

Healthyminds

Promoting Your Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental Health Alliance Newsletter

WINTER 2010

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**“It works
for me!”**

mental wellness tips that
enhance mind, body & spirit





the best things about

being mentally ill

portions of blog post "The 12 Best Things About Being Mentally Ill" by James Bishop, developer of Optimism Software for Mental Health, www.findingoptimism.com

It's an odd title I know. What can possibly be good about mental illness? Well, nothing when you're in the depths of despair. But there can be great benefits from having an illness, including a mental illness. This is what I've found in my life.

Slow • I've slowed down a lot. I stopped wearing a watch a couple of years ago and haven't missed it once. If someone asks me the time I take a guess, and I'm always within 10 or 15 minutes.

No • I've learned how to say no. If you are good at something, like work, then people will ask you to do more. It builds up over time. I've learned to say no. I can't. I'm mentally ill. Sorry.

Simple • I don't worry about what I'm going to wear. I don't have to keep track of my clothing cycle for work. I don't care what I'm going to eat for dinner, whether I need a bigger television, if I can buy a half-decent car or what people think of my extra 30 pounds of insulation. If I didn't have depression these things would still consume me.

Thanks • It's been tricky but I've learned to be thankful for what I have, not what I don't have. It keeps things in the right perspective.

Time • I spend more time on what is important to me. I have great relationships with my kids. Time with them is invaluable. Depression is a good wake-up call.

Perspective • I've developed a much bigger picture of things and learned to keep the small things in perspective. This has been necessary because of depression.

Health • I take my physical health much more seriously than I used to because of my illness.

Marriage • My marriage is far stronger today than it would ever have been if I

didn't have bipolar. I read recently that 90% of marriages with one partner having bipolar end in divorce. If that statistic is even close to right, then it is truly tragic. My wife had plenty of reasons to leave me for years, but she stayed true to her vows even though she didn't understand what was wrong with me. (I write that with a touch of trepidation. I know that many don't have good support and I can't imagine how hard it is.)

Friends • I've always been very open about having a mental illness, and I've actually never felt the stigma. When I converted to Christianity about 15 years ago I lost half my good friends who had a problem with it. Since I've been telling people that I have bipolar, I've gained at least the same number of friends. Go figure!

Others • The best thing about having any illness must be the ability to empathize and help others.

Speak • I was once very guarded with what I said, often checking myself from saying anything that could offend or impact someone's view of me. I've really lightened up and feel liberated.

Character • In the Bible, in Romans 5:3-4 it says: "we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."

Concern • Being engaged with the world is good. I think a lot more deeply about things like inequality, poverty, the environment and mental illness. Unfortunately being more concerned means I feel more let down by those in power who continually fail us.

Laugh • Life is absurd. My life is absurd. I've learned to laugh more at both.

■ Article edited for space. To view in full, visit www.findingoptimism.com

what is bipolar?

Bipolar disorder, or manic depression, is a medical illness that causes extreme shifts in mood, energy, and functioning. These changes may be subtle or dramatic and typically vary greatly over the course of a person's life as well as among individuals. Over 10 million people in America have bipolar disorder, and the illness affects men and women equally. Bipolar disorder is a chronic and generally life-long condition with recurring episodes of mania and depression that can last from days to months that often begin in adolescence or early adulthood, and occasionally even in children. Most people generally require some sort of lifelong treatment. While medication is one key element in successful treatment of bipolar disorder, psychotherapy, support, and education about the illness are also essential components of the treatment process.

Visit the National Alliance on Mental Illness at www.nami.org for more information about bipolar disorder.

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For more information call 219/531.3500
or visit www.porterstarke.org



life in the fast lane

you can avoid hectic activity schedules with your kids when you follow these helpful tips

Sunshine. Spotting the first robin. A crocus pushing up through the snow. All sure signs of spring. But for parents, this list includes mailboxes bursting with brochures for summer camps, sports teams, enrichment classes and college programs. In our “go-go-go” culture, there are endless activities demanding kids’ free time. What is the right thing to do? Before registering and writing a check, consider these ideas:

As a family, talk about your values regarding success. Kids do better academically and socially, and behave in ways we value, when they have multiple interests instead of just one.

Talk with your child about what’s important and what he wants to do. Dedicate your child’s (and family’s) time and energy toward a true interest.

If you want your child to be good at something, that pursuit will be demanding in terms of time. This is true for all people. In order to master a skill, it takes time and practice.

