

# BANA BE YOURSELF

A publication of the Bulimia Anorexia Nervosa Association

SUMMER 2023

## Featured Columnists:

Rich O'Brien  
Living Positive Pathways  
Firsthand Impact Of Organizational  
Support On Individuals  
Affected by HIV/Aids

Martha Munroe  
Embodied  
Self-Compassion

A Mental  
Health and  
Wellness  
Magazine

## Also In This Issue:

- Let's Talk About It – Mental Health
- About ARFID...
- The Road That Led To Somewhere
  - Why We Need To Learn From Cultural History
- Silent Epidemic – Shedding Light on Elder Abuse
- Nurturing Self-Esteem/Positive Body Image In Children
- Staying Informed on Hep-C
- 10 Tips for Intuitive Eating
- ...and more

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## Please Note:

All contributions and editorials are  
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## Publishers Note:

Hello Readers!

I am honored and delighted to welcome you to BANA BE YOURSELF- A Mental Health and Wellness magazine. Whether you're reading through these pages with your cup of morning coffee (tea), learning new tips about wellness, or just enjoying the beautiful positive messages, we are here for you.



A big thank you to all of the people who have contributed to this magazine, especially to our editing team and all of the contributing writers and photographers.

With so much uncertainty when it comes to mental health and wellness in the world today, our goal is to provide an accessible forum for education, discussion and acceptance for both the general public and professionals alike. We hope, that in some small way, this publication can help.

Thank you in advance for the support, we are looking forward to bringing you many more issues in the months to come.

As BANA enters our 40th year of service provision, we ask that you take forth the message to be kind to yourself, generous with others, and stay healthy.

Sincerely, Luciana Rosu-Sieza, Executive Director

## DISCLAIMER\*

Content within this publication may include details from lived experience that can be triggering to some. Reader discretion is advised. Should you find yourself feeling triggered, please seek support.

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# Let's Talk About It – Mental Health

By: Cassandra Jocco – Solutions Counselling

Mental health is an essential aspect of our overall well-being that deserves open and honest conversations. However, society has often stigmatized mental health, leading to silence, misunderstanding, and neglect. It's time to break this barrier and foster a culture of understanding and empathy.

## **Let's talk about it, openly and compassionately.**

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition and understanding of the importance of mental health. The stigma and misconceptions surrounding mental health are slowly being dismantled, and conversations about mental well-being are becoming more prevalent.

*This shift in societal attitudes is crucial in promoting awareness, understanding and support for those struggling with mental health challenges.*

When we talk about mental health, we also contribute to prevention efforts. Open conversations raise awareness about the risk factors, warning signs, and strategies for maintaining good mental well-being. Discussing mental health openly encourages help-seeking behaviour.

Many people suffering from mental health issues may hesitate to seek support due to fear, shame, and embarrassment. By encouraging conversations and promoting open dialogue within a safe space, we can not only break down barriers to treatment, but we can empower individuals to reach out for assistance whether from loved ones, health care professionals such as therapists, support organizations or treatment options. All of it making mental health services more accessible to all.

Early intervention and access to appropriate resources greatly increases the chances of recovery and improved quality of life.

Talking about mental health also fosters understanding and empathy. When we share our experiences and listen to others, we gain insight into the struggles and challenges faced by individuals with mental health conditions.

It humanizes the issue and helps dispel myths and misconceptions. The understanding allows us to support and stand in solidarity with those battling mental health problems, offering compassion, and encouragement rather than judgement.

*Open conversations about mental health play a vital role in prevention and early intervention.*

Listening without judgement and offering empathy can make a significant difference in someone's life. When someone opens up about their mental health, it's crucial to be supportive, understanding, and friendly to validate their experience.

This helps create an environment where people feel heard and encourages others to speak up.

In schools, integrating mental health education into the curriculum can help young people develop resilience, emotional intelligence, and coping mechanisms.

