



MERCER COUNTY
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION, INC.

8406 SHARON-MERCER ROAD, MERCER, PA 16138

Please contact us at: 724-662-1550

Or visit our website at:

www.mercercountybhc.org

MERRY CHRISTMAS
and
HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Welcome to our New Hires:

Shelly Tantlinger
Intake/Assessment
CM II



Lori Fowler
Clerk Typist II



Natasha Velazquez
ID Supports
Coordinator



The BHC Bulletin

ISSUE 20
DECEMBER
2016

Note from our CEO:

Mary Ann Daniels



The Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission would like to thank its Board of Directors and the Mercer County Commissioners for their continued commitment to the most fragile citizens and families of our county. Pictured above is Board President Charles Hahn as well as a group photo of our Board of Directors who give their time, energy and talent to the community. We would also like to thank our community partners who make it their business to provide sound, quality care.

Finally, I would like to extend my personal gratitude to the staff of this agency. Their professionalism and their caring attitudes toward helping others is indeed unsurpassed. Above all, they are just a great group of people I am honored to be with every day.

Many wishes for a safe and happy holiday season to all.

BHC Central Intake: 724-662-2230
Crisis: 724-662-9292

Our Mission:

The Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission is a non-profit organization that assists individuals and families experiencing substance abuse, or mental illness, or developmental challenges through the administration, coordination, and delivery of a service system committed to promoting recovery and improving the quality of life of those served.





WHAT'S YOUR GRIEF'S COPING WITH GRIEF DURING THE HOLIDAYS FREE ECOURSE IS OPEN!

VISIT WWW.WHATSYOURGRIEF.COM/SCHOOL TO SIGN UP!

After someone important to you dies, the holidays are never the same again. Traditions, events, parties, songs, and decorations – all the things you once enjoyed have now become triggers for sadness and emotion. You may feel anxiety about how you will manage your grief during the holiday season and you may wonder how grief will impact your family as a whole. The reality is, there *will* be moments that are deeply and profoundly painful during this holiday season. However, you may be able to soften grief's overall impact by anticipating challenges and triggers, proactively identifying ways to cope, and by planning ahead for how you and your family will handle the holidays and holiday tradition.

In this brief self-guided eCourse, participants will be provided with:

- Guidance on managing grief and planning for the holidays
- Suggestions on how to thoughtfully approach tradition
- Thoughts on handling both family and social demands
- Tips for coping with grief during the holidays
- Practical ideas for honoring and remembering loved ones



Managing Holiday Stress

Are your expectations for the holidays realistic? Asking yourself this question is the first step to managing holiday stress. Make a list of what you expect from yourself and your family during the holidays. Hidden within these expectations you might find your potential holiday stressors. Under each item in the list write down what changes you can make to prevent or defuse stress. Here is an example of a holiday stress prevention list:

Holiday Shopping

- Ask people what they want instead of trying to find the perfect gift.
- Shop early, when there is more of a selection.
- Stick to your gift budget.

Planning Family Get-Togethers

- Ask others to bring their favorite dishes.
- Cook and freeze food ahead of time.

Scheduling time with family and friends

- Simplify holiday commitments and traditions.
- Don't over-schedule yourself.
- Allow time for yourself.

Pausing before the holiday spread

- Avoid overeating and overdrinking, especially alcohol.
- Continue to exercise and watch your diet.

Managing your time

- Set priorities and let go of impossible goals.
- Stop to enjoy the fruits of your labor.
- Rest when your body tells you to.

For additional information go to:
<http://my.clevelandclinic.org>

Toy Safety Guidelines

Toys are the treasures of childhood. But if you're not careful, toys can be hazardous, too.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), more than 250,000 toy-related injuries were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms in 2010. Of those, about one third involved kids under 5.

To keep your child safe, follow these guidelines when choosing toys.

Pick age-appropriate toys. Most toys show a "recommended age" sticker, which can be used as a starting point in the selection process. Be realistic about your child's abilities and maturity level when choosing an [age-appropriate toy](#). Toys that have projectiles, for example, are never suitable for a child under age 4 – and even some 6-year-olds aren't mature enough to handle them. Likewise, if your 3-year-old still puts everything into his mouth, wait a little longer to give him toys and games with small parts and pieces.

