



# EMPLOYEE

## ASSISTANCE NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2024

PROVIDED BY SAINT ALPHONSUS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



## GRIEF COMES IN MANY FORMS

“On Earth, just a teaspoon of neutron star would weigh six billion tons. Six billion tons equals the collective weight of every animal on earth. Including insects. Times three.

Six billion tons sounds impossible until I consider how it is to swallow grief—just a teaspoon and one might as well have consumed a neutron star. How dense it is, how it carries inside it the memory of collapse. How difficult it is to move then. How impossible to believe that anything could lift that weight.

There are many reasons to treat each other with great tenderness. One is the sheer miracle that we are here together on a planet surrounded by dying stars. One is that we cannot see what anyone has swallowed.” — *Rosemary Wahtola Trummer*

There are many kinds of grief, and more ways to grieve. Here are just a few types of grief you might encounter in this life.

**Rational Loss:** This type of loss is often associated with the death of a loved one, separations, divorces, and the end of any important relationship.

**Role or Identity Loss:** These losses can include life transitions, loss of independence due to health or financial changes. It also includes how we think about ourselves in life, our professions, and titles. This type of loss often goes unrecognized.

**Invisible Loss:** Loss of dreams, goals, and wishes to loss of sense of control are associated with this type of grief. Traumatic loss often fits into this category. Trauma always includes some sense of loss, generally affecting our sense of security, trust, and feeling safe in this world.

**Anticipatory Grief:** Anticipatory grief frequently accompanies a loss that has yet to occur, but we know it is coming. We often experience this with a loved one who has dementia, terminal illness, or an untreated mental illness or substance abuse problem. Fear of the unknowns and what is to come when we lose someone important to us is often a part of anticipatory grieving.

**Ambiguous Grief:** This kind of grief is often associated with the changes in someone as we knew them, but still have that person with us in body. You may experience this type of grief with someone who has a traumatic brain injury, Alzheimer’s, or severe mental illness.

**Disenfranchised Grief:** Often felt by individuals who do not have a “sanctioned” relationship with the person who has died, such as first responders, health care workers, ex-spouses and others who are not directly related to the deceased or severely injured person.

**Collective Grief:** Collective grief is generally felt by a group of people who have mutually experienced a loss, such as in the event of a war, natural disaster, or pandemic.

**Cumulative Grief or Loss:** Loss tends to spiral together. Often when a new loss occurs, feelings surrounding previous losses arise, making the current loss even more challenging.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of the kinds of grief we might face in our lifetime; however, it is important to note there are many ways we can be impacted by grief. And just as there are infinite ways to experience loss, there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Loss is an inevitable part of life, but you do not have to manage it alone. Here at the EAP, we would be honored to walk alongside you as you move through the various losses you may encounter.



**Saint Alphonus**  
A Member of Trinity Health

**EAP MISSION** Saint Alphonus Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a voluntary, confidential counseling service that assists employees and their families with issues that affect their quality of life at home and work.

# TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP HYGIENE:

## A GUIDE TO RESTFUL NIGHTS

Along with nutrition and exercise, sleep is one of the three pillars of human health and well-being. Sleep plays a crucial role in our physical, mental, and emotional health.

Yet, many people struggle with sleep problems, often due to poor sleep hygiene. Sleep hygiene refers to a set of practices and habits that can promote good, restful sleep. In this article, we'll explore some essential tips for improving your sleep hygiene and achieving better, more rejuvenating sleep.

### Create a Relaxing Bedtime Routine

Develop a soothing bedtime routine to signal to your body that it's time to wind down. This can include activities like reading, taking a warm bath, or practicing relaxation techniques like deep breathing or meditation.

### Optimize Your Sleep Environment

Your sleep environment greatly influences the quality of your sleep. Make sure your bedroom is

dark, quiet, and at a comfortable, cool temperature. The ideal bedroom temperature for sleeping is 60 to 68 degrees Fahrenheit. Also consider using blackout curtains, earplugs, or a white noise machine.

### Stick to a Consistent Sleep Schedule

One of the key principles of good sleep hygiene is maintaining a regular sleep schedule. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends. This helps regulate your body's internal clock, making it easier to fall asleep and wake up naturally.

### Schedule Enough Time for Sleep

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that adults get at least seven hours of sleep a night. Set a bedtime that is early enough for you to get at least seven to eight hours of sleep.

### Limit Exposure to Screens Before Bed

The blue light emitted by phones, tablets, and computers can interfere with your sleep by disrupting your body's production of melatonin, a hormone that regulates sleep. Try to avoid viewing any screens at least an hour before bedtime.

### Watch Your Diet and Alcohol Intake

Avoid heavy, large meals close to bedtime. Also, steer clear of alcohol in the hours leading up to sleep. Alcohol can disrupt your sleep patterns and make it harder to fall asleep.

