incidents, information, or behaviors you observe to confirm a preexisting belief. Example: Witnessing a workplace error made by an older employee, and using this experience to confirm the bias that older employees make more mistakes. *Implicit bias*: This bias is almost entirely subconscious, and you may even disavow it. However, you act on the bias when the opportunity arises. Example: Believing subconsciously that one gender is better at leadership than another, so it influences your vote for a work team member to be the team leader, in part because of the person’s gender. Implicit bias can have adverse effects on hiring and promotion practices, and it often requires a good amount of education and training to increase employee awareness to overcome it. *Social bias*: This refers to attitudes or prejudices that individuals have based on race, disability, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation/identity, or socioeconomic status. Example: “All disabled people are inspirational.” Biases can lead to discrimination, unequal treatment, conflict, and lower morale. Learn more: “BREAKING THE BIAS BARRIER: A Guide to Overcoming Unconscious Bias in the Workplace and Beyond” by Anabel Bassey (2023)

More Tips about: Living Well in Anxious Times

Terrible news about war and terrorism can be extremely unsettling, but completely avoiding news is probably not the best solution. To strike a balance, consider these few tips: 1) Schedule—not just prioritize—your self-care practices such as exercise, meditation, and hobbies to help reduce stress and promote mental well-being. 2) Maintain a supportive network of loved ones you can share concerns and process emotions with. 3) Focus on what you can control—your goals, daily activities, and well-being are still important! 4) If anxiety feels overwhelming, speak to a mental health professional at your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). 5) There are now free apps *that block other apps* and let you get news or schedule access only at specific times. Some will even block you from tweaking the schedule in case you get the urge to peek! Learn more: beebom.com/app-blocker-apps/

Flip the Script with Positive Self-Talk

“Self-talk” is how we think and reason. It’s the inner voice that influences your mindset and actions. The words or scripts it produces are either positive or negative but are often outside our awareness. With practice, you can take control of self-talk messages, steer them to be positive, overcome negative scripts, and make self-talk a superpower. In moments of adversity, ask yourself “Is my self-talk lifting me up right now or dragging me down?” If it’s negative, fight the script. Immediately replace a negative script such as “I can’t do this” with a positive script like “This is a big challenge, but I have the innate capacity to learn and grow from this experience.” Key: Self-talk isn’t about denial; it’s about embracing challenges, learning from failures, and anticipating positive outcomes. The payoff for a positive self-talk habit is huge—more resilience, improved well-being, and more effective relationships.

Make Your Medical Visit More Beneficial

Bring health questions to your doctor to maximize the benefits of a medical exam. It could save your life. For example, forgetting to mention the curious bump under your arm could be disastrous if it is cancerous. Ask questions about risk given your family's medical history and about genetic tests that can help prevent them. And don't hold back questions you feel squeamish about, like sexual health issues. The bottom line—team with your doctor to maximize wellness. Source: [health.usnews.com](https://www.health.usnews.com/search/patients-ask-questions) [search “patients ask questions”]

Do You have Shift Work Sleep Disorder?

Shift work sleep disorder (SWSD) affects about 10% to 40% of employees—like health professionals, truckers, first responders, pilots, online customer service agents, factory workers, and retail clerks—who work irregular, nontraditional hours (shift work). Preventing SWSD requires six to seven hours of quality sleep nightly, but many life factors can make this goal difficult to achieve. The key is effective sleep hygiene to avoid health effects associated with SWSD, including insulin resistance and diabetes, anxiety, depression, lower bone density, and even lower fertility and neurodegenerative disorders like dementia. Tips: Create a sleep schedule and a comfortable sleep environment, and avoid exposure to digital screens and drinking coffee and alcohol before bedtime, as they disrupt the sleep cycle. Get regular exercise a few hours before bedtime. Avoid eating prior to sleeping. Learn more: sleepeducation.org

Tips for Managing a Heavy Workload

Many surveys show the primary cause of job stress is a heavy workload. If reducing your workload is not possible, set boundaries between work and personal life by first gauging the amount of work and then scheduling the time necessary to complete it. Also schedule personal, family, or leisure time around these hours. Stick rigorously to this schedule. Here's why: Work tasks naturally consume all the time allocated or perceived to be available to complete them. (This is known as Parkinson's Law.) By rigorous scheduling, you leverage this principle to complete the work but still have a personal life—and all the benefits you derive from it!

Preparing for More Positive Holidays Ahead

November is a good time to plan support and structure and to brainstorm ideas for coping with stress or loneliness during the holidays. The EAP is here to assist you in addressing the feelings of holiday-related sadness, isolation, anxiety, emptiness, or loneliness that can arise during this season. You don't have to endure these emotions in silence or solitude. While you may witness the joy and enthusiasm of others, the EAP understands that your experience might be different. Together, you and the EAP can work on creating a personalized strategy to help you navigate the season, and also empower you to embrace the energy and excitement of the upcoming new year.

We know it is not always easy to juggle everything & realize simple tips can help provide a different approach. Your EAP is here to help with family, work, health, & legal issues.

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