- **Choose toys that are well-made.** Used toys passed down from older relatives or siblings or bought at yard sales can be worn or frayed, which can sometimes be dangerous. Check all toys – new or used – for buttons, batteries, yarn, ribbons, eyes, beads, and plastic parts that could easily be chewed or snapped off. Make sure a stuffed animal's tail is securely sewn on and the seams of the body are reinforced. Parts on other toys should be securely attached. Make sure there are no sharp edges and the paint is not peeling.

- **Think big.** Until your child turns 3, toy parts should be bigger than his mouth to prevent the possibility of choking. To determine whether a toy poses a choking risk, try fitting it through a toilet paper roll. If a toy or part of a toy can fit inside the cylinder, it's not safe.

- **Make sure your child is physically ready for the toy.** For example, parents of older kids may buy a bike one size too big so as not to have to buy a new bike the next year. This tactic can lead to serious injury if a child doesn't have the physical skills to control the bigger bike.

- **Skip the balloons.** They may be cheerful party decorations and fun to bounce around, but latex balloons are the main cause of toy-related choking fatalities in children. When ingested, uninflated balloons (or pieces of burst balloons) can form a tight seal in a child's airway and make it impossible for him to breathe.



- **Don't pick heavy toys.** Could your child be harmed if it fell on him? If so, pass.

- **Don't pick toys with a string or cord longer than 12 inches.** A cord can too easily wrap around a young child's neck, causing strangulation. Once your child can climb up on his hands and knees, remove crib gyms and hanging mobiles from his crib. Be particularly vigilant about older toys. For example, an older model of a popular play kitchen may have a phone attached with a potentially deadly cord, while the latest model of the same kitchen has the more current and safer cordless phone.

- **Avoid toys with small magnets.** The CPSC calls magnets a hidden home hazard. Small, powerful magnets are often used in toys, and they may fall out of the toy and be swallowed by a child. Two or more swallowed magnets (or a magnet and a metal object) can be attached to each other through intestinal walls, twisting and pinching the intestines and causing holes, blockages, infection, or worse if not discovered and treated promptly. Between 2009 and 2011, the CPSC received reports of 22 accidents involving children who swallowed magnets, including 11 incidents that resulted in surgery. The agency recommends keeping toys with magnets away from kids under the age of 14.

- **Watch out for toxic toys.** Even when you find a toy that seems safe, you'll want to be sure it's not made with chemicals that can harm your child. Phthalates, or "plasticizers," are used to make plastic more flexible and durable, and these chemicals are found in many toys. Cadmium, lead, mercury, and arsenic are other chemicals you can find in everything from dolls and action figures to children's jewelry and stuffed animals.

To learn more, check out HealthyStuff.org's [tips on shopping for children](#). The website rates thousands of toys (and other products) by brand, type, and chemical hazard. Use the search box to learn about a specific toy.



This Holiday Season is filled with reasons to make healthy living at the top of your list!

This November, Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission joined The American Cancer Society's National campaign to "quit tobacco one day at a time," by participating in The Great American Smokeout the week of November 14-18, 2016. Each day the BHC participated in activities that ranged from education about new tobacco products, such as vaping, to supporting those trying to quit. The most important aspect of the Great American Smokeout, is pledging to be tobacco-free. Those who pledged to be tobacco free, received "quit kits", opportunities for Nicotine Replacement Therapies and entered into a "cold turkey" give-a-way. MCBHC supported this campaign by offering a voluntary 100% tobacco free campus. Thirty-Seven Employees participated in Carbon Monoxide testing. Carbon Monoxide levels are higher in person's exposed to cigarette smoke or those who are smoking. Within 12 hours of quitting smoking, a person's carbon monoxide level returns to that of a non-smoker. A great incentive and quick reward when someone is trying to quit.



MCBHC was one of many organizations to participate in the Great American Smokeout. PK Management Company participated by going 100% Smoke-free permanently as of November 1, 2016, creating even longer lasting benefits for their residents. Two properties, Willow Village and Riverview Manor, home to over 369 residents is now 100% Smokefree indoors and 25 feet from building! Way to go PK Management! There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke and smoke drifts through multi-unit buildings and can enter common areas and units occupied by non-smokers.



Northwest Tobacco Control Programming promotes tobacco prevention, protection from secondhand smoke and support for tobacco cessation. In the past year, Mercer and Lawrence County residents have benefited by 9 in-person tobacco cessation groups offered within the community, groups consists of six 1.5-2 hour classes, free materials, and opportunities for Nicotine Replacement Therapies. 101 participants have registered for these in-person tobacco cessation classes and 90.3% of participants who have attended 5 of the 6 classes quit on "quit day." Join the 51 million Americans who have quit tobacco, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for free over the phone counseling and free Nicotine Replacement Therapies.

