

## Clearinghouse Connections

Your Quarterly E-Newsletter  
Update From the New Jersey  
Self-Help Clearinghouse



New Jersey

Self-Help Group Clearinghouse

800-367-6274

### How Gratitude Helps... and When it Can Hurt

Throughout this holiday season, you will almost certainly encounter messages of gratitude and thankfulness, as well as some messages encouraging you to reflect on your appreciation for things in your own life. We are inviting you to learn more about how the practice of gratitude can positively impact wellness, and how something called toxic positivity, or toxic gratitude, can actually harm well-being.

Gratitude is defined by Miriam Webster as "the state of being thankful". It is a positive and authentic emotion, and there is significant evidence that practicing gratitude has a large, favorable impact on mental health. When someone engages in the practice of gratitude, whether through journaling about a recent positive experience, sending kind letters to valued friends expressing appreciation, or even listing one thing a day for which they are thankful, they can bring positive experiences and emotions to the forefront of their minds and cultivate feelings of wellness and appreciation. Gratitude does not magically fix a problem or change a circumstance, of course, but it can allow us to see what good remains when times are hard. This can lift someone's mood and increase happiness.

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### Thank You!

The New Jersey Self Help Clearinghouse would like to take the opportunity, during this season of Thanksgiving, to thank you for all your support throughout this year. We wish each of you a healthy holiday season and hope for a peaceful new year ahead.



-Kelly, Lauren, and Megan

So, how could gratitude ever be toxic, if it's so beneficial? True gratitude is genuine, and not forced or imposed on someone. It's a voluntary expression vs a "should" message from someone else (i.e. "you should be happy you had the time with your love one who passed" or "you're lucky to have any job-quit being so ungrateful") Toxic gratitude, however, leaves no room for any other emotions but optimism and joy, and it instead pressures someone into maintaining a positive while invalidating all negative emotions and experiences. When we look at the previous examples, we see that yes, someone is likely appreciative of time and memories with a loved one they lost, and they naturally wish the loved one were still with them. Someone can appreciate having a stable job and still experience stress and burnout. This denying and exclusion of any negative aspects of someone's reality can lead to them experiencing emotional avoidance, shame, and an increase in stress.

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### How Gratitude Helps... and When it Can Hurt

The takeaway here is that gratitude is indeed a powerful tool for our wellness, as it allows us to relive positive events and shift our perception of our circumstances through reframing or changing focus. The difference between this healthy gratitude and toxic gratitude is that toxic gratitude removes the important balance of being thankful and appreciative while still acknowledging experiences like loss and sadness. It instead seeks to invalidate or ignore the less positive emotions stemming from these events or circumstances, and to force "good vibes only". We encourage each reader to practice gratitude in a way that makes room for other emotions to coexist, with authenticity and genuineness, this holiday season.



### Tips for the Chaotic Thanksgiving

If you're gathering with family or friends this Thanksgiving, you may be overwhelmed by travel, feeling over-scheduled, or even some family members' behavior. Here are some strategies to cope with overwhelm, set boundaries with family and friends, and promote relaxation:

-Compile a list of plans, supplies, errands, or whatever happens to be on your to-do list this Thanksgiving. Mapping it all out will ideally reduce your stress around forgetting to do something, while also giving you a plan to cross it all off the list on time. It may help to make a budget, too, since holiday hosting or travel can be expensive and stressful.

-Take time for something of value to you amid all the craziness. This could be a quiet walk with the kids after dinner, sharing your signature side dish with family, or a meditation in the morning to center and prepare. It could really be anything, so long as it speaks to you and your enjoyment of the holiday. It's okay to make it your day, too!

-Set boundaries (and then stick to them) so that you aren't feeling depleted, resentful, or overwhelmed. Maybe you need to stick to three hours at a family gathering, due to other plans or the limits of your social battery, or maybe you're dreading a relative inevitably bringing up differing viewpoints and looking to politely bow out of the conversation. It may help to plan out what you'll say and do if tension occurs. For example, you might let the host of a gathering know you'd love to join them, but only until 4PM, and prepare in advance to handle any pushback.



