

Stepping Stones of Rockford, Inc. [HTTPS://www.steppingstonesrockford.org](https://www.steppingstonesrockford.org)

Recovery Steps and Stories

Spring 2021: Volume 1 Issue 2



Recovery Steps & Stories

REMEMBER: THIS NEWSLETTER IS FOR YOU, BY YOU!!!

“Recovery steps and stories” seeks articles, photos, original artwork, poetry, short stories, and jokes or just about ANYTHING you would like to share with peers. We’re especially interested in personal stories of recovery to help spread the word that RECOVERY IS FOR EVERYONE!! If you would like to contribute something for future issues, please contact Bonnie Holeton—you can talk to me in person at the Main office (lower level) or call ME by phone—call the Main Office at 815-963-0683, ext. 246.

What is Recovery to You

RECOVERY IS A JOURNEY

Recovering from mental illness includes not only getting better, but achieving a full and satisfying life. Many people affirm that their journey to recovery has not been a straight, steady road. Rather there are ups and downs, new discoveries and setbacks. Over time, it is possible to look back and see, despite the halting progress and discouragements, how far we have really come. Each time we reach such a milestone, we see that we have recovered a piece of our lives and we draw new strength from it. The journey to full recovery takes time, but positive changes can happen all along the way.

Stepping Stones Cares

Stepping Stones of Rockford is who we are. Improving lives, one step—one smile, one successful outing, one moment of kindness—at a time, in the community is what we do.

Here's to reading the paper and drinking coffee without interference from symptoms of mental illness.

Here's to finding and keeping the job of choice.

Here's to decreasing the frequency and intensity of those symptoms.

Here's to feeling acknowledged and accepted, in this community and in life.

Here's to improved lives, one glorious step at a time!

MAY is MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental illness. During May, NAMI joins the national movement to raise awareness about mental health. Each year we fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for policies that support people with mental illness and their families.



Mental Health Fast Facts These numbers are only a few of the reasons why it's important to take part in promoting our awareness events.

Please use these facts and others, including the infographics on our website, [nami.org/MH Stats](https://nami.org/MHStats), to encourage discussions with your community, whether through social media or other forms of outreach.

- 20.6% of U.S. adults (51.5 million people) experienced mental illness in 2019, but only 43.8% of them received treatment. 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year, but less than half get treatment.
- 5.2% of U.S. adults (13.1 million people) experienced serious mental illness in 2019, but only 65.5% of them received treatment. 1 in 20 U.S. adults experiences a serious mental illness each year, but less than two-thirds get treatment.
- 16.5% of U.S. youth aged 6–17 (7.7 million people) experienced a mental health disorder in 2016, but only 50.6% of them received treatment. 1 in 6 U.S. youth experience a mental health condition each year, but only half get treatment.
- 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24.
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10–34 and the 10th leading cause of death overall in the U.S.
- The overall suicide rate in the U.S. has increased by 35% since 1999.
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are 4x more likely to attempt suicide than straight youth.
- Transgender adults are nearly 12x more likely to attempt suicide than the general population.
- The average delay between onset of mental illness symptoms and treatment is 11 years.
- 55% of U.S. counties do not have a single practicing psychiatrist.
- 3.8% of U.S. adults experienced both mental illness and a substance use disorder in 2019 (9.5 million people).
- Mental illness and substance use disorders are involved in 1 out of every 8 emergency department visits by a U.S. adult (estimated 12 million visits).
- 20.5% of people experiencing homelessness in the U.S. have a serious mental health condition.
- 37% of adults incarcerated in the state and federal prison system have a diagnosed mental illness.
- 70.4% of youth in the juvenile justice system have a diagnosed mental illness.
- 41% of Veteran's Health Administration patients have a diagnosed mental illness or substance use disorder.



Food for your mood: How what you eat affects your mental health

The Science Behind Food and Mood

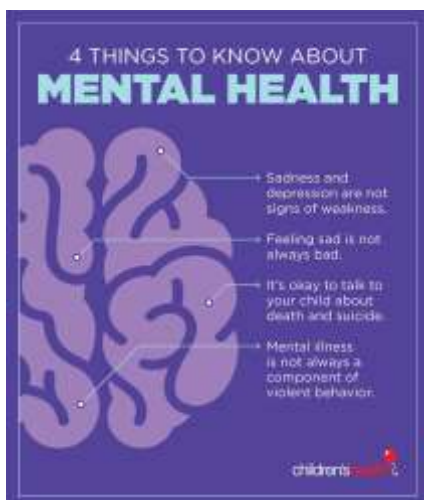
While it's widely known that nutrition plays a key role in a person's physical health, it directly affects emotional well-being, too. The connection between diet and emotions stems from the close relationship between your brain and your gastrointestinal tract, often called the second brain.