Local assistance with policy change, cessation, tobacco prevention available: contact MCBHC at 724-662-1550 ext. 147, Katie Gassner, CTTS.

Alcohol Abuse and the Holidays

A new study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found a distinction between drinking too much and being alcohol dependent. The researchers say 9 in 10 Americans who drink too much should not be classified as alcoholics, but this does not mean they are not doing real damage to themselves both physically and socially. In recent years binge drinking has been a growing concern, especially among young adults. Researchers say it is important to distinguish between binge drinking and alcoholism, the latter being a chronic disorder.



Binge drinking is defined as four or more drinks on an occasion for women, five or more drinks on an occasion for men. Consuming eight or more drinks a week for women or 15 or more drinks a week for men also falls within the binge drinking definition. It turns out millions of Americans fall into the category of binge drinkers. The study found that nearly 1 in 3 adults is an excessive drinker, and most of them binge drink, usually on multiple occasions.

The researchers say excessive drinking is responsible for 88,000 deaths in the U.S. each year; 3,700 of those deaths were linked to alcohol dependence. There were also serious health effects from drinking too much in a short time period, such as violence, alcohol poisoning, and car accidents.

Here is some practical advice for the holidays. Think about how much alcohol you will consume before arriving at a party, then stick to your decision. If you find it difficult or uncomfortable to stick to your alcohol consumption plan, that is a red flag of a potentially more serious alcohol issue. If you are the host, offer a wide selection of non-alcohol beverages along with a variety of food to snack on. Never push someone to have a drink. Furthermore, if someone is intoxicated, try to discourage him or her from another drink or trying to drive by offering an alternative. The inconvenience of driving a friend home is better than living with only a memory during the holiday season.

Article excerpted from Psychology Today Magazine



The United States is in the midst of an epidemic of opiate addiction and overdose.

Pennsylvania’s overdose rate is higher than the national average.



Anyone Can Become Addicted.

Anyone.

Stop Prescription Drug Abuse Before It Starts.

The Problem:
Did You Know?

Overdose kills more people in Pennsylvania than car accidents. Seven Pennsylvanians die every day of a drug overdose.

75% of young people who misuse prescription painkillers get them from friends and family, not doctors.

About 3 out of 4 new heroin users report having abused painkillers prior to using heroin.

Although the national rate of overdose from prescription painkillers has flattened out in recent years, the rate of heroin overdose has tripled in the last five years.

Prevention:
Did You Know?

There is strong evidence that involved and supportive parenting can reduce the likelihood that a young person will use drugs.

Research clearly shows that early onset of substance use leads to more problems later in life.

Some people are at higher risk of addiction than others. A family history of addiction, a mental health condition, an impulsive/ risk-taking personality, and/or a history of trauma are considered to be risk factors.

Finding Help:
Did You Know?

Treatment quality varies. There are questions you can ask that help you find good treatment for yourself or a loved one.

Detox and treatment are different. Detox is the medical management of withdrawal symptoms. Treatment addresses the biological, psychological and social aspects of treatment. Detox with no follow-up is not treatment.

There are three main types of medications that have been shown to help people recover from opiate addiction; methadone, buprenorphine (Suboxone is a popular brand name), and injectable naltrexone (Vivitrol is a popular brand name.) All of which must be medically supervised by health care professionals.

Counseling can provide encouragement and motivation to stick to treatment. It can teach coping skills and how to prevent relapse. And, it can help people learn how to make healthy decisions, handle setbacks and stress, and move forward with their lives.



Opiates & Addiction



Heroin and prescription painkillers (with brand names like Vicodin, Percocet, and Oxycontin) are both opiates. They affect the brain and body in very similar ways. Either one can lead to addiction and overdose.

There is evidence that, as prescription painkillers become less freely available, heroin use is increasing. Not everyone who uses prescription painkillers will move on to heroin—but many people will.

In Pennsylvania and around the country, opiate addiction affects men and women of all ages, races, and geographic locations. Anyone can become addicted. Anyone.

There are research-based approaches to preventing and treating opiate use.

What is PAStop.org?

Funded through a generous grant from the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), The Commonwealth Prevention Alliance (CPA) has developed these resources for anyone looking for help. PA Stop is designed to educate Pennsylvanians about the risks of prescription painkiller and heroin use, the relationship between painkiller and heroin use, and what to do when you need help.