Workplaces also play a significant role in promoting mental health discussions with many companies recognizing the importance of employee's well-being by implementing various initiatives.

Within families, open and non-judgmental conversations about mental health can strengthen relationships and build trust.

*By openly discussing emotions, anxieties, and mental health challenges, schools, workplaces, and family homes can create safe spaces for their students, colleagues, and family members to share their struggles without fear or rejection.*

Mental health affects us all, directly, or indirectly and deserves our attention and understanding. We must acknowledge that mental health is an integral part of overall well-being, just like physical health.

While progress has been made, there is still work to be done, and by sharing personal experience, challenges, and triumphs, we can humanize mental health issues. It enables us to recognize that mental health conditions affect people from all walks of life.

In conclusion, by engaging in open, honest, and compassionate conversations about mental health we can break the stigma, as well as create a more compassionate and supportive society where individuals feel empowered to seek help and promote awareness.

So, let's create a world where mental health is prioritized and where no one suffers in silence. Let's keep talking about it and make mental health a priority for all – our mental health depends on it.



Solutions Counselling is a mental health clinic located in Windsor, Ontario. We offer friendly and compassionate counselling in a comfortable environment that includes in person, virtual or phone sessions. We are open 7 days a week and serve individuals (children, teens, adults, elderly), couples and families..

Our therapists are experienced in helping clients who are struggling with issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, grief, ADHD, life transitions, ASD, among others. To better serve the needs of the community, we offer a sliding fee scale based on client's needs. If you would like more information or to book an appointment with one of our therapists, please call us at 226-280-3016. We look forward to meeting you!





This year marks the Bulimia Anorexia Nervosa Association's (BANA) 40th year of service.

In 1983, a group of concerned parents and community members founded an organization which would positively impact the lives of thousands of people in our community for years to come.

This milestone anniversary presents a unique occasion for BANA to celebrate its history of extraordinary service delivery, growth, compassion and dedication in our region.

On June 16th, 2023, we hosted our **Annual General Meeting and 40th Anniversary Celebration** at Windsor's Historic Walker Brewery, in which we seized the opportunity to share the highlights of the year with those in our community.

We are truly fortunate to be guided by our mission, vision and values, as each working day provides us with opportunities to positively contribute to our community.

*As I look back at the past year, there is one word that comes to mind- recovery.*

We have learned that human interactions are extremely important; technology is invaluable and that balance, in every respect of our lives, is vital.

At BANA, our success lies in our team. We are fortunate to have a strong and vibrant Board of Directors led by our President, Kelly Gosselin, that provides outstanding leadership.

Each board member brings their unique skills and backgrounds to the table to lead this organization into the future.

Our staff have worked tirelessly to raise the voice and profile of our organization in our community and beyond over this past year. Personally, I am truly humbled to lead the BANA team, which is comprised of incredibly talented and dedicated individuals.

I would like to thank our staff for coming to work each day with a passion and commitment that most workplaces do not have the privilege of experiencing. Finally, our team of volunteers are a fundamental part of the organization that helps move our mission forward.

*Together, truly anything is possible.*





*Our organization is one of the many essential touch points in our community. The support of our partners has allowed us to expand our outreach beyond what would have been possible alone.*

Part of our outreach this year included the BANA Be Yourself Mental Health & Wellness Magazine, which you are reading now. This publication continues to reach individuals globally and serves as a vehicle to educate, support, and create awareness for our community.

We incorporate a "lived experience" voice in every quarterly issue. Reading their stories has been profound and meaningful beyond words.

BANA, in partnership with Rotary (1918), hosted the Children's Fest event with record-breaking attendance and revenue after a 2 year hiatus (due to Covid-19). An activity book was created in both French and English, and was distributed to over 33,000 students in all four local school boards free of charge.