### Limit your Caffeine Intake

Avoid drinking caffeine in the afternoon and evening. It can take up to 10 hours for caffeine to be completely cleared from your bloodstream.

### Get Regular Exercise

Regular physical activity can improve sleep quality but try to finish exercising at least a few hours

before bedtime. Exercising too close to bedtime can have a stimulating effect, making it harder to relax.

### Manage Stress and Anxiety

Stress and anxiety are common causes of sleep problems. Practice relaxation techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, or progressive muscle relaxation to calm your mind before bedtime.

### Limit Daytime Napping

While short naps can be refreshing, long or late-day naps can interfere with your nighttime sleep. If you need to nap, keep it short (20-30 minutes) and early in the day.

### Don't Lie Awake in Bed

If you don't fall asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed and do a quiet activity without a lot of light exposure until you feel sleepy. Lying awake in bed for too long can create an unhealthy mental connection between your sleeping environment and wakefulness.

### Consult a Healthcare Professional

If you've tried these tips and still struggle with sleep, it's a good idea to consult a healthcare professional. They can help identify any underlying sleep disorders or issues and provide tailored solutions. Treatments like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or sleep medications can be helpful if other methods haven't worked.

Improving your sleep hygiene is a valuable step toward better sleep and improving your overall well-being. By following these tips, you can create a sleep-friendly environment and establish healthy bedtime routines, leading to more restful nights and productive, energetic days. Remember, consistently practicing good sleep hygiene can have a profound impact on your health and quality of life.



## PUMPKIN TEA CAKE

Recipe by Ginny Bayuk

### INGREDIENTS

1-2/3 cups all-purpose flour  
 1-1/2 tsp baking powder  
 1/2 tsp baking soda  
 1 tbsp + 2 tsp ground cinnamon  
 2 tsp nutmeg  
 1/4 tsp ground cloves  
 1 cup + 2 tbsp pumpkin puree  
 1 cup vegetable oil  
 1-1/3 cups sugar  
 3/4 tsp salt  
 3 large eggs  
 2 tbsp sugar for topping

### PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 325. Lightly butter the bottom and sides of a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan.
2. Sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves into a mixing bowl and set aside.

3. In another mixing bowl, beat together the pumpkin puree, oil, sugar, and salt on medium speed or by hand until well mixed. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition until incorporated before adding the next egg. Scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula. On low speed, add the flour mixture and beat just until combined. Scrape down the sides of the bowl, then beat on medium speed for 5 to 10 seconds to make a smooth batter. The batter should have consistency of a thick puree.
4. Transfer the batter to the prepared loaf pan and smooth the surface with an offset spatula. Sprinkle evenly with the sugar. Bake until a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean, about 1 hour.
5. Let cool in the pan on a wire rack for about 20 min. and then invert onto the rack, turn right side up, and let cool completely. It will keep, well wrapped, at room temp. for 4 days or in the refrigerator for about 1 week.

PREP  
30 m

BAKE  
about 1 h

COOL  
20 m

# MAKING NEW FRIENDS AS AN ADULT



At every conference, music event, show, festival, open market, or sporting event there is what’s happening on the “stage,” but there is also what’s happening in the hallways and bathrooms, near the hydration stations, check in lines, ticket counters, and near our tables or seats.

People are eager to connect on a personal level. They likely have deep connections at home, but there is something unique about connecting in a new space with new people in real time. You can walk in alone, but you will not be lonely for very long. But there is always the question: How much of myself should I share?

This is a question that comes up in all new adult friendships. Over the last 10 years, this has become a topic that has both fascinated and perplexed many. “How does one make friends without having grown up with each other—without knowing each other’s parents and seeing inside each other’s homes” or more pointedly “How do you make friends with people who know nothing about where you come from?”

The thought of trying to “make new friends” as an adult creates anxiety of varying degrees for many people. If you are feeling some anxiety, raise your hand...ok, now raise it to the height that corresponds with the level or intensity you are experiencing. Those of you who are near panic attack level, would have your hand straight

up in the air. Please know you are not alone, and this topic is highly relatable for many of the people you encounter each day.

Many of us struggle with feeling like we don’t have enough to offer, are asking for too much, are uncomfortable with initiating conversation, feel intimidated or awkward, are navigating imposter syndrome, are wanting to show up authentically but not knowing how, and/or believe others would not be interested in getting to know us.

Please know, you are NOT alone in these feelings. Social emotional connection is a basic human need we all have, although the frequency and intensity may vary from human to human. When we are isolated and not able to establish or maintain social emotional connections in meaningful ways, there is a negative impact on our mental health, sense of self, perceptions of the world, and how we think about life and our place in it.

