

MindFull - Jewish Connections Newsletter

"Jewish Connections is a program of Jewish Family & Children's Service with a focus on broadening awareness, sensitizing, and educating the Jewish Community on topics related to at-risk populations dealing with mental illness, addiction, and abuse."

A Note from the Coordinator



I have a friend that has committed herself to only reading non-fiction. This friend feels that there are so many things to learn in this world, why read something that is not true. As much as I need to escape periodically, I love this concept of "living consciously" by focusing on controlling what you put into your mind and body. This concept is utilized a lot in reference to eating habits. Putting thought into your words, there are so many words to choose from, choose them judiciously. Strive to be more articulate. Everyone has stories and struggles, craft your story/struggle to inspire and teach. Being "MindFull" is a very important concept in Judaism. That is why Judaism has laws that dictate the minutia of everyday living. That is why we have a blessing for everything, to show that we recognize what we have, and that these luxuries are not an entitlement.



The intention of this newsletter is to continue conversations that begin at the Jewish Connection programs. The title of this newsletter is "MindFull". Frequently we "fill our mind" with the superficial that is around us, and even negative feelings. One of the title's double meanings refers to the filling of our minds with useful information that helps us relate to each other and educate others. The second meaning encourages us to take pause in our actions and words. Spend this year not being afraid of reality, but being afraid of complacency.

- *Liz Singer*, Program Coordinator

"Our job is not to make up anyone's mind, but to open minds -- to make the agony of decision-making so intense that you can escape only by thinking."

-- Fred W. Friendly

Fill your mind at these upcoming events.

MINDS ON THE EDGE: FACING MENTAL ILLNESS

Igniting a conversation about mental illness and building a consensus for change.

IT'S 5 O'CLOCK SOMEWHERE...

Recognizing the stress relieving habits of young adults. Learning the skills to balance one's life. Too much stress relief is not always a good thing.

Contact Liz (esinger@jfcs-stl.org or (314)812-9366) for more information about these two upcoming events

Liz Singer ♦ MSW ♦ Coordinator of Jewish Connections

10950 Schuetz Road ♦ St. Louis, MO 63146

♦ esinger@jfcs-stl.org ♦ (314) 812-9366 ♦

Questions to ask if you suspect someone is struggling with an addiction.

- ◆ Do you lose time from work due to drinking/drugging?
- ◆ Is drinking/drugging making your home life unhappy?
- ◆ Do you drink/drug because you are shy with other people?
- ◆ Is drinking/drugging affecting your reputation?
- ◆ Have you ever felt remorse after drinking/drugging?
- ◆ Have you gotten into financial trouble as a result of drinking/drugging?
- ◆ Do you turn to people you normally don't associate with when drinking/drugging?
- ◆ Does your drinking/drugging make you careless of your family's welfare?
- ◆ Has your ambition decreased since drinking/drugging?
- ◆ Do you crave a drink/drug at a definite time daily?
- ◆ Do you want to drink/drug the next morning?
- ◆ Does your drinking/drugging cause you to have difficulty sleeping?
- ◆ Has your efficiency decreased since drinking/drugging?
- ◆ Is drinking/drugging jeopardizing your job or business?
- ◆ Do you drink/drug to escape worries or troubles?
- ◆ Do you drink/drug alone?
- ◆ Have you every had a memory loss as a result of drinking/drugging?
- ◆ Has a physician ever treated you for drinking/drugging?
- ◆ Do you drink/drug to build up your self-confidence?
- ◆ Have you ever been to a hospital or institution because of drinking/drugging?

Scoring: If you answered "yes" to:

1 of the questions, you may have an alcoholism/drug addiction.

2 questions, chances are that you have an alcoholism/drug addiction.

3 or more, you definitely have the disease of alcoholism/drug addiction.

(Source:http://www.ncada-stl.org/addiction-information_self-test.html)



Program Update:

On January 26, 2010 a recent Jewish Connections program involved a panel discussion and some clips of contemporary media. Many of the attendees became intimately involved with the intricacies of addiction. Participants came from a variety of perspectives, and learned a lot from the speakers who had a mix of professional and personal experience with the subject.

The program was designed to really evoke feelings through various art forms, and gain insight from people that have been leading the Jewish community's battle against the stigma associated with addiction. Thank you Rabbi James Stone Goodman, Arlene Miller, Jean Sokora, and Marsha Koski for sharing your wisdom with us.



How can you help people living with Mental Illness ?

- ◆ Be there to talk and listen.
 - ◆ It's often hard to tell someone about a mental health problem because of fear of people's reactions. So if someone talks to you, don't brush it off, acknowledge their problem and let them know you're there for them.
 - ◆ Make time to stay in touch. Call, visit or invite your friend round - carry on with whatever you normally do.
 - ◆ Ask the person how you can help - people will want support at different times in different ways.
 - ◆ Keep in mind that having a mental health problem is just one part of the person. People don't want to be defined by their mental health problem.
 - ◆ Think about the words you use. Words like nutter, crazy and psycho can hurt.
- (Source: <http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/get-involved/our-campaign/help-someone-you-know>)

Mental Illness

Facts & Fiction

FICTION: People with a mental illness are often violent.

FACT: Actually, the vast majority of people with mental health conditions are no more violent than anyone else. People with mental illness are much more likely to be the victims of crime.

FICTION: Mental illness is a sign of weakness.

FACT: A mental illness is not caused by personal weakness—nor can it be cured by positive thinking or willpower - proper treatment is needed.

FICTION: Only military personnel who have been in combat can suffer from PTSD.

FACT: While PTSD is prevalent in men and women who have seen combat, experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event can trigger PTSD, including violent personal assaults such as rape or robbery, natural or human-caused disasters, or accidents.

FICTION: People with a mental illness will never get better.

FACT: For some people, a mental illness may be a lifelong condition, like diabetes. But as with diabetes, proper treatment enables many people with a mental illness to lead fulfilling and productive lives.

FICTION: Children don't suffer from mental illness.

FACT: Millions of children are affected by depression, anxiety and other mental illnesses. As a matter of fact, 1 in 10 children suffer from a diagnosable mental illness. Getting treatment is essential.

FICTION: "Mental illness can't affect me!"

FACT: Mental illness can affect anyone. While some illnesses have a genetic risk, mental illness can affect people of all ages, races and income levels, whether or not there is a family history.
(Source: <http://www.bringchange2mind.org/index.php/learn-the-facts/fact-vs-fiction>)

FICTION: Mental health problems are rare.

FACT: Mental health problems affect one in four people in any one year. So, even if you don't have a mental health problem, it's likely your best friend, a family member or work colleague will be affected. Mental health problems affect people of all ages, from all different backgrounds.

(Source: <http://www.jamiuk.org/images/downloads/timeToChange.pdf>)

Please let us know what issues are important to you and the people in your life. Contact Liz Singer, esinger@jfcs-stl.org with program ideas or information that you think the St. Louis Jewish community needs to be aware of.