

# MHA NEWSLETTER

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP

Sleep. It is a universal act. Everyone needs it. Everyone participates in it. Many of us take it for granted until we do not get enough of it. For those who usually slip off to dreamland quickly and easily, they will never understand the agony of those who experience sleep disturbances. If you have ever spent time, head on pillow, eyes peeled at the minutes on the clock ticking by, mocking your desperation, you will understand what a significant role that sleep, or lack thereof, can play in your mental health.

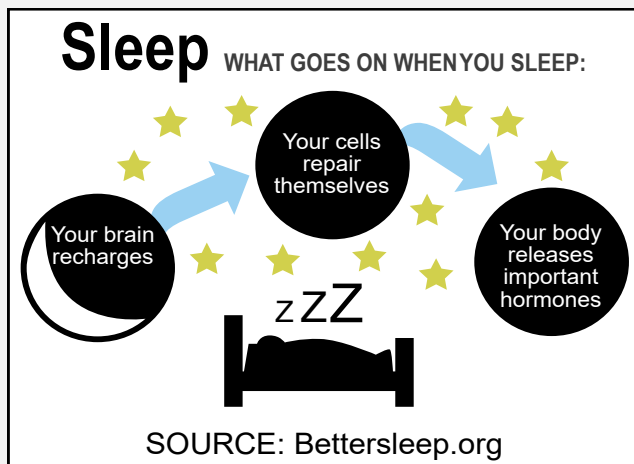
But what is sleep? What function does it serve? We know the generalities – that sleep serves to regenerate us and gives us the ability to keep moving forward. But how? Studies have shown that many of the body's organs, not just the brain, appear to function differently when we are sleeping. One example is that our gut manufactures new cells during sleep. It has long been established that certain changes in the bacteria we all carry in our gut can impact obesity, type 2 Diabetes and chronic sleep

deprivation, but some preliminary studies have also found that the inverse is true. Chronic loss of sleep appears to affect the gut's bacteria levels and can also cause side effects such as insulin becoming less effective at treating Diabetes.

A recent study conducted by University Wisconsin-Madison (UWM) biologists hypothesized that one primary, or possibly the ultimate, function of sleep is simply to forget. The biologists' theory is that "during the day our brain circuits get 'noisy'. When we sleep" our brain pares back, physically shrinking synapses to the extent that, after a full night's rest, the difference in size from when we fall asleep at night to when we wake up could be as great as an 18% total shrinkage of synapses. The biologists assert that the process helps us to "forget in a smart way".

What does this all mean? The biologists who performed the study at UWM with mice believe that the end result of not being able to "prune the synapses" due to lack of quality sleep leads to "fuzzy" memories. Based on the specifics of the study, one hypothesis as to how this discovery could explain human behavior is of particular importance for individuals who have experienced trauma in the past. Though more studies on this topic need to be

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## COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY TEAM UP TO TACKLE EATING DISORDERS AWARENESS

Eating Disorders statistics are alarming. Approximately one in ten people suffer from an eating disorder, and 90% of women are dissatisfied with their body image. For National Eating Disorders Awareness (NEDA) in February, SUNY Cortland offered both free exercise classes and a discussion by author, Jenni Schaefer, who has lived experience with eating disorders; Cortland County Mental Health, SUNY Cortland and TAG (Think Again Group) also partnered to show the documentary "Embrace", featuring Taryn Brumfitt, founder of the Body Image Movement, followed by guest speaker Brianna Mangram from the NEDA organization. Mangram was among the 20% of female college students who struggle with an eating disorder. As an African American woman, Mangram was impacted by the cultural norms around beauty in our county. Mangram asserted that eating disorders are a disease at epidemic levels in today's society. Eating disorders do not discriminate against gender or ethnicity—it is an illness that can affect anyone. But, as with many other illnesses, recovery is possible. The coalition also sponsored a Lunch and Learn by Audry Mattle, who shared her lived experience with an eating disorder.

Events such as these help to reduce stigma and promote help seeking. Most importantly, it communicates to those struggling with an eating disorder, they are not alone.