So... what do we do about it? Well, we don’t have any control over how others will show up to our

attempts to connect but we do have control over ourselves. Consider the following:

- When meeting someone, ask a question that is not simply “what do you do?”
- Consider asking/stating, “I am curious what has made you smile or pause and think differently today” or “What is your favorite thing about...” or “Are you where you expected to be today” or “if you had the opportunity to go back and do one thing differently what would it be” or something along these lines, depending on space and circumstance.
- Then practice active listening, instead of listening to respond or sharing your own experiences.
- With boundaries in mind, ask a few follow up questions.
- Do practice reciprocity, at the appropriate level. If after a few follow up questions, you find you have something in common, please share. Be mindful not to “trauma dump” or “overshare” on your first interaction. Like any relationship, healthy friendships take time to be cultivated.

## EAP COUNSELORS

### SAINT ALPHONSUS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



**Jared Belsher – Supervisor  
MA, LCPC, NCC**

Jared is a licensed clinical professional counselor (LCPC) and national certified counselor (NCC) who has worked in outpatient mental health clinics and in private

practice since 2007. He received a bachelor’s Degree in Political Science and a master’s Degree in Community Counseling from Northern Arizona University. His approach to counseling is strength-based, which means that rather than dwelling on

things that are wrong, he focuses on the strength individuals have, and how they can use those strengths to overcome their obstacles. He uses a person-centered approach and additional counseling techniques such as cognitive-behavioral

therapy (CBT) to help clients discover healthier ways to cope and think about a problem.

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# SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER— MORE THAN THE WINTER BLUES

If your spirits start to fall with the leaves every year, and you don't feel up again until the tulips are, this could signal a type of depression called seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

SAD comes and goes with the seasons. Winter depression, the most common type of SAD, begins in late fall and goes away by summer. Researchers aren't sure what causes winter depression, but it may involve how you react to shorter days. The sleep-related hormone melatonin has been linked to SAD. Melatonin is thought to cause symptoms of depression, and your body makes more melatonin in the dark, according to the National Mental Health Association.

This association also reports up to 25 percent of Americans have mild winter depression, and about 5 percent have more severe symptoms. You are more likely to develop it if you are a young woman or live in a northern region.

**If you struggle with SAD, you may:**

- Crave sugary or starchy foods and gain weight
- Lack energy and sleep more
- Have a heavy feeling in your arms and legs
- Have trouble concentrating or feel irritable or tense
- Withdraw socially
- Lose interest in sex

A rare summer version of SAD begins in late spring and goes away by winter. If you have summer SAD, you may have trouble sleeping or

eating, lose weight, and feel agitated or anxious. Both types of SAD may cause symptoms of depression including feeling guilty and hopeless.

If your winter symptoms are mild, try spending more time outdoors during the day or arranging your home or office to get more sunlight. Regular exercise, especially outside, may help. If your symptoms affect your lifestyle or work, see a health professional who may suggest several treatments including light therapy. Other options may include antidepressants and psychotherapy.

No matter which type of SAD you have, you don't have to let the seasons make you feel poorly. Talk to your doctor about the right treatment for you.

EAP COUNSELORS

SAINT ALPHONSUS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



**Jenny Lee Doty, MSW, LCSW**

Jenny Lee has been practicing as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker for nearly a decade. She has worked in the mental health field for more than 20 years in a variety of treatment settings including but not limited to schools, day treatment centers, hospitals, and local community agencies. Jenny Lee has provided treatment to children, pre-teens and teens, and adults in individual, group, and family settings.

Jenny Lee is skilled in working with complex family units, emotional and behavioral issues, trauma, depression, mood disorders, anxiety, co-occurring diagnosis, psychotic disorders, self-harm, suicidal ideation, gangs, and those involved with foster care and Child Protective Services. Jenny Lee practices from a strength-based approach to treatment, while using a combination of interventions tailored to meet each individual's needs.



**Melissa Young, MSW, LCSW**

Melissa has been a Mental Health Professional for 30+ years having the opportunity to serve in a variety of mental health settings, with diverse client populations, working in various roles. As a Clinical Social Worker she has had the opportunity to work with survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence; as an Outpatient Psychotherapist within a Community Mental Health Center; a Peace Corps Volunteer in Asuncion Paraguay; Hospice Social Worker; and currently working as a Counselor at the Saint Alphonsus Employee Assistance Program and Clinical Supervisor with Tidwell Social Work Services and Consulting Inc. She employs an eclectic approach to her work with clients, believing that a trusting and supportive relationship is key to any therapeutic success. In addition to her professional life, she is a mother of three teenage boys, wife of 18 years, and a proud dog and horse owner.

**Saint Alphonsus Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

**Regular Appointment Hours:**  
9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Monday-Friday  
(special appointment hours by request)

**Phone: (208) 367-3300**

**Locations:**  
6140 W. Emerald St., Boise, ID 83704  
3025 W. Cherry Ln, Ste 205  
Meridian, ID 83642

**Counselors:**  
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