Here's how it works: Your GI tract is home to billions of bacteria that influence the production of neurotransmitters, chemical substances that constantly carry messages from the gut to the brain. (Dopamine and serotonin are two common examples). Eating healthy food promotes the growth of "good" bacteria, which in turn positively affects neurotransmitter production. A steady diet of junk food, on the other hand, can cause inflammation that hampers production.

Try incorporating these foods at your next mealtime:

- Whole foods;
- Fiber-rich foods;
- Antioxidants;
- Fatty acids;
- Folate; and
- Magnesium.

Incorporating "good-for-your-mood" foods into your diet may take some extra effort. You can also try making small healthy food swaps, like trading white rice, pasta, and bread for whole-grain versions. It may take days or week before you start to feel the mood-boosting effects of a better diet, depending on how many changes you implement.



May is Asthma & Allergy Awareness



Understanding Asthma

Since 1984, the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) has declared May to be “National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month.” It’s a peak season for people with asthma and allergies, and a perfect time to educate patients, family, friends, co-workers, and others about these diseases. Asthma affects more than 25 million Americans according to the AAFA.

It is a chronic disease that causes your airways to become inflamed, making it hard to breathe. There is no cure for asthma. The best way to manage asthma is to avoid triggers, take medications to prevent symptoms and prepare to treat asthma episodes if they occur.

Common Symptoms of Asthma Include:

- Coughing;
- Wheezing (a whistling, squeaky sound when you breathe);
- Shortness of breath;



- Rapid breathing; and Chest tightness.

People with asthma usually see a doctor that specializes in allergies or the immune system. You and your doctor will come up with a plan to treat your asthma. It often involves a blend of medication and avoiding triggers.

1 The best way to prevent an asthma episode, or attack, is to follow your treatment plan. Learn your triggers and avoid them. Take your allergy and asthma medicines when you should and use your quick-acting medicine as soon as you start to notice symptoms. Many people live normal lives with asthma when properly managed. With a good treatment plan and guidance from your doctor, you can still do much of what you enjoy.

FAST FACT

TAKING TIME FOR YOURSELF

Self-care is proven to reduce stress and anxiety levels while increasing self-compassion.



MLHA

LEARN MORE
mlha.org/may

FAST FACT

RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

Practicing radical acceptance has been shown to reduce feelings of shame, guilt, and anxiety.



MLHA

LEARN MORE
mlha.org/may

From the Desk of the Recovery Support Specialist Bonnie

Recovery in practice means:

Working to *values* which support recovery such as:

Hope
 Diversity
 Choice
 Meaningfulness
 Acceptance
 Inclusion
 Citizenship
 Partnership working
 Mutual respect
 Empowerment
 Person-centered
 Believing in people

May is a time to raise awareness of those living with mental or behavioral health issues and to help reduce the stigma so many experience. Talking to an individual with a behavioral or substance use disorder means seeing them as a person battling an illness. Our words reflect our thinking and make a profound difference in the

outcome of care. Let's choose to inspire and support each other by reducing stigmatizing language. Words *can* transmit stigma. Studies have shown that people with psychiatric and/or substance use disorders often feel judged, outside and inside the health care system. This can lead them to avoid, delay or stop seeking treat-



Join the Client Advisory Committee

We seek client participation in regards to the Client Advisory Committee at Stepping Stones. This is your chance to take an even more active role in your recovery! "I am looking for people who want to take the next step in Recovery by participating in what I am currently calling the Client Advisory Committee. This group will discuss and suggest improvements to treatment throughout the agency. Group members will act as representatives of all Stepping Stones clients. The next advisory committee meeting will be held on May 25th @ 1pm at the main office. If you are interested in becoming an advocate for yourself and peers please contact Bonnie (at the main office) or talk with your supervisor or program manager. For more information contact Bonnie at 815-963-0683 Ext 246 or email bholeton@steppingstonesrockford.org.

Anne O Picture



Cassandra L Picture



Story by Aaron Ayen

Chapter 1: The Universe War!!