## Tips for Thanksgiving with Grief and Loss

Being on your own or without certain loved ones can bring on loneliness or exacerbate grief. This is particularly true if you have a recent change in circumstances, like the passing of a family member or friend, or the break-up of a relationship. Here are some ways to cope with loneliness or grief this Thanksgiving:

-Attend a self-help group either virtually or in-person. Okay, it's a predictable suggestion coming from the Self Help Clearinghouse, but it's not a bad idea! If you want to seek out connection but don't know where to turn, a support group could be the answer. Many of the available groups this time of year focus on grief, seasonal depression, or loneliness. If you prefer some lighter company, there are fun groups to share music or a meal, too.

-Reach out to someone, even if by phone or text. If family members are far away and unable to gather, consider a phone call or a virtual Thanksgiving dinner. Additionally, it might work to ask a friend or family member, or a support like an AA/NA sponsor, if they would be able to check in sometime over the long weekend.

-Do something to honor your late loved one's memory, if you're feeling up to it. Play their favorite song, complete a random act of kindness, or look at pictures and share memories with friends and family. In doing so, remind yourself that grief does not come with any instructions or an expiration date, and it's also not wrong if you aren't ready to do this.

Cont. at right

-Put your own spin on the holiday. Maybe the 4th Thursday in November is now the day you eat ramen and watch your favorite action movies, and that's how you cope. Or, if you're now splitting custody of young children, maybe Thanksgiving pancakes before they go to their other parents' home will become a new tradition. The day doesn't have to center around turkey, football, or even family and friends.



## Tips for Any Thanksgiving

-Practice self-care and self-compassion and realize the holiday can be hard for many reasons. You are most likely not alone, and you are allowed to cut yourself some slack. It's also fine if you aren't feeling great about celebrating right now, for whatever reason, such as stress, grief, seasonal depression, or tight finances.

-Let go of expectations for the perfect Thanksgiving. This can create too much pressure on yourself or others, which only adds to stress. Notice that this does not mean letting go of boundaries or minimum standards and tolerating everything, no matter what; it merely means accepting that not every moment of the holidays will be worthy of a Hallmark movie, nor does it need to be.

-Use your WRAP® if you have one and adapt it for the holidays. Take time to reflect on what will support your wellness, and what the warning signs are that you are not doing as well and might be headed for crisis. If possible, involve supporters in this, as many times, the people closest to you may notice changes in mood and behavior even before you do.



## *Holiday's The Nurtured Heart Way*

Topic reflections will include navigating unhealthy relationships and setting clear boundaries with children and family members using the Nurtured Heart Approach over the holiday season.

If you have ever attended a Nurtured Heart Approach Workshop and are now beginning to wonder how the Approach will look during the busy Holiday season?

Join us for an evening of mindfulness painting while listening to how to incorporate the Approach over the Holidays. We will end the evening with a Nurtured Heart Approach Supported Reflection.

*November 7th from 5:30 to 7:30 pm*

*or December 11th from 5:30 to 7:30 pm*

36 Washington Street, Suite 201, Toms River

Facilitated by Christine Grandinetti

**Refreshments provided**

**Please call or email to register**

**[nina.sonatore@oceanfso.org](mailto:nina.sonatore@oceanfso.org) or 732-569-6334**



**NurturedHeart**







## MEETING SCHEDULE



HOLIDAY 2024



260 CASINO DR. FARMINGDALE NJ

**TUE**

7 PM

**SMART RECOVERY**

**WED**

7 PM

**“SHE” GOALS  
WOMENS EMPOWERMENT**

**THU**

7 PM

**REFUGE RECOVERY**

**FRI**

7 PM

**RECOVERY 2.0  
“LITERATURE INSPIRED”**

**SAT**

11 AM

**SMART RECOVERY**

**CANCELLED MEETING DATES: 11/28, 12/24, 12/25, 1/1**



*happy holidays*

[WWW.HEALINGUS.ORG/EVENTS](http://WWW.HEALINGUS.ORG/EVENTS)





# Coping with Holidays

**Samaritan** | GRIEF  
SUPPORT

## NOVEMBER IN-PERSON SESSION

- Monday, November 25 — 1:00 - 2:30 pm

## DECEMBER IN-PERSON SESSION

- Tuesday, December 17 — 1:00 - 2:30 pm

**IN-PERSON SESSIONS HELD AT 3906 CHURCH ROAD, MOUNT LAUREL, NJ**

## NOVEMBER ONLINE SESSION

- Wednesday, November 20 — 6:00 - 7:30 pm

## DECEMBER ONLINE SESSION

- Wednesday, December 11 — 6:00 - 7:30 pm

For most people, holidays are a happy, festive time of year. But, for those facing holidays after a loss of a loved one, the season can be lonely, depressing, and often difficult to handle.

