

March 2024

Newsletter



Mental Wellness

URGE SURFING

The nicer weather is just around the corner and more people will be out and about celebrating St. Patrick's Day, weddings, and other activities. There may be times during these events when we may have to consider whether or not to engage in behaviors that may not be helpful to us. This is an opportunity to make wise-mind decisions.

We all have urges in life. Sometimes these urges are related to addictions, bad habits, or other behaviors we engage in. We have to decide whether to act on the urge or make the decision not to engage in the behavior. When you think of an urge, I want you to compare it to an itch. I can start to scratch the itch, but this may not make it go away or it can make the itch worse. When deciding to avoid acting on the urge (or in this case scratching the itch) this is referred to as urge surfing.

When using urge surfing, first it is important to acknowledge that you are having an urge and second you need to be aware of what may have triggered this urge. The urge will start to rise and become more intense which can happen either suddenly or very gradually. After it rises, the urge will peak.

During this time, it will reach its most intense point and it may feel like the urge will never go away. Eventually, the urge will lose its intensity and will eventually fade away. Once we have identified and acknowledged that we are having an urge, notice your thoughts and feelings without trying to change them.

Remember it is normal during this time to feel some discomfort. Remind yourself that it is okay to have urges and that urges are natural reactions to addictions, habits, or other behaviors we engage in that are not always healthy.

An urge is a feeling, and it is not a MUST. We can have feelings and choose not to act, which is truly what *wise mind* is. Some discomfort is okay and not dangerous, and we do not have to change it. Remember that an urge is temporary and like any other feeling, it will pass on its own. What can we do with the urge? We can use our skills to manage and reduce the power of triggers. It is very helpful to be aware of our triggers and have a skill prepared for each one. Some examples include deep breathing, leaving a situation if it is high risk, and we can also take our mind off the urge by using delay and distraction. Some distraction examples include going on a walk, listening to music, engaging in a hobby, calling a friend, or reading a book. Do something to keep your mind off the urge. Remember that every minute we delay increases the chance the urge will weaken on its own.

When trying to make a wise mind decision, ask yourself these questions:

- What is it that I am trying to accomplish?
- Why do I want to engage in the behavior?
- What are the benefits of the behavior and consider using pros and cons to help with this.
- Is this an emotional decision or a wise mind decision?
- Am I trying to avoid feelings or situations by engaging in this behavior?
- What are the consequences or aftereffects of engaging in the behavior?

Stefanie Montgomery, LPC

Learning to love...you!



Mental Wellness

MORE THAN WHAT MEETS THE EYE

I will not lie; mindfulness is NOT the easiest skill for me personally. I am high energy, an overthinker, and an analyzer. However, mindfulness is one of the core DBT skills we teach here at Rock Creek Wellness. As a therapist, mindfulness is one of those skills I have to creatively practice to make sense of it so I can convey it effectively to others.

My most recent mindful adventure has been making myself sit for 15 minutes during my hike (torture for the first 3 minutes) and use all of my senses to absorb what is around me. A moment with a bunch of trees that eventually turned into a concert of rustling leaves, chirpy birds, a far-off cow, an increased interest in how moss harbors its own little "forest and ecosystem". This is followed by an intense awareness of what calm and relaxed feel like.

I am throwing out a challenge to those who opt to read this: **practice observing for 15 minutes while being outside and record what you experience.**

Is there more than what meets the eye for you when you take those 15 minutes?

What do you notice that you didn't notice before?

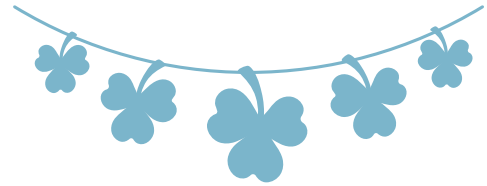
Amy Amon, LPC

Join our private Facebook group! A place to learn, share, and encourage the practice of mindfulness, Yin yoga, and DBT skills!



Welcome to the
**Rock Creek Wellness
Community**

DBT • Mindfulness • Yin Yoga



Learning To Love...
YOU CREW!
A D V E N T U R E

Hiking

WOLF CREEK NARROWS
SATURDAY, MARCH 9TH
9:30 - 10:30 AM

724.269.7222

ROCKCREEKWELLNESS.ORG

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