In a dark Universe right next to our one, there was a million year war. That the evil side won. This story starts on the last day of that war...The city shields are holding but we have 3 hours before they fail my big conuna, said the head general. My master! Said another officer, the son of the conuna is badly injured sir! We need to put his brain in a robot body or he will die! How much time do we have to launch, We have two hours and 45 minutes my big conuna! Ok, that gives me three minutes to work with said the big conuna. Start the surgery on my son Christime, and at the same time begin loading all the super protection garden materials in the flying inter dimensional base. When Christime brain is installed I will launch my base. The big conuna could say that because his badly injured brain runs that base. His brain and body was severely injured a few years before. So badly in fact the big Conuna's heir brain functions are stored in the main computer. A little bit later as the shields around the last good city in the dark universe failed and last defenders fought to protect the launch point. The two Conuna's got out safely. The interdimensional base parked itself in-between that universe and our one. That base artificially created a self sectioning pocket universe, and equipped with the super protection garden powers. Those to immortal kings waited for the portals to be opened. Only the super protection garden powers could save the entire universe. The big Conuna and Christime would not have to wait for long, and when the stuff hit the fan Rockford and the surrounding cities destiny's would be changed forever. Out of the situation great super hero's would be forged. Rockford would call them the super protection gardens.

Chapter 2. The powers are given.

It is a nice summer day in the Rockford area. The clients of healthy minds. Are enjoying the week off from group. 6 clients in particular by days end would become the super protection gardens. And they are Ronald ion overom iyen Jordan Rogen Amy wamey and two sisters Jamie and Maggie Sammy. All of them were walking together to their dojo. When a base soundly appeared on the rock river. And a small portal to the dark universe formed in the sky above the new base. A dark medium size army started to come through the portal. And started attacking Rockford and the surrounding cities. At first it looked like the hero's would be killed. They were completely surrounded. And out guns. The enemy had superior numbers and firepower. But at the last second. The big conuna and the son of the conuna. Beamed them to their inter dimensional base. And they all had a talk. Welcome humans said both Conuna's at the same time. Where are we asked Ronald ion. You are in my inter dimensional base. I am the big conuna and this my son of the conuna Christime. We beamed all of you here to give you the super protection gardens powers. To save your entire universe. But we must work quickly. In 5 hours that base and portal will be self existing and when that happens your planet will fall. Here are your medical changes watches use them to turn in to the super protection gardens. Put them on and go save your universe. All of them then put the watches and instantly they had the knowledge and powers of the super protection gardens flowing through their bodies, But still a great battle must be fought.



Recovery Steps and Stories from the Clients point of view

Ghosts what are they? In this article I will try to tell what Ghosts are made of. And why they do what they do. And at the end of this article I hope you will not be as afraid of Ghosts as you use to be. Point 1. Ghosts do not have supernatural powers. They move in the world like we do. But they do it differently. Point 2. Ghosts are not dead they are just a different life form then we are. Point 3. Ghosts are not trapped souls they are a natural part of this planet like we are just in a different way. Point 4 some of ghosts are good and some are bad. Now on to the expatiations. So let's cover how they form. When a person body goes through the process of death. That person's life force is released into the surrounding environment. In some times some of that economacket energy from that person gets caught in a some kind of a magnetic abnormality that is naturally part of the earth's magnetic field. That magnetic abnormality works as the ghosts womb. It turns into the ghost when the ghost energy is self existing. So in short ghosts are a part of our planet natural environment. So why are they most of the time invisible? Because they are made of magnetic energy which our eyes naturally cannot see. So we cannot see them unless that ghost wants to be seen. So how does the ghost reveal itself. Well magnetic energy from the earth interacts with all the light on the planet. So they have the natural ability to affect the light energy which we can see. So how do they walk trough walls and move stuff without touching it? Well there magnetic energy allows them to move through a wall like we move through an open door. And ghosts actually have to touch a item to move it. Once the ghost energy comes in contact with the item. The more energy the ghost puts into the item the faster and farther that item goes. It only looks like the ghost doesn't touch a item because we can't see the ghost. Last Lee a ghost is not a trapped soul. When the ghost is forming from that person's unique energy puts an in parcel impend of that person's personality and knowledge is put into the ghost energy itself. It only seems like seems like a lost soul because the ghost has a from that looks like that person we lost. And responds like the person we know. But it is the important talking not the soul. The soul is eternal and passes immediately to the next world on death. But your life force is absorb by the natural environment around you. And sometimes a ghost is made because of that energy. So I hope that I have given you something to think about. And that you are not as afraid of Ghosts as before you red this article.

By Aaron Ayen

David C Picture



Anne O Picture



In Life's Garden

In life's garden we all
need a little help from
time to time, to encour-
age one another not to
give up Hope.