Holidays or not, it is important for you to find a way to take care of yourself. You're invited to join us at this free workshop to learn tips about how to deal with holidays.

**Registration is required at 856.596.8550 or [CFGcounseling@SamaritanNJ.org](mailto:CFGcounseling@SamaritanNJ.org)**

**Samaritan**  
LIFE-ENHANCING CARE

Samaritan offers a number of grief support groups at no charge thanks to the charitable support of our donors... each designed to meet different needs. Learn more at [SamaritanNJ.org](http://SamaritanNJ.org)

*Journey  
To Wellness*  
25 South Shore Drive  
Toms River, NJ 08753



Mental Health  
Association  
in New Jersey, Inc.  
Ocean County

# HARVEST FEAST POTLUCK

## FRIDAY 11/22

Open to All

4:00 PM | Setup Begins

5:00 PM | Dinner Starts

6:00 PM | Cafe MHA & Dessert

You are invited to bring something to eat, drink, & share with others - but it's okay to only bring yourself - we'll be grateful to have the gift of your company.

MHAOC Staff Encouraged To Participate



MHAOC: 732-244-0940  
JTW: 732-914-1548



mhaocean@mhanj.org  
hshawlinski@mhanj.org  
rvereldrsturmin@mhanj.org





# JOIN UNITED BY WELLNESS FOR THANKSGIVING!



## THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY POP UP GROUP

### **SATURDAY NOVEMBER 23RD**

11 AM NOT ANOTHER HOLIDAY -  
HOLIDAY GROUP

## THANKSGIVING WEEK GROUPS

### **MONDAY NOVEMBER 25TH**

8 AM EMPOWER HOUR  
11 AM TOPICS IN MENTAL HEALTH  
12 PM SURVIVING NOT JUST  
THRIVING: A DOMESTIC ABUSE  
SUPPORT GROUP  
2 PM COPING SKILLS  
5 PM MENTAL HEALTH WRITING  
GROUP

6 PM BIPOLAR SUPPORT GROUP  
7 PM EMPOWERED BY GRATITUDE

### **TUESDAY NOVEMBER 26TH**

8 AM ROOT & RISE YOGA  
11 AM YOU HAVE THE FLOOR  
1 PM FUR-EVER FRIENDS: RECOVERY  
AND SUBSTITUTE SUPPORT  
3 PM BETTER TOGETHER  
4 PM TOWNHALL  
4 PM RISING MINDS  
5 PM LIFE AFTER LOSS  
7 PM WOMEN'S WELLNESS  
8 PM RELATIONSHIPS IN RECOVERY  
8 PM KEEPING UP OUR  
COMMITMENTS

### **WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 27TH**

8 AM SHARE YOUR SUNSHINE  
10 AM GRATITUDE COFFEE  
11 AM RECOVERY DHARMA  
12 PM ADDRESSING ANXIETY  
2 PM CAEI ROUND TABLE  
5 PM UNAPOLOGETICALLY ME (BPD)  
6 PM DEPRESSION SUPPORT GROUP  
7 PM NEURO-TRIBE

### **THURSDAY NOVEMBER 28TH**

9:30AM THANKSGIVING LIFE SKILLS  
10 AM DEPRESSION & ANXIETY  
SUPPORT GROUP  
12 PM NOT FEARING FEAR  
12 PM BIG TIME FUN TURKEY DAY  
PARTY  
1 PM HOLIDAY GRATITUDE  
LETTERS & MEDITATION GROUP  
3PM MARA  
5 PM EYES ON THE "PIES"  
THANKSGIVING DAY GAME GROUP  
8 PM LAMBDA RISING (LGBTQIA+)  
**FRIDAY NOVEMBER 29TH**  
10AM COPING WITH CHRONIC  
CONDITIONS  
11 AM DEALING WITH DEPRESSION  
1 PM EXPLORING ENVIRONMENTAL  
WELLNESS  
2 PM LIGHT BULB  
4 PM BREAKING BARRIERS  
7-9 PM MUSIC TO MY EARS



