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## Mental Health During the Holidays

The festive season is a time of joy and spending time with friends and family. It can also be one of the most stressful times of the year. Symptoms for people with anxiety, traumatic brain injury, depression, chronic pain, and post-traumatic stress disorder may get worse due to the stress and emotions the holidays bring. The thoughts of passed loved ones, budgeting time and money, and dealing with family can make anyone question the joy of the holidays. This time of year, we often forget to look after our mental health and wellbeing. Here are some tips for you:

### **Talk about your feelings**

Talking about your feelings can improve your mood and make it easier to deal with the tough times – which many people feel during the holidays.

### **Accept who you are**

Don't feel under pressure to do more than you feel up to this time of year.

### **Care for others**

Caring for others can be a real boost for your mental health – and present-buying isn't the only way to do it.

### **Keep in touch**

Friends and family can make you feel included and cared for. Good relationships are vital to your mental health.

### **Keep active**

It may not feel like the best time to exercise but research shows it's really good for you!

### **Eat Well**

It can be difficult at the holidays but eating well is good for mental health and physical health.

### **Take a break**

The festive season is the perfect time to stop and

reflect.

### **Do something you enjoy**

Try to keep up your hobbies this time of year – you could even make them festive.

### **Drink sensibly, Avoid triggers**

If you drink, know your limits and never drive. If you have a substance use disorder, avoid situations and people that trigger your urge to drink or use drugs

### **ASK FOR HELP**

It's ok to ask for help if you're struggling to cope with the season. Call Sunpath LLC Crisis Line anytime, every day at (704) 300-9913 – even Christmas and New Year's Day.

From the Partners Behavioral Health Focus, December 18, 2018.

**“Don’t let one bump in the road mean the end of it. Get up, brush yourself off and keep moving.”**

### Sunpath Outcomes on Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

The Consumer Satisfaction Survey is helping Sunpath to improve services in all areas. This survey is conducted twice a year. Here it is the outcomes for the first six months of this year. We want to say thank you to all our consumers and their families to participate on this important process:

Intensive in Home Community Support Team	83%
Outpatient Therapy	90%
Substance Abuse	94%
	91%

**Overall 93%**

### Stakeholders Satisfaction Surveys

The Stakeholders Satisfaction Survey is helping Sunpath to improve services in all areas. During the fourth quarter of this year our Stakeholders showed a **100%** of satisfaction.

## A Guide for Making New Year's Resolutions When You Live With a Mental Illness

It’s hard to know what to plan for in a new year when you have a mental illness. I can say that some years have been relatively uneventful while others have taken me on a ride that I had not even vaguely expected. I’m one who loves to make resolutions and challenge myself to reach for goals in a new year, but when I’m pretty sure the year will whip me back and forth like a roller coaster, it’s awfully hard to know what I can accomplish.

This time I’m entering the new year in the midst of a major depressive episode. I know a lot needs to change, but the challenge is knowing what I have control over versus what is outside of my realm. I am going to push myself to do some things differently, but it feels like the hurdles I have to overcome are more so than the average person, so to speak. I’m not just overcoming habits, I’m overcoming an illness that has been affecting me for years. When it comes to making resolutions for yourself this new years, it can be helpful to think of the following points:

1. Break big changes into smaller steps. I know that when I’m depressed I often think that everything is

insurmountable. The smaller and more manageable a task is, the more likely I think I can tackle it. If I think of being healthier as just drinking a glass of water a few times a day to start, it seems like maybe I can do it. So it’s a start.

2. Know your most difficult issues and work around those. If you know that eating healthy is the hardest thing for you, focus on taking walks first. If you know that exercising is hard for you because of your anxiety, focus on meditation first. Starting with something that you feel more comfortable tackling can give you some success, building the confidence to tackle the harder things later.

3. Make your mental health a priority when you’re making resolutions. Ensure that you take care of your mental health as seriously as your physical health. Taking medications regularly, seeing a therapist and keeping doctor’s appointments can all be wonderful resolutions for those who struggle in these areas and want to make a positive change in the new year.

4. Take barriers into consideration. One of the things I tend to do alongside my new year’s resolution list is to list the barriers I feel will get in the way of my success and how I will tackle those barriers.