Young children should avoid demanding activities. Young children grow and develop rapidly. Most child development experts recommend avoiding demanding activities that can hurt child development in other ways.

Know what you’re willing to invest financially in an activity. Determine short term (this season) and long term (future years) costs *before* your child begins to enjoy and excel at an activity. Talk with your child about your informed decision.

Notice how your child reacts to scheduled activities. Does she get excited and stay engaged, or does she whine and want to leave? Her behavior says a lot about what she thinks of an activity.

Get to know the adults leading the program. Even if your child is in a demanding program, she is more likely to enjoy it and stick with it if she has a good rapport with the adult leaders.

Your child may want to quit an activity that he used to enjoy because others are excelling in it more quickly than he is. Talk with him about doing activities that bring him joy and pleasure. He doesn’t need to be “the best” at an activity in order to enjoy it.

Connect your teenager with other teenagers interested in the same activity. When teens invest a lot of time and energy mastering an activity, it can sometimes isolate them in school among classmates who can’t relate. Seek out the support of others working in this area through regional or statewide clubs.

Ask your teenager helpful questions about her demanding activity, such as: What do you enjoy most about your activity? What stresses you out? How do you feel like you’re being pushed? How can we best support you?

■ Source: *Search Institute*

what’s my role?

Behind every successful child is an informed, supportive and loving parent. To learn more, visit:

Search Institute
www.search-institute.org

An independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide leadership, knowledge, and resources to promote healthy children, youth, and communities.

Indiana Youth Institute
www.iyi.org
Promotes the healthy development of children and youth by serving the institutions and people of Indiana who work on their behalf.

Sparks
www.ignitesparks.com
Help teens discover their Sparks - the hidden flames within that excite them - and tap into their true passions.

The College Board
www.collegeboard.com
A not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity.



For more information call 219/462-6267 or visit www.mentalhealthpc.org



piles of stress

learn tips to prevent the build up of mental and physical stress from clutter

The beginning of a new year brings out the spring cleaner in many of us. But it's not only our homes that we need to be concerned about. When you can't find things, you can feel frustrated, angry, and unproductive. It can spill over into every aspect of life.

Clutter, both mental and physical, can do a number on your productivity and eat away at your time. Think of all the minutes wasted looking for items that aren't where they should be. The sheer stress of a cluttered life can lead to missed deadlines, longer work hours, and the loss of important stuff. Clutter equals stress. What can we do about it?

A Cluttered Mind

With a growing to-do list, work, family obligations, and daily worries, it's no wonder you have a cluttered mind. Start evaluating where you can let go.

Think about eliminating unhealthy people and situations from your life. The negative attitudes of others can be infectious. If you feel stuck in a dead-end job, resolve to make a change. It takes courage to go through this process but you will feel much more fulfilled once you are able to concentrate on the people and things that do make you happy.

Other ways to clean out your thoughts:

- A hot bath
- A meditation practice
- A long walk
- A phone call to a friend
- Spend at least 15 minutes a day

in a pursuit that allows you to decompress, clear your mind, and rid your thoughts of the mental chit-chat that clouds creativity, passion, and productivity.

A Cluttered Life

Declutter your life for better emotional health. Follow these steps to help clear clutter from your life:

Organize in bite-size bits • Set a timer for just 15 minutes a day. Knowing you won't spend hours working on an organizational project can make projects easier to manage.

Mainstream email • Only check your emails twice a day. When you open an email, answer it immediately and don't save it for later.

Handle snail mail only once • Upon opening the mail, take immediate action. File it with bills, shred it, recycle it, etc. Commit to touching each piece of mail immediately and only once.

Avoid horizontal piles • When possible, avoid putting paper in horizontal stacks in your home or office. Save time by categorizing and finding a home for paper as soon as it comes through the door.

Purge regularly • This applies to every room in the house. Don't forget your purse! Stick to the "when in doubt, throw it out" rule. If you can't remember when you purchased it, let it go.

■ Source: *webMD*

what is hoarding?

