December 2019

At the Heart of Wellness

Message from Maria

Maria Coutant Skinner, Executive Director

Dear friends;

Ah - the holidays are upon us! I’ve long felt that this is the time of year that amplifies everything...the kind gesture of a person letting you go in front of them in traffic feels extra wonderful...the harried pace of our to-do lists carries enormous pressure...the cultural expectations for happy scenes of families around fireplaces are ubiquitous...and the grief so many of us feel as we miss our loved ones is painfully sharp. The temptation to put a little cushion between us and that intensity is human. Often that can come in the form of alcohol and other drugs. This can be quite tricky when the offers for a drink or other form of unhealthy options are all around us – in fact, they’re normalized in our culture.

I talk with a lot of folks who are in the ambivalent about their drinking. They think maybe they should cut back...stop for a time or otherwise put some controls on their consumption. They’re aware that they don’t feel great on many mornings, may have made some iffy decisions and know they’d probably be better off without it. These are not people who meet the stereotypical definition of a person with the disease of alcoholism. They’re holding down jobs, taking care of their families and are paying their bills, even enjoying many aspects of their lives. But they get to that point of wondering – am I okay?

What’s usually just beneath that are all of life’s questions about our ‘okay-ness’. Am I enough? Am
I lovable? Can I forgive myself? Love myself? And then – yikes! That’s a LOT! Please pass the wine/beer/whatever will help me cope with that discomfort!
Here’s my humble opinion on that big stuff. You are enough. Let’s start there. My wish for each of you this holiday season is for you to feel the deep and abiding peace that’s found in connecting with others you can be vulnerable enough to feel all the feels of this holiday and each day. We’re in this together…through the good, the bad and, yes, even the ugly.

As Ram Dass said;

“We’re all just walking each other home”

I wish you a holiday season filled with peace and light….and the vulnerability and courage to feel all the feels.

All my very best to you,
Maria

Addiction Affects Everyone, so Does Good Will

Time to Celebrate

Many of us look forward to celebrations during the holidays, yet it is also a time when some people, even those who rarely drink, are more likely to consume alcohol than at other times of the year. Whether you’re drinking to celebrate or to calm your nerves due to the stress of the holidays. So how do you celebrate the holidays without drinking? Here a couple of tips

Always have one non-alcoholic drink in your hand.
It lessens the chance that someone will come up to you and assume you “need a drink” and it makes things easier to have something non-alcoholic to sip on while you’re watching other people drink. Whether you’re in early recovery, the holiday season can be a tough time. Make sure you remember why you

Have excuses.
Although rude, people will probably ask you why you’re not drinking. Don’t get nervous about answering the question. If you are comfortable telling them that you are in recovery, do that. If not a simple and easy excuse is to say “I’m driving tonight”.

Remember why you’re doing it.
If you’re in early recovery, the holiday season can be a tough time. Make sure you remember why you
chose recovery. Make a list of the reasons you decided not to drink and revisit it whenever you need a reminder.

**Have a sober friend.**
More people than you realize choose not to drink even though it often feels like every person around you has a drink in their hands. Find your person, your sober person, before the holidays. Although you likely will not be able to take that person to every holiday event with you, it is surprisingly helpful to be able to pull out your cell phone and text or call your “sober person” right when you need them. Not drinking can feel lonely, but with your “person” you’re never alone and there is strength in numbers.

If you think you may need help, saying no to alcohol or if you think you or a loved one may be struggling with alcohol addiction give us a call at 860-496-2100 and speak to a counselor who can help you find the right treatment that fits your needs and your schedule or visit our website at www.mccallcenterct.org