

Clearinghouse Connections

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



NJ SELF-HELP CLEARINGHOUSE
NJGROUPS.ORG

**NEW YEAR,
YOUR WAY**

As the New Year approaches, there's often a sense that something should feel different. The idea of a fresh start is everywhere—on social media, in conversations, and in the pressure to set resolutions or commit to change. For some, that sense of renewal can feel amazing. For others, it can feel overwhelming, unrealistic, or completely out of reach.

After the holidays, many people find themselves reflecting on the year behind them while trying to imagine what comes next. However, entering a new year isn't always... exciting (perhaps a common experience among many). The expectation to embrace a “**New Year, New Me**” mindset can make it harder to be honest about where we really are, especially when it comes to mental health.

Not everyone feels drawn to making resolutions, and not everyone experiences the start of a new year with hope. It's just another day on the calendar for some. For others, entering a new year involves carrying stress, grief, uncertainty, or exhaustion from the months before. All of these experiences are valid, and understanding them can help us approach this time of year with less pressure.



SHCH Update

Over the past quarter, the New Jersey Self-Help Clearinghouse has remained active in community outreach, group development, and training:

- **Trainings:** The SHCH continued to deliver WRAP 18-hour workshops virtually each month. In December, Catherine Galioto-Galesky and Michelle Collier—both certified WRAP® Facilitators—delivered a WRAP Seminar I in-person at the Ocean administrative office and did AMAZING!
- **SHCH Webinars:** Past webinars include "Navigating Conflict: Strategies for Harmony in Self-Help Support Groups", "Crisis Planning with Compassion: WRAP's Role in Hard Times", "The WRAP Life: Sustaining Wellness Through Life Transitions" (all hosted by Kelly Uhland); "Holiday WRAP" (hosted by Kelly Uhland & Megan Macapagal)
- **Outreach:** Megan Macapagal (*that's me!*) participated in the **Disability Connections Information & Resource Fair** at Middlesex College, in partnership with the Middlesex County Department of Community Services, joined the **Bark for Life** event hosted by the American Cancer Society at Bell Works in Holmdel, and attended the **Caregiver Conference** at the Grand Marquis with the Middlesex County Department of Community Services (*pictured below*)
- **Support Group Requests:** The SHCH continues to answer requests, responding to more than 132 group requests just this quarter!

The Clearinghouse closed out the year with continued momentum in all areas, a strength that we strive to bring into 2026.



Disability Connections
Information & Resource Fair at
Middlesex College





Bark for Life Event
at Bellworks



Caregiver Conference at the
Grand Marquis



Get involved with the Clearinghouse!

The Clearinghouse is always
looking to:

- Connect with new groups
- Expand awareness of existing ones
- Encourage anyone interested in starting a group of their own
- Help you find a support group that fits your needs

If you'd like to connect,
please reach out to us at njgroups@mhanj.org or go to our website
at www.njgroups.org

Looking for support? Connect with us to find a self-help group near you!

800-367-6274

The **NEW JERSEY SELF-HELP CLEARINGHOUSE** provides education, training, support, and technical assistance to a broad range of self-help support groups across all 21 counties in New Jersey.

WHAT WE OFFER

- Technical Aid for New and Established Self-Help Groups
- Trainings and Workshops
- Self-Help Group Referrals
- WRAP Training
- Community Psychiatric Advanced Directives (PAD) Education

CONTACT US

- ✉ njgroups@mhanj.org
- ☎ 732-451-4457 or 800-367-6274
- 📺 NJSelfHelpGroupClearinghouse

Visit Our Website: www.njgroups.org

When Resolutions Don't Fit



New Year's resolutions are often framed as a positive way to grow or improve; for many people, however, trying to come up with resolutions isn't exactly fun. Rigid or all-or-nothing goals can lead to negative thought processes, such as frustration and self-blame.

Multiple mental health organizations have noted that a significant number of people feel pressured to set resolutions, even when they don't feel ready or able to do so (Mental Health First Aid). This pressure doesn't necessarily lead to lasting change; it may even make mental health challenges feel heavier.

Resolutions also tend to overlook an important truth: **mental health doesn't operate on a calendar.**

Healing, growth, and stability are not linear, and they certainly do not reset on January 1st. Choosing not to make resolutions—or deciding to approach them differently—can be healthy and intentional (MHS DBT).

You're allowed to enter the new year without...

- A resolution
- A 1-year, 5-year, or 10-year plan
- Closure
- A positive outlook
- Excitement
- Feeling different



Community Voices

We asked a few members of our community **two simple questions**:

*What are your thoughts on New Year's resolutions?
What feelings tend to come up for you at the start of a new year?*

Their responses reflect the wide range of experiences people carry into January, which serves as a reminder that there's



no single way to start the year off.

Identities have been kept anonymous as requested by each individual, but ages are added to highlight the different perspectives

Answers have been slightly altered for the sake of brevity

Community member #1 - 28

"I think New Years resolutions are a good way to reflect on yourself and set goals that lead to positive lifestyle changes. However, it's important not to be tied to them in the event that you can't meet them months into the new year because your goals and situation can change in a short time. At the start of the year, I personally feel a weight of expectations for both resolutions and general goals. So, I often try not to create goals in the first place. I unintentionally make plenty of goals throughout the year already. I don't feel the need to add more stress or pressure into the mix!"