We are working to prevent non-medical use of prescription painkillers and, in so doing, to break the connection between heroin and prescription painkillers. Together, we can stop opiate addiction before it starts.

Discard your unused medications at one of these locations:

Grove City Police Dept.
337 E. Pine Street
Grove City, PA 16127

Hermitage Police Dept.
800 N. Hermitage Rd.
Hermitage, PA 16148

Mercer Cty. Sheriff's Off.
205 S. Erie Street
Mercer, PA 16137

West Salem Police Dept.
125 Main Street
Greenville, PA 16125



Additional Questions/Services Contact:
Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission @ (724) 662-

Learn More.
PAStop.org



Commonwealth Prevention Alliance
Stop Opiate Abuse Campaign

Sponsored by the Commonwealth Prevention Alliance through funding made available by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)

BHC BULLETIN Extra



Lori Fowler began working with the Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission (MCBHC) on October 24, 2016 as a Clerk Typist II in our Central Intake Unit. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Clarion University. She previously worked at the North Face Outlets in Grove City. She currently resides in Mercer with her husband Timothy, 3 sons, Cody, Trenton and Trevor as well as their Golden Retriever Bella. In her spare time, Lori enjoys watching her son play soccer for Point Park University in Pittsburgh.



Goodbye and thank you to long-time MCBHC Prevention Supervisor, Debby Fye pictured here with fellow co-worker Kelly Burke. Debby spent many, many years providing prevention services to Mercer County residents. The entire BHC (and most especially her fellow Prevention workers) will miss her and wish her the



HEALTH & WELLNESS

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Tis the season to be joyful and merry. Throughout this time of the year, we are constantly reminded of the magic of Christmas and the joy it is supposed to bring to each one of us. Happy moments are displayed all around us at shopping malls, on television, and all over the internet. In our hustling and bustling lives, these messages are often meant to remind us of the importance of people in our lives and enjoying each other. Unfortunately, many of us experience a very different feeling. Holiday stress is worse than ever due to our overworked, time restrained lives and our materialistic wants. What could happen if we stopped for a moment and gave true meaning to the art of giving and receiving?

Giving to each other does not have to be materialistic. In the month of December start with giving to yourself. Provide yourself ten minutes a day of true relaxation. Give yourself permission to simply do nothing other than find gratitude for what you already have at this very moment. You can express your gratitude for the good things in your life. You can also express gratitude for the negative things; for they are learning experiences and are providing you strength and teaching you wisdom. There is no need to seek out peace or comfort at this moment. Peace will find you when you have an open heart.

Having an open heart will provide you with the ability to give to another. You can give a material gift or give in other ways such as the gift of your time, attention, a heartfelt compliment, a helpful hand etc. Even the gift of forgiveness can be a true blessing for another person. Giving does not have to be financially expensive, yet your gift may be worth more than any amount of money could ever buy.

Last but not least, be open to accepting gifts from others. Remember how it feels to give and appreciate when others take the time to open their hearts and express their gratitude to you. Remove ideals of false modesty and pride and share in the joy of being valued by another person. Accepting this gift with true gratitude generates an energy balance that will nourish our lives.

Wishing each and every one a beautiful holiday season filled with gratitude and peace.

Submitted by: Lisa Medvetz

RECIPE CORNER

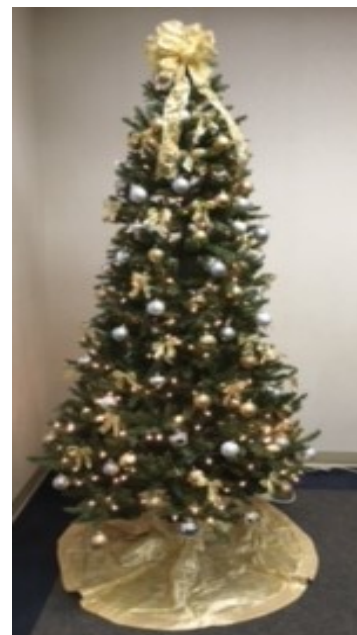
Cranberry Chutney

2 ripe pears chopped
1/2 lb. cranberries
1/4 cup onion chopped
1 med. Bell pepper chopped
3/4 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup white vinegar
1 1/2 tsp. finely ground ginger root
1 clove of garlic minced



Mix together in a sauce pan, bring to a boil
Reduce to a simmer for one hour until thick
Chill in refrigerator
Pour chutney over a block of cream cheese
Serve with crackers

Submitted by: Colleen DeJulia



Just believe that
good things are
on their way.