Miranda O'Brien- intern- Cortland County Mental Health [mobrien@cortland-co.org](mailto:mobrien@cortland-co.org)

For more information on the Body Image Movement and how to watch "Embrace" visit <https://bodyimagemovement.com/embrace/>



### App(s) of the Month: Recovery Record

The Recovery Record app is your smart companion for eating disorder recovery. Recovery Record helps you to stay motivated, remain connected, and achieve your recovery goals. Use for self-help or in conjunction with a treatment team at all stages of recovery and every type of eating disorder; by tracking meals, thoughts and feelings. The app allows you to stay connected anytime and anywhere to check out your progress and celebrate your wins!

iPhone: <http://apple.co/2lxLQox>

Android: <http://bit.ly/2miSeo0>



## PERINATAL MOOD DISORDERS: IT'S MORE THAN JUST POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

“Having a baby is supposed to be the happiest time of your life. But what if it’s not?” Healthcare providers from several counties in the Central and Southern Tier regions grappled with this question while attending a clinical training on Perinatal Mood Disorders on March 2nd. The training, co-sponsored by the Mother and Babies Perinatal Network and Seven Valleys Health Coalition, screened a viewing of the nationally acclaimed documentary, “The Dark Side of the Full Moon”, which reveals the plight of mothers who struggle with finding support, diagnosis and treatment for postpartum depression and other perinatal mood disorders. According to Postpartum Support International, “One in seven women will experience a pregnancy and postpartum mood and anxiety disorder, and one in one thousand will suffer from postpartum psychosis. Considered one of the most common complications of childbirth, up to 20 percent of women are affected by a maternal mental health complication each year. However, it is the one condition during pregnancy and postpartum that is most often under-diagnosed by care providers.” Discussion and education from Perinatal Mood Disorder specialist, Christine Kowaleski, NP and Perinatal Family Support Leader from Crouse Hospital was also included in the training. Crouse offers help for women and their families who are experiencing Perinatal Mood Disorders that range from depression and anxiety to psychosis, through their Perinatal Family Support program. For more information call 315-470-7940. “The Dark Side of the Full Moon” is available for purchase and download through Amazon.com.

Erin Ladoceur, Project Coordinator—Seven Valleys Health Coalition

<http://www.postpartum.net/psi-news-release-jan-22/>

<https://crousehospital.spirithealth.com/>

## PROBLEM WITH GAMBLING?

March is designated as problem gambling awareness month throughout the country. It is a time where we, as a community, can discuss the issues related to problem gambling prevention, treatment, and recovery. According to the New York Council on Problem Gambling, a problem gambler is someone who, despite experiencing negative consequences related to their gambling, continues to gamble. Not everyone who gambles will experience issues related to their gambling but it is important to recognize that many do. Groups at the highest risk for developing problems related to gambling are youth, older adults, college students, and veterans.

Because problem gambling is often not spoken about within our culture it can be very difficult for professionals, family members, and community members to spot when someone is either at risk for problem gambling or has already begun to develop issues related to their gambling. However, there are several warning signs that people can be on the look out for. According to the New York Council on Problem Gambling, some warning signs for adolescents engaging in problem gambling behavior include:

- Unexplained absences from school or classes, or sudden drop in grades
- Exaggerated display of money or other material possessions
- Unusual interest in newspapers, magazines, periodicals, sports scores
- Unaccountable explanation for new items of value in possession
- Change in personality or behavior
- Daily or weekly card games
- Borrowing or stealing money
- Intense interest in gambling conversations

Warning signs for adults can also include many of these behaviors as well as inability to pay bills, carrying numerous loans, and theft-related legal problems.

Problem gambling is not an issue of an individual choosing to do “bad things,” but a brain disorder similar to other addictions such as alcoholism, opiate and other drug addictions. For people dealing with problem gambling, the issue can often feel very hopeless. They may feel they are far too in debt to help or that their problem is just too difficult to solve. But there is hope! Problem gambling can be successfully treated. The first step to treating problem gambling is to begin to have these conversations. We must begin to educate ourselves and each other on the issues related to problem gambling, the warning signs, and that recovery is possible.

For information related to problem gambling, treatment for problem gambling, or how to become more involved please visit [cortlandprevention.org](http://cortlandprevention.org) or [nyproblemgambling.org](http://nyproblemgambling.org).

Ethan Lewis, Prevention Specialist– Cortland Prevention Resources: a division of Family Counseling Services Prevention Specialist  
[elewis@fscortland.org](mailto:elewis@fscortland.org)

**Gambling?** Know ALL of the Facts before YOU decide!

**www.YOUthDecideNY.org**  
Giving teens the power to de-





New York Council on Problem Gambling



We are a volunteer Board of Directors that act to initiate and promote advocacy services, educational presentations, prevention programs, and information and resource referrals.

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To learn more about the Cortland MHA visit:

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## THE SHORT-TERM BENEFITS OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

It's easy to think of eating healthy as a long game. Sure, it's more work now, but it'll pay off years down the road.

But a new study published in PLoS One is suggesting that if you eat your broccoli and have an apple a day, you could see psychological benefits in less than two weeks.

Yes, admittedly that sounds a little like a bad advertisement – eat your veggies and see results within two weeks, or your money back! – so [let's] fill in a few more details.