Community member #2 - 47

"I don't love or hate New Year's resolutions. Lately, I've started to appreciate them by focusing on small, achievable goals. Simple steps that nudge me in the right direction without demanding me to make huge changes really help. Before this, making resolutions was so frustrating! I'd aim high by making goals like buying a new car, losing x amount of weight, and it ultimately made me feel disappointed in myself for not trying hard enough to reach them. Now, I feel curious, a little anxious, and excited. A lot can happen in a year, and I try to stay realistic about life's unpredictability."

Community member #3 - 50

"I think about resolutions more as a way to reflect on the past year rather than plan for the year ahead. I consider the positives and the negatives, but I mostly focus on the mistakes I've made and ways I can improve myself to become a better person. I don't really make typical resolution goals anymore... they feel too complicated and focused on things that, at this point, don't matter as much to me. Now, I just want to keep working on myself, to be a good person not only for me but also for my family. I enter the new year feeling ready to tackle whatever life brings, but also a little indifferent, knowing that time keeps moving and I just have to move with it."

Take a moment to think about your own answers. How do they differ from the responses above?

Alternatives to Resolutions: Gentler Ways to Move Forward

Instead of focusing on resolutions that require some hefty changes, some people find it more helpful to approach the new year with more flexibility.

Mental health experts often encourage smaller, more realistic goals—or shifting focus away from goals altogether—to protect emotional well-being (NAMI).

This might look like:

- Staying connected to your support system
- Noticing what your mind and body need right now
- Valuing steadiness over momentum
- Allowing change to happen gradually, without a fixed timeline

If you choose to set up goals going into the new year, the ones that are more sustainable are the ones that prioritize balance, self-compassion, and support over perfection or productivity (NAMI).



If you take one reminder into the new year...

You don't have to start over to move forward. Continue to move at your own pace.



Entering the New Year with Support and Connection

Breaking news: There is no “right” way to enter a new year.

You're allowed to bring unfinished feelings, unanswered questions, and mixed emotions with you into 2026.

Instead of focusing on changing yourself, or perhaps in addition to forming smaller, manageable goals if you so choose, it can be helpful to focus a little bit on connection—to support, to community, and to spaces where you can show up without expectations. Peer-led self-help groups offer something different from the pressure to improve or reinvent yourself. They are spaces where people come together with shared experiences, listen without judgment, and support one another through whatever they're facing, whether that includes hope, uncertainty, or both.

Rather than asking, “What should I change?” peer support invites connection, reminding us that we don't have to move forward alone.

DON'T MISS THIS: UNITED BY WELLNESS HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Speaking of support groups and connection, here's a quick reminder: United By Wellness, a program of MHANJ that we LOVE to share every chance we get, will be hosting peer support groups from January 1–4. If you're looking for extra support as the holidays come to a close, or if you just need some good company, consider attending these sessions as they are a great way to reflect, share, and be part of a community. Attending these virtual groups is free! Just make sure to register.



United by Wellness
 a virtual wellness center

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

December 2025 - January 2026

Thursday 1/1

8AM Exploring Environmental Wellness
 11AM Goal Planning for the New Year (Pop-Up)
 3PM MARA
 4PM Life Skills
 7PM Healing Intimacy, Connection, and Self-Love

Friday 1/2

11AM Dealing with Depression
 1PM Big Time Fun Party
 2PM Light Bulb
 4PM Breaking Barriers
 7-9:30PM Music To My Ears

Saturday 1/3

9AM Joy, Gratitude, and Laughter
 11AM Putting Off Procrastination
 12PM Problem Solvers
 1PM Mental Health Writing Group
 6PM Lambda Rising (LGBTQIA+)
 7PM Game Night Spectacular

Sunday 1/4

9-11AM Better Home, Better Life
 11AM Overcoming Obstacles
 12PM Vision Board (Pop-Up)
 2PM Emotions
 5PM Growing With DBT
 6PM WINGS
 7PM Meditation
 7PM BIPOC




WWW.MHAAC.INFO/UBW

UNITEDBYWELLNESS@MHANJ.ORG

 609-652-3800

Click Here to Become a Member

As this year comes to a close and a new one begins, we hope you change the saying from "new year, new me" to "new year, your way." Maybe you're the same "you" that you were in the beginning of 2025, and you'll roll into 2026 knowing that it's okay!

May the year ahead bring moments of peace, good health, and honesty towards ourselves, and may you gently remind yourself to move at your own pace. :)

The NJ Self-Help Clearinghouse Team

References

- 1. www.mhs-dbt.com/blog/new-years-resolutions-protect-your-mental-health-with-realistic-expectations/
- 2. <https://www.nami.org/people/mental-health-resolutions-for-the-new-year/>
- 3. <https://mentalhealthfirstaid.org/news/new-year-same-you-and-thats-ok/>



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