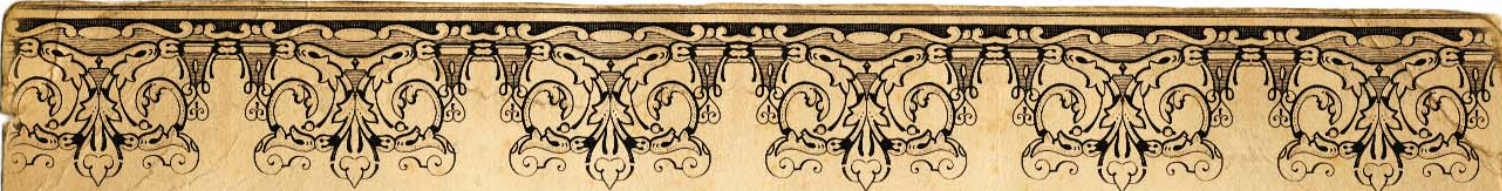
Compulsive hoarding is a mental disorder marked by an obsessive need to acquire (and failure to use or discard) a significant amount of possessions, even if the items are worthless, hazardous, or unsanitary. Signs and symptoms of hoarding may include:

- Cluttered living spaces
- Inability to discard items
- Keeping stacks of newspapers, magazines or junk mail
- Moving items from one pile to another, without discarding anything
- Acquiring unneeded or seemingly useless items, including trash
- Difficulty managing daily activities, including procrastination and trouble making decisions
- Difficulty organizing items
- Perfectionism
- Excessive attachment to possessions, and discomfort letting others touch or borrow possessions
- Limited or no social interactions
- People who hoard animals may keep dozens or even hundreds of pets

Share questions or concerns about hoarding with a doctor or mental health provider.

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For more information call 219/531-3510
or visit www.porterstarke.org



*Spend
Your
Weekend
Exploring
Treasures
of the
Past...*

2010 ANTIQUE & COLLECTIBLES SHOW

MARCH 13 (Saturday, 9am-4pm) & **MARCH 14** (Sunday, 10am-4pm)
Porter County Expo Center • 215 E. Division Rd. • Valparaiso, IN 46383
Admission \$4.00 per person • Children 12 and under are free

ANTIQUe APPRAISAL FAIR

MARCH 12 (Friday, 6pm-9pm)
Porter County Expo Center • 215 E. Division Rd. • Valparaiso, IN 46383
Tickets: \$20.00 • Casual Attire • Cash Bar • Hot Appetizers

- Appraisal Fair: three appraisers in a "Roadshow" type venue
- One (1) free appraisal with ticket, additional appraisals \$5 (no weapons)
- Silent Auction
- First chance shopping at "Antique & Collectibles Show" dealer booths
- Tickets available at the door or by calling 219.462.6267



Both Fundraising Events Benefit Mental Health America of Porter County
For More Information: Call 219.462.6267 • Email: mentalhealthpc@verizon.net



A rendering (left) and photograph (right) of the progress on construction on the new Porter-Starke Services Portage location at 3176 Lancer Street.

Progress in Portage

Construction continues on the new Porter-Starke Services building located at 3176 Lancer Street in Portage. By expanding its presence in Portage, Porter-Starke Services can better serve the community's growing needs. The new facility offers more space for expanded mental health and addiction services and for the additional staff needed to provide those services. Careful planning of this new facility will enable Porter-Starke Services to serve several thousand more clients annually. Until construction is complete, Porter-Starke continues to provide services at the current Portage location at 3349 Willowcreek Road.

2010 marks Porter-Starke Services' 35th anniversary of providing mental health and addiction services to Northwest Indiana. We are excited to celebrate that history as we grow with the community of Portage.



THANK YOU

The Porter-Starke Services Foundation would like to thank those who contributed to the 2009 Annual Employee & Board Campaign. Over \$15,000 was raised to continue our mission of supporting and promoting mental health and substance abuse treatment needs in our community! We recognize and appreciate those individuals that joined in support of the Porter-Starke Services Foundation at the following giving levels:

Executive Influence Board Level (\$500 and above)

Dale Clapp • Steve Massa • Pat Puffer

Community Direction Board Level (\$250 - \$499)

Shannon Franko • Julie Graegin • Vince Galbiati • Jeff Good
Randy Zromkoski

Employee Executive Influence Level (\$320 and above)

Sandy Carlson • Bob Franko • Mitchell Goldstein, MD • Samir Gupta, MD
Shannon Heineman • Mary Idstein • Sajiv John, MD • Daniel Kim, MD
Anand Popli, MD • Rocky Schiralli • Aileen Wehren

Employee Star Level (\$120 - \$319)

