Atlantic Health

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

A Monthly Newsletter from Atlantic Behavioral Health

November 2026

The Power of Gratitude

A Simple Practice For Better Mental Health

In a world that often feels busy, stressful and unpredictable, it can be easy to focus on what is going wrong rather than what is going well. Daily responsibilities, personal challenges and uncertainty can leave us feeling overwhelmed. Even during difficult times, taking a moment to recognize the positive aspects of our lives can make a meaningful difference. This practice, known as gratitude, can support emotional well-being, strengthen relationships and help us develop a healthier perspective on life.

What Is Gratitude?

Gratitude is the practice of recognizing and appreciating the people, experiences and everyday moments that increase our sense of peace and contentment. It does not require a perfect life or the absence of hardship. Instead, gratitude encourages us to acknowledge that positive experiences and meaningful connections can exist alongside stress, disappointment and loss.

Gratitude might mean appreciating a supportive friend, enjoying a quiet morning, recognizing a personal accomplishment or simply being thankful for a moment of peace. These seemingly small experiences can remind us that even on challenging days, there may be something worth appreciating.

Connection Between Gratitude and Mental Health

A gratitude practice offers several benefits for emotional well-being:

- **Encourages a more balanced perspective.** Stress can make it difficult to see beyond our immediate concerns, causing a “glass half empty” outlook. Appreciating positive experience, however small, can help us see a “bigger picture” without minimizing real challenges.

- **Supports emotional well-being**. Research suggests that gratitude practices may improve aspects of psychological well-being, including mood and life satisfaction.
- **Strengthens relationships.** Expressing appreciation helps others feel valued and recognized. A sincere thank-you or a thoughtful message can strengthen connections and encourage a greater sense of belonging.
- **Builds resilience.** Gratitude can help us recognize the resources, relationships and personal strengths that support us through difficult circumstances.
- **Promotes mindfulness.** Paying attention to positive moments encourages us to slow down and become more aware of what is happening in the present.

Making Gratitude a Part of Everyday Life

Gratitude does not need to involve a major lifestyle change or a significant time commitment. Small, consistent practices can make it easier to notice and appreciate positive experiences.

Keep a gratitude journal. Spend a few minutes each day writing down three things you appreciate. These can include ordinary activities that may get overlooked: A good conversation, a favorite meal or a moment of laughter.
Express appreciation to others. Tell a friend, family member, coworker or caregiver what they mean to you. Specific, genuine expressions of appreciation can strengthen relationships and improve communication.
Pause and notice the present. Take a moment to appreciate something you might otherwise overlook, such as fresh air, a comforting routine or the beauty of nature.
Acknowledge your own efforts. Gratitude can also be directed inward. Give yourself credit for managing school/work/family responsibilities, accomplishing a difficult task or getting through a difficult day.
Reflect before bed. At the end of the day, think about something that happened that day that brought comfort, connection, learning or joy.

Gratitude Does Not Mean Ignoring Difficult Emotions

It is important to remember that gratitude is not about forcing positivity or pretending that everything is fine. People experiencing grief, anxiety, depression, trauma or other challenges should not feel pressured to find a silver lining in every situation.

All emotions deserve acknowledgment. Feeling grateful and feeling sad, angry or anxious can happen at the same time. For some people, identifying anything to appreciate may feel difficult during periods of distress, and that is okay.

The goal is not to replace difficult emotions with positive ones. It is to make room for appreciating a range of experiences, recognizing both the challenges we face and the things that continue to give our lives meaning.

A Small Practice That Has Meaningful Potential

Gratitude is not a cure-all, and its benefits will vary from person to person. However, incorporating it into everyday life can be a simple way to support emotional awareness, nurture relationships and cultivate resilience. Although gratitude is not a treatment for every mental health concern, it can be a helpful addition to other wellness strategies.

This week, consider taking a few moments each day to ask yourself: What is one thing I appreciate today? The answer does not need to be profound. Sometimes, the smallest moments of connection, comfort and kindness are the ones that matter most.

By learning to notice these moments, we can develop a greater appreciation for the good that exists in our lives—even when life itself is far from perfect.

You do not have to feel grateful for everything you experience. Sometimes, simply recognizing one small thing that brings comfort or hope can make a big difference.

Copy this link to your browser to print your very own Gratitude Journal.

https://atlantichealthorg.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/CONCERNTeam/ERT4KXqDwfZGuCSNU83-NkQBUBTNF3Y0xyX2w6yDY_HhIQ?e=md1W5A



If you feel you or someone you know may harm themselves or someone else:

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: 988

The Trevor Lifeline for LGBTQIA+ Youth: 1-866-488-7386

Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988 and Press 1

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE

National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) 24/7 Hotline: 1-800-656-4673

Dial 211: 211 provides callers with information about and referrals to social services for every day needs and in times of crisis

ADDICTION RESOURCES

SAMHSA's National Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish)
Also visit the online treatment locator. Call: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Alcoholics Anonymous - Northern New Jersey AA - Meeting Finder (nnjaa.org)

Narcotics Anonymous - NA Meetings in NJ (narcoticsanonymousnj.org)

NJ Self Help Clearinghouse 800-367-6274 - FIND A GROUP | NJSHGCH (njgroups.org)

Atlantic Behavioral Health
ACCESS Center:
888-247-1400

Atlantic Behavioral Health Crisis Intervention Services
24/7 Hotlines:

Atlantic Health Chilton Medical Center: 973-831-507
Atlantic Health Hackettstown Medical Center: 908-454-5141
Atlantic Health Morristown Medical Center: 973-540-0100
Atlantic Health Overlook Medical Center: 908-522-3586
Atlantic Health Newton Medical Center: 973-383-0973

Website: www.atlantichealth.org