United by  
Wellness

**To join the groups  
Become a member today**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8VXP2K8>



[WWW.MHAAC.INFO/UBW](http://WWW.MHAAC.INFO/UBW)



[UNITEDBYWELLNESS@MHANJ.ORG](mailto:UNITEDBYWELLNESS@MHANJ.ORG)



609-652-3800



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## How Families and Caregivers Can Navigate the Holidays: Support

The holiday season is a joyful time but can be a time of increased stress when caring for a senior or loved one with memory loss, a serious illness, or special needs. Join us to discover strategies and practical ways to navigate the holiday season by prioritizing self-care to make it enjoyable for all. If you are a family member, a caregiver, or a healthcare professional this supportive event is for you!

**To Register for this Event, [Click Here](#)**

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Do you worry about going through the holidays after a divorce or separation? If so, we want to support you. We're offering two special DivorceCare support groups this holiday season, called Surviving The Holidays. Each group is a one-time meeting, during which you will learn how to deal with all the emotions you'll face during the holidays: What to do about traditions, tips for surviving social events, and how to discover hope for your future. We're hosting these one-time groups on November 24th and December 8th, and both groups will meet in-person at Liquid's Union County Mountainside campus.

For Information and Registration, **[Click Here](#)**

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## Parent Holiday Virtual Support Group for Adoptive Parents

This is a free virtual support group meeting for parents of adoptees with the purpose of connecting with other parents to learn how to navigate the joys and challenges of the holiday season. Parents will learn effective strategies for navigating these times as well as learn how to view the holidays from their child's perspectives. Parents will also receive helpful resources to support them during the holidays.

For information and registration, [Click Here](#)

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## Glioblastoma Research Organization Fall 2024 Support Groups

This Fall 2024 the Glioblastoma Research Organization will be hosting 6 virtual support groups for the glioblastoma community. Topics include loss of a parent, planning for the holidays, and surviving the holidays.

For information and registration, [Click Here](#)

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**Rock Recovery**  
BRIDGE TO LIFE

**FINDING  
balance**  
not words - true lives  
LIFE

### **Lasting Freedom: Holiday Recovery Support Group**

Mondays, November 18th - December 23rd  
7:30 - 9:00 PM ET  
Join us on Zoom

Approach the holidays with tools to build healthy relationships and experience freedom from disordered eating and body image issues! \$99 for a six weeks of zoom sessions

For information and registration, [click here](#)

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CALL 877-292-5588  
TTY: 877-294-4356

CALL FOR SUPPORT AND  
INFORMATION  
MONDAY-FRIDAY 8AM TO 10PM  
SATURDAY-SUNDAY 5PM TO 10PM  
HOLIDAYS-3PM TO 10PM

PEER RECOVERY WARMLINE  
(PRW) IS A PEER-RUN SERVICE  
PHYSICIAN IN NEW JERSEY  
TELEPHONE SUPPORT TO  
MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS  
AS THEY WORK TOWARDS THE  
RECOVERY. ALL CALLS ARE  
ANSWERED BY PEERS WHO AR  
TRAINED, SUPPORTIVE PEOP  
WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE WIT  
MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER.



CALL 855-652-3737  
TTY: 877-294-4356

THE NJ CONNECT FOR  
RECOVERY CALL LINE  
FOCUSES ON HELPING  
PEOPLE WHO ARE  
EXPERIENCING DISTRESS  
RELATED TO THE  
SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER  
OF A FAMILY MEMBER OR  
FRIEND.

## New Jersey MentalHealthCares

CALL 1-866-202-  
HELP(4357)  
TTY: 877-294-4356

NJMENTALHEALTHCARES  
IS NEW JERSEY'S  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
INFORMATION AND  
REFERRAL SERVICE. THE  
STAFF OF SPECIALISTS  
USE THEIR EXPERIENCE  
AND UNDERSTANDING OF  
THE BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTH SYSTEM TO  
PROVIDE CALLERS  
INFORMATION AND  
CONNECT THEM TO THE  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
AND SERVICES THEY  
NEED.

Mental Health Association in New Jersey | 673 Morris Ave. Suite 100 | Springfield, NJ 07081 US

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