Carmen Artl • Linda Arvidson • Carol Balko • Sharon Belaschky • Linda Bowlby • Eric Brant • Dave Busch • Jennifer Carlos, MD • Danielle Dobos
Andrea Farmer • Susan Glick • Socorro Gonzalez • Laura Grant • Jan Hannah • Dianna Harris • Mike Hofmann • Bonnie Hurst • Kandi Kindmark
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your mood & food

oranges

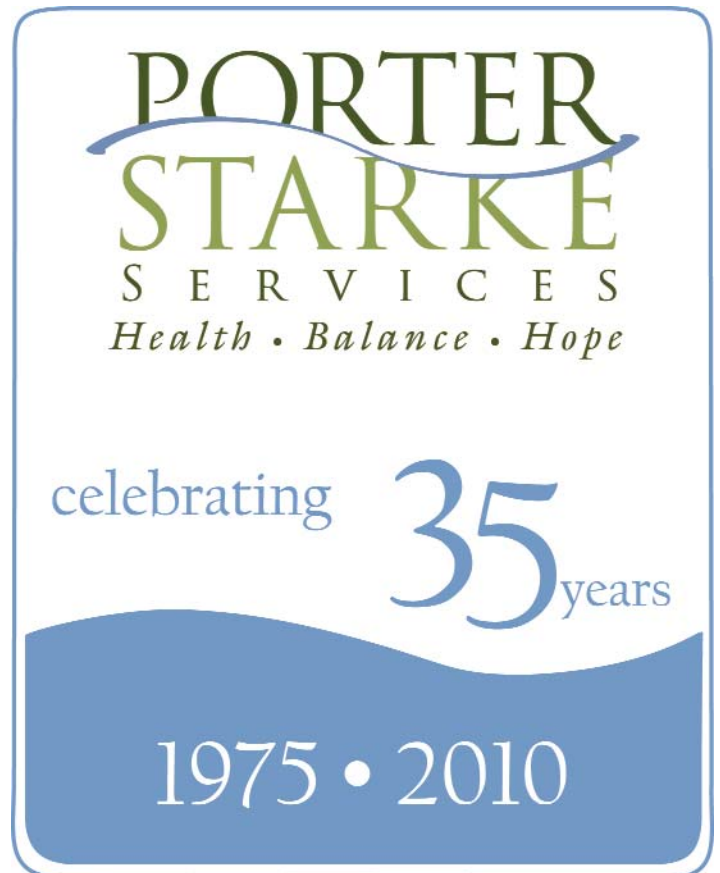
Oranges make the list for their wealth of vitamin C. Studies suggest this vitamin can reduce levels of stress hormones while strengthening the immune system. If you have a particularly stressful event coming up, you may want to consider supplements. In one study, blood pressure and cortisol levels returned to normal more quickly when people took 3,000 milligrams of vitamin C before a stressful task. *Source: WebMd*

This article is not intended to provide medical advice on issues of personal health or wellness, which should be directly obtained by a physician.



If you've never been to a mental health care provider, it can feel a little daunting. Knowing what to expect and following a few suggestions can make it easier. Before you call, prepare a list of questions, like:

- What experience do you have treating my issues?
- Do you have a particular approach, expertise, or training?
- Consider the traits you would like in your provider. You want to feel comfortable, so ask yourself if you'd prefer to see a man or woman, someone older or younger, etc.
- Do you work with my insurance plan?
- When you call, you may get an answering machine or service. Specify when and how the provider can reach you and whether or not it's OK to leave a message on your answering machine or with the person who answers your phone.
- During the first visit, expect that the therapist will ask questions about your background and why you're seeking help. You can ask questions too, like what your treatment would involve and how long it might last.



help is here

THERAPEUTIC GROUPS & SERVICES

A range of therapeutic and wellness services are available at **Porter-Starke Services**, provided by qualified mental health professionals and staff. They include:

- **Counseling Services** (individual, couples, group, family)
- **Child & Family Services** including counseling, day treatment and educational services
- **Chemical Dependency & Addiction** services for teens and adults
- Case management, day treatment and housing services for **chronically mentally ill**
- **Business Services** (Employee Assistance Programming and Beyond Boundaries)
- **Educational presentations** including Learn @ Lunch and Speaker's Bureau programs.

For more information call 219/531-3500 or visit us online at www.porterstarke.org.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUPS

The following support groups are available through **Mental Health America of Porter County** located at 402 Indiana Avenue in Valparaiso. For group meeting times, please call 219/462-6267.

BUILDING UP GIRLS (BUG)

A year-long program that assists middle school girls by pairing them with trained female high school and college mentors.

BUILDING UP OUR YOUTH (BUOY)

Expansion of the BUG program. Includes educational workshops for adults on how to build upon the strengths of our youth.

