

BCPN Community Connection

February 2007

Keeping the community informed about prevention in Bay County

Volume 9, Issue 2

Dear Readers;

In this month's issue of Community Connection we will focus on National Children of Alcoholics Prevention Week and National Eating Disorders Week. The information was obtained from the Children of Alcoholics Foundation and National Eating Disorders Association.

We hope that all of you had a safe and fun holiday and are looking forward to the new year. Please take time to do something special with your loved ones this Valentines Day.

National Children of Alcoholics Week: February 11-17, 2007

Often, the people hurt most by alcohol abuse don't even drink. They are the children of alcoholics. In the United States, about 28.6 million people have parents who abuse alcohol. Nearly 11 million of these people are children who are under age 20. They are at higher risk for problems at school and other problems such as lying, stealing, or fighting. They also have a higher risk of depression and anxiety problems. Children who grow up in homes with parents who abuse alcohol are more likely to become alcoholics themselves.



There is a responsibility we share for the well-being of all children, but especially for those who struggle with alcohol or drug addiction in their families. Envision a world in which these children can reach adults who can help them. Children of alcoholics can learn to cope with and heal from the effects of alcoholism in their families.

Caring adults can do a lot to aid children of alcoholics. Anyone who can show they care and any program that brings youth together in constructive ways can help.

The most important thing, say the experts, is for children of alcoholics to develop healthy relationships with others. Broken promises, harsh words, and the constant threat of abuse make "Don't trust" the rule for many of these youngsters. Teach children "the Seven Cs":



- I didn't **C**ause it.
- I can't **C**ure it.

- I can't **C**ontrol it.
- I can **C**are for myself by **C**ommunicating my feelings,
- Making healthy **C**hoices, and
- By **C**elebrating myself.

Sharing these important messages with children of alcoholics can reverse many of the negative effects of living with alcohol abuse.

Children of alcoholics also may benefit from being involved in a group created just for them like AL-ANON/ALATEEN. There is help for families and friends to recover from the effects of being close to someone who abuses alcohol. Groups such as these offer information and support to children of alcoholics and their families and friends.



Remember The Seven Cs

Some children with moms and dads that drink too much think that it is their fault. Maybe you are one of those children. Well, it's not your fault and you can't control it. But, there are ways that you can deal with it. One important way is to remember the 7 Cs.

13 CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS

1. Adult children of alcoholics guess at what normal behavior is.
2. Adult children of alcoholics have difficulty following a project through from beginning to end.
3. Adult children of alcoholics lie when it would be just as easy to tell the truth.
4. Adult children of alcoholics judge themselves without mercy.
5. Adult children of alcoholics have difficulty having fun.
6. Adult children of alcoholics take themselves very seriously.
7. Adult children of alcoholics have difficulty with intimate relationships.
8. Adult children of alcoholics overreact to changes over which they have no control.



9. Adult children of alcoholics constantly seek approval and affirmation.

10. Adult children of alcoholics usually feel that they are different from other people.

11. Adult children of alcoholics are super responsible or super irresponsible.

12. Adult children of alcoholics are extremely loyal, even in the face of evidence that the loyalty is undeserved.

13. Adult children of alcoholics are impulsive. They tend to lock themselves into a course of action without giving serious consideration to alternative behaviors or possible consequences. This impulsively leads to confusion, self-loathing and loss of control over their environment. In addition, they spend an excessive amount of energy cleaning up the mess.

National Eating Disorders Week February 27-March 5, 2007



The symptoms of eating disorders -- such as restricting food intake, compulsively exercising and dissatisfaction with body weight -- are often considered “normal” and harmless in our culture and many people who engage in these behaviors may not feel that they have a problem. In fact, such behavior is not harmless. These habits can quickly spin out of control and lead to a potentially life-threatening eating disorder such as anorexia, bulimia or binge eating disorder.

The scope and severity of eating disorders are often misunderstood by sufferers, their loved ones, the media and the general public. Anorexia and bulimia affect nearly 10 million women and one million men (primarily teens and young adults) in reported cases in the U.S. It is estimated that another 25 million people suffer from binge eating disorder. Eating disorders are real and can have life-threatening consequences. In fact, anorexia nervosa has the highest premature mortality rate of any mental illness.

Eating disorders are lethal, but they are also treatable. If you are concerned that you or someone you love might be struggling with an eating disorder it is imperative to get professional help. To find out more about getting help, call Bay Arenac Behavioral Health 1-800-327-4693.



10 Things You Can Do to Get Real

1. Create a list of all the things you like about who you are - read it and add to it often.
2. Don't let your weight or shape keep you from participating in activities that you enjoy.

Federal, State and Local dollars, help support the cost of this project.

3. Become aware of what your body helps you do each day. Remember that it is the instrument of your life, not just an ornament.

4. Think about all of the things you could accomplish with the time and energy you currently waste worrying about your appearance. Try one!

5. Don't exercise to lose weight or to fight your body. Do it to make your body healthy and strong and because it makes you feel good.

6. Remind yourself: Life is too short to waste time hating your body!

7. Consciously choose to avoid making comments about other people or yourself on the basis of body size or appearance.

8. Enjoy your favorite meal without feelings of guilt or anxiety over calories and fat grams.

9. Throw out the diet products in your house (e.g. fat-free cheese, diet pills, the scale).

10. Eat when you are hungry. Rest when you are tired. Surround yourself with people that remind you of your inner strength and beauty. Get Real.

Eating disorders are **REAL** illnesses happening to **REAL** people. While eating disorders may begin with preoccupations with food and weight, they are about much more than food. Eating disorders are complex conditions that arise from a combination of long-standing behavioral, emotional, psychological, interpersonal, biological and social factors. Because of the secrecy and shame associated with eating disorders, it is very likely that many more cases are not reported.

There is help available, and there is hope. While eating disorders are serious, potentially life threatening illnesses, there is help available and recovery is possible. It is also important for those affected to remember that they are not alone in their struggle; others have gone before them and are now living healthy, fulfilling lives. With family and friends to support them with the knowledge that this is an illness, not a behavior, they can find their way. NEDA has information and referrals available via the website, www.NationalEatingDisorders.org, or the toll-free Helpline, 800-931-2237



Families in Action

A 9-week series offering education and support to family and friends who are supporting an adult who has a mental illness.



When: Thursday evenings from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Where: Opportunity Center, 1301 N. Madison

Cost: \$10 for the 9-week series. Includes refreshments, training manual, etc. Contact Ellen, BABH, at 895-2300 for more info.