This will help you be prepared for what you know will come your way as you move forward.

5. Take supports into consideration. This is something that people often forget. Who will help you as you take on these challenges? None of us can succeed in making big changes without at least a little help. Know your supports and if you don’t have any, do your best to see if you can build some through support groups or meet-ups in person or online. Then, once you have them, be sure to use them.

Be kind above all else. No resolution was ever achieved with perfection. I struggle with giving up the second I hit any type of adversity... because I think that since I blew it once, it’s all over. Don’t let one bump in the road mean the end of it. Get up, brush yourself off and keep moving. If you have a mental illness, you’re used to that anyway! So apply it to this as well.

Heading into a new year can be an opportunity, particularly for those of us who struggle with mental health issues. How do we make this year a little better than last year (or a lot better)? Taking it in stride and showing ourselves kindness can make all the difference. Happy New Year!

The Mighty Mindy Morgan,  
The Mighty

Our recent snowstorm reminded us all that winter can get brutally cold and it's just beginning. With nine more weeks of winter, now is an important time to remind your consumers of the importance of saving energy and reducing costs to their home. Energy bills in the winter can become high and can stretch the limits of any budget. Now would be a great time to remind consumers of the following tips to help try to reduce those costs:

- Reduce the thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting while home and turn it down a few degrees before leaving. According to Duke Energy, you will save approximately one percent of your bill for every one degree that you lower your thermostat.
- One of the easiest ways to help your HVAC system, is to regularly change your air filter in your home.
- Operate the ceiling fans in the home in a clockwise direction, which pushes warm air back down in the room.
- Leave the blinds/curtains open during sunny days to help heat the home but close them at night to help to insulate the home.
- Make sure that the home's heating and air conditioning system has been checked and is performing well to maintain efficiency.
- Ensure that the windows in the home are sealed and that cold air isn't entering the home.

Housing is already the largest expense in a household, don't let winter energy costs ruin the monthly budget.

You can find more information to share with your consumers at [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov).

Reference:  
Partners Behavioral Health Management  
Provider Communication Bulletin #88  
December 20, 2018

### Treatment Team Meeting Outcomes

Every 3 months a Treatment Team Meeting is conducted between the staff, the consumer and the consumer support system to evaluate progress and work with the consumer on their necessities.

The Treatment Team Surveys for this period revealed the following percentages of satisfaction for the first and second quarter of this year:

Intensive in Home Community	100%
Support Team	100%
Outpatient Therapy	100%
Substance Abuse	100%

The Overall Satisfaction reported is **100%**.

"Thank you very much for your participation on the surveys"





415 W Main Ave  
Gastonia, NC 28052

P.O. Box 864  
Gastonia, NC 28053

Phone  
(704)478-6093

Fax  
(704) 973-9287

E-mail  
admin@sunpathllc.com

Office Hours  
Monday - Friday  
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

*Pathway to brighter  
futures...*



### Bilingual Services

Si usted o alguien que usted  
conozca necesita servicios  
en Español, por favor  
comuníquese a nuestras  
oficinas para poder  
asistirle.

If you or someone that you  
know need services in  
Spanish, please contact us  
to our offices to assist you.

### About Sunpath, LLC.

Sunpath LLC is a nationally accredited by CARF and CABHA certified behavioral health agency that provides mental health and substance abuse services to individuals and families in Western North Carolina. We provide an efficient and effective array of services that are psycho-educational and supportive in nature. These services are intended to meet the Mental Health, Developmental Disability, and Substance Abuse needs of clients with significant functional deficits or who because of negative environmental, medical or biological factors, are at risk of developing or increasing the magnitude of such functional deficiencies.

Sunpath LLC focused on providing the highest caliber service through professionalism and building a dependable therapeutic rapport with consumer and their families.

**SUNPATH, LLC**  
P.O. BOX 864  
GASTONIA, NC 28053



**CUSTOMER NAME**  
STREET ADDRESS  
ADDRESS 2  
CITY, ST ZIP CODE



### We're on the Web!

See us at:  
[www.sunpathllc.com](http://www.sunpathllc.com)