In life's garden we some-
times wander as we try
to cope, that's when we
need to pull out the
weeds and plant new
seeds. We keep going and
growing.

In life's garden just like
those seeds we all need
to keep going and grow-
ing just like the plants,
flowers and tree's. We all
need love, water and air
to breathe. A chance to
thrive and survive like
chimes.

Its in those times we pull
out the weeds and plant
some new seeds.

By TEM



'Prism of rainbows' poem art by Wordpassion

Zazzle

Anne O painting



Pictures from Cassandra

Summer Activity

Softball will be starting on June 2nd. If you have a preference as to a certain day and time please let me know at 815-963-0683 Ext 246. If I do not hear anything softball will be held on Wednesday At 3pm at the Overdene soft-ball field. I will be sending a reminder out to staff and if it looks like rain we will postpone for that day.



How the Dinosaurs died.

I believe that the dinosaurs were completely destroyed by a very big asteroid that hit the earth's surface. The asteroid was probably the size of a large nation. The asteroid hit earth like a jackhammer hitting concrete. The asteroid made impact where the golf of Mexico is today. When the asteroid hit the earth's crust cracks in the ground formed and went in all directions from the impact crater. Since all the land is connected to the ocean floor cracks formed in the ocean to. Those cracks caused 3 things to happen at the same time. Earth-quakes /volcanoes and tsunamis. Now all the volcanoes on land and under the ocean floor and everywhere on the planet went off at the same time. Because they were set off by the earthquakes. The volcanoes under the ocean boiled the sea that is why the fish dinosaurs did not survive. The land dinosaurs died as well. There was rivers of lava everywhere on land burning everything in its path. That is why the land dinosaurs did not survive as well. The volcanoes polluted the air and what was left of the water from the ocean's. And the dust from the asteroid impact went into the sky blocking out the sun. But at the same time tapping in all the heat from the volcanoes and the asteroid, so the entire planet goes through a nuclear summer. At the end of all that the dinosaurs as we know them were all destroyed.

The asteroid changed the earth forever when it hit. Braking the Magma content. The earthquakes also split the Magma content in two big pieces. And a handful of smaller side pieces. Until the asteroid hit the earth all the contents that we know were part of one big content called the magma content. And that is how we got the contents we know today.

Story by Aaron Ayen

If anyone would like to try their hand at gardening, there are a few boxes at River north that are empty. If you are interested please contact Tracy Meinert from River north and she can help you get started. Email Tracy - tem438260@gmail.com

Relaxation meditation, which helps bring calm by using an object of focus such as your breath or a visualization, is a proven tool to help manage and ease stress. Not every meditation technique is meant for relaxation, but try this today! Here's an exercise to try, which uses deep breathing, body scanning, and awareness to calm the body and mind:

- 1. Focus on your breath.** Find a quiet space and get comfortable. Begin by taking five deep breaths — in through the nose and out through the mouth. As you breathe in, think about taking in fresh air; as you breathe out, think about letting go of any stress in the body and mind. On the last exhalation, gently close the eyes.
- 2. Check In.** Pause and take a few moments to settle into your body. Acknowledge your senses, noticing any sounds, smells, tastes; feel the weight of your body on the chair, or wherever you're sitting.
- 3. Body scan.** Scan your body from head to toe, observing any tension or discomfort. Scan a second time, observing which parts of the body feel relaxed. Take about 20 seconds for each scan. Notice any thoughts that arise without attempting to alter them. Note your underlying mood, becoming aware of what's there without judgment.
- 4. Back to the breath.** Return your attention to your breath. Breathe normally, simply observing the rising and falling sensation in your body. Focus on the quality of each breath. Is it deep? Shallow? Long or short? Fast or slow? Now, begin to silently count the breaths: 1 as you inhale, 2 as you exhale, 3 on the next inhalation, and so on, up to 10. Then start again at 1. If thoughts bubble up or your mind starts to wander, don't worry. Just guide your attention back to the breath.
- 5. Just sit.** At the end of your breath work, spend 20 to 30 seconds just sitting, allowing your mind to be free. It doesn't matter whether you're calm and focused or you have a lot of thoughts. Just let your mind simply be.
- 6. Prepare to finish.** Finally, bring your awareness back to anything physical you may be experiencing. For example, your posture or where your feet make contact with the floor. Notice any sounds. Then, slowly open your eyes. Try to recognize how your mind feels and then make an intention to carry those feelings of calm and relaxation into the rest of your day.

<https://www.headspace.com/meditation/how-to-relax>