Researchers from New Zealand decided to investigate the short-term benefits of fruit and vegetable consumption by recruiting 171 young adults, who they then divided into three groups:

- A group who continued their diet as normal
- A group who received vouchers to purchase fruits and vegetables as well as text-message reminders to eat fruits and vegetables
- A group who was given two additional servings of fruits and vegetables a day

The first thing to note is that there ended up being no real differences between the first two groups – the normal diet group and the voucher group. This suggests that encouraging people to eat more fruits and vegetables is no easy task. Apparently, you have to actually physically give them fruits and vegetables every day – even giving them access to free fruits and vegetables and texting them repeatedly doesn't seem to do the trick.

Once people do up their fruit and vegetable consumption, though, a number of psychological benefits might be waiting for them.

After 14 days, the third group (who actually did eat more fruits and vegetables) reported several positive changes in their lives: they scored higher on vitality, on flourishing, and on overall motivation.

Now, the study didn't look at why fruits and vegetables had this effect on people. But for those who are a little impatient, there's no doubt that the result is good news: eating healthy doesn't have to be an exercise in delayed gratification. It may be that upping fruit and vegetable consumption can make you feel more vital, motivated and ready to take on life right away.

Neil Peterson

<https://blog.allpsych.com/the-short-term-benefits-of-fruits-and-vegetables/>  
<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/>

### *The Importance of Sleep continued...*

completed to determine this hypothesis, it appears possible, based on these findings, that lack of sleep can cause people to have difficulty identifying safe vs dangerous situations based on their “fuzzy”, non-pruned memories. Those who suffer from PTSD often experience hyperawareness and react to what may appear to be a harmless situation as though they are in danger. This UWM study about the importance of sleep may be one more explanation as to why that is the case. For the rest of us, it is one more reinforcement of the importance of sleep in keeping our brains healthy.

The average adult needs between seven to nine of hours of sleep every night to feel rested and reap the multitude of benefits that sleep affords. Some basic guidelines for improving your sleep include setting a sleep/wake schedule and sticking to it; avoiding screens at least 1-2 hours before bedtime, including tv; keeping the room in which you sleep relatively cool; sleeping in complete darkness if you are able or wearing a sleep mask if that is not possible; setting your bedtime early enough that you are not yet tired when you start your bedtime rituals; and having bedtime rituals that include relaxation such as reading or meditating. If you continue to have sleep disturbances, be sure to talk with your primary care doctor and/or mental health counselor about possible solutions that will work for you.

Susan Williams, LMSW, Project Manager at Seven Valleys Health Coalition—[susan@sevenvalleyshealth.org](mailto:susan@sevenvalleyshealth.org)

References:

[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/02/science/sleep-memory-brain-forgetting.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/02/science/sleep-memory-brain-forgetting.html?_r=0)

Addressee

Questions, comments, or feed-back on the MHA Newsletter?  
We appreciate your thoughts!

**EMAIL OPTION:**

If you'd like to receive the MHA Newsletter electronically in  
**color** as a PDF, please send your full name and email to:  
**erin@sevenvalleyshealth.org**

## Community Events & Support



### CACTC Key Leader Breakfast

Wednesday, March 15, 2017  
SUNY Cortland, Corey Union Function Room  
8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

An informational presentation featuring results of the 2016  
Cortland County Youth Drug Survey will be offered, includ-  
ing a look at how the data collected is utilized.

PLEASE RSVP to Sara Watrous  
at [swatrous@ccocc.org](mailto:swatrous@ccocc.org) or (607) 299-4910 ext. 1

### Cortland LGBT Men's Group (Monthly)

- Where: Cortland LGBT Resource Center, 73 Main St.
- Contact: (607) 756-8970

### Parents & Change Support Group (Monthly/2nd Monday)

- When: 6:00 to 7:00 PM
- Mar 13      Apr 10      May 8      Jun 12      Sep 11
- Oct 9      Nov 13      Dec 11
- Where: 90 Central Avenue
- Contact: Beckey Trippp ([parentsandchange@yahoo.com](mailto:parentsandchange@yahoo.com))

### Caregivers Support Group (Monthly)

- When: 4th Thursday at 12:30 PM
- Where: County Office Bldg (Dining Rm.)
- Contact: The Area Agency on Aging @ (607) 753-5060



If you have an upcoming community event or article you would like considered for admission to the  
MHA Newsletter, send your submission to **ben@sevenvalleyshealth.org** by the 7th of the month prior.

**Disclaimer:** The information presented here does not constitute professional medical advice. Individuals respond to treatment for  
mental health conditions in different ways, and treatment plans often need adjustment over time. Patients should work closely with  
their doctor and other health professionals in order to achieve optimal control of symptoms.