CLIENT ADVOCATE PROGRAM

Assures support/representation to mental health consumers seeking treatment. Client Advocates are available during regular office hours or by appointment.

HEALTH FINANCIAL AID

Assistance in purchasing medications for individuals under psychiatric care in financial crisis.

HOLIDAY GIFT LIFT

Community-wide solicitation, collection and distribution of gifts in December for needy Porter County individuals and families.

DEPRESSION AND BIPOLAR SUPPORT ALLIANCE (DBSA) • www.dbsalliance.org

DBSA is a free support group for individuals diagnosed with depression or bipolar disorder as well as for friends and families. Lectures are free and attendance is open. For more information, please call Monika at 219.462.3689. Weekly meetings are held at the following locations:

Valparaiso • 1st & 3rd Wednesday • 6pm • Porter Starke Services, 701 Wall St., Entrance C.

Merrillville • 2nd & 4th Monday • 7pm • Methodist Hospital/Southlake, Hospitality Rm, (Basement), 8701 Broadway.

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS (NAMI) • www.nami.org

NAMI (Porter County) offers free support groups and educational programs for those whose lives are touched by mental illness. For more information please, call 219.764.2958. Support groups are held at Porter Starke Services, 701 Wall St., Entrance C, Valparaiso:

Adult Support Group • 2nd & 4th Thursday • 7:00p.m. - 8:30pm

For adults who suffer from a mental illness, as well as their family members and friends

Parent/Caregiver Support Group • 1st & 3rd Sunday • 6:00pm - 7:30pm

For parents or caregivers of children with mental illness.

ONE-CALL RESOURCE

Contact us for resources, materials, books, videos, provider referral lists, etc. that can help you make informed choices about your health.

OPEN DOOR SOCIAL CLUB

A safe, comfortable environment in which persistently mentally ill members socialize, participate in activities and attend outings.

HEALING HEARTS *Grief Support Groups*

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Peer-facilitated group support for individuals grieving the death of a friend or loved one.

SURVIVORS OF LOSS THROUGH ADDICTIONS OR SUICIDE (SOLAS)

Facilitated support for individuals who have lost a loved one through addictions or suicide. Peer support serves to minimize isolation created by this devastating loss.

GRIEF SUPPORT & EDUCATION

MHA staff available for grief-related presentations and educational seminars.

THE MENTAL HEALTH ALLIANCE

Our Members • Our Missions

MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF PORTER COUNTY

To promote mental wellness in our community.

Dr. Jennifer Carlos
Don Evans
Dona Henry, Secretary
Jim Henry, Vice Chair
David Lain
Dr. Craig Nordstrom, Chair

Teresa Pavy
John Peyton, Treasurer
Rev. Jodi Sen
Vicki Urbanik
Mary Hodson, *Exec. Director*

PORTER-STARKE SERVICES

Dedicated to enhancing the quality of life within our communities.

Dale Clapp, Treasurer
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Jeff Good, Vice Chair
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President/Chief Executive Officer

PORTER-STARKE SERVICES FOUNDATION

Dedicated to promoting and supporting the mental health and substance abuse treatment needs of our community through comprehensive fundraising efforts.

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Julie Graegin

Heather Henderlong
Christine Maassel, Alumni
Steve Massa, Vice President
Pat Puffer, Secretary
Tom Wyatt
Jennifer Peek, *Foundation Coordinator*



facebook

Calling all
**Porter-Starke Services
Facebook Fans!**

When you're a Facebook fan of Porter-Starke Services you're connected to the latest events, updates and trends in mental health! Simply follow the Facebook link from our webpage, www.porterstarke.org, or search Porter-Starke Services at www.facebook.com.

It works for me!

everyday strategies that promote a healthy mind, body & spirit



“What I do to stay mentally healthy is run. It's kind of body and mind. I prefer to run outdoors whenever possible. I get cranky if I don't run. I'm up most days at 5 a.m. to get my run in and then off to work. It clears my head for the day.”

- Tom Wyatt

Tom Wyatt is Senior Director of Creative Services, Integrated Marketing and Communications at Valparaiso University, and is a member of the Porter-Starke Services Foundation Board of Directors. He resides in Valparaiso with his wife Amanda and son Aidan.

Healthy Minds is published three times a year by the Mental Health Alliance. For more information, or to make a suggestion regarding the newsletter, please call 219/476.4506.

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Mental Health Alliance Newsletter



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