In February, as part of our annual Eating Disorder Awareness Week (EDAW), BANA once again returned to in-person booths in the community. The Health Promotion team developed a fantastic and interactive campaign that ran both in-person and virtually. The Health Promotion team also returned to in-person activities delivering close to 400 presentations to 14,000 participants this year.

Eating Disorders Ontario-Prevention identified BANA as the Host Organization for the Ontario West Region. In addition, BANA hired the first Prevention Lead in the province and will continue to add Prevention Specialists in this upcoming fiscal year.

Our clinical team has continued to innovate and expand over the past year. They attended several training and education sessions to enhance their skills and continue to provide the best evidence-based treatment. BANA's intakes and clinical statistics reached a record high this year, and credit is given to the staff for working tirelessly through this influx.

After much planning and anticipation, we were thrilled to launch the newly funded Windsor-Essex Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) for Eating Disorders on May 2, 2022 ([www.bana.ca/weiop](http://www.bana.ca/weiop)) in partnership with Windsor-Essex Community Health Centre- Teen Health and Windsor Regional Hospital.

We are delighted to welcome new members to our BANA team while creating new formal partnerships with local partners to continue to meet the needs of our community. Most recently, we acquired additional space at BANA to be able to provide in person groups, meal support and a meeting area for the IOP staff.

We are proud of the achievements highlighted in this story and look forward to continuing our work with our board, staff, students, volunteers, stakeholders, funders, donors, and community partners.

*Together, we will eliminate the stigma around Eating Disorders (and Mental Health) through open dialogue and increased awareness, nurturing current partnerships and exploring future collaborations with community agencies to meet the diverse needs of our region. In an increasingly complex society, building connections and collaborative relationships are crucial in addressing Eating Disorders.*

No single answer or approach can bring about the necessary change. But by working together, we can develop client-centered programs that involve those with lived experience to plan and shape the future. In the upcoming year, we will maintain this momentum and embrace new approaches and techniques, aligning with our mission and vision to deliver comprehensive care.

As you read this, we hope it reminds you of our recent successes and inspires you, envisioning the mission of BANA moving forward.

**Luciana Rosu-Sieza**

BANA Executive Director



THE BULIMIA ANOREXIA NERVOSA ASSOCIATION IS CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF EATING DISORDER PREVENTION & TREATMENT IN WINDSOR-ESSEX

We'd like you to join us in congratulating the recipients of our 2022-23 BANA Community Awards:



**Nour Akil**  
Outstanding Volunteer



**Windsor Regional Hospital**  
Outstanding Non-Profit



**Ryan Essery**  
Outstanding Individual



**Auntie Aldoo's Kitchen**  
Outstanding Business



**Jean Laforge**  
Moriarty Leadership Award

[www.bana.ca](http://www.bana.ca)

# About ARFID

## Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder

ARFID - Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder - has been diagnosable since 2013 when it first appeared in the DSM-5; however, it remains under-researched and under-served, and many still do not recognize the diagnosis exists.

This leaves these individuals untreated and suffering; accessing treatment that is unhelpful and not appropriate for their needs; or continually undergoing testing for physical complaints that do not have a medical cause and may be better explained by ARFID.

Recently, the BANA clinical team has observed an increase in ARFID-related referrals and concerns, and wanted to share the following infographics to assist in a better understanding of ARFID criteria.

### DSM-5 Criteria for Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID)

An eating or feeding disturbance, manifested by persistent failure to meet appropriate nutritional/energy needs, associated with one (or more) of the following:

- ① Significant weight loss (or failure to achieve expected weight gain/faltering growth in children)
- ② Significant nutritional deficiency
- ③ Dependence on enteral feeding (intake via the G.I. tract, or oral nutritional supplements)
- ④ Marked interference with psychosocial functioning

The disturbance is not better explained by lack of available food, or by an associated culturally sanctioned practice

The eating disturbance does not occur during the course of Anorexia or Bulimia Nervosa, and there is no evidence of a disturbance in the way in which one's body weight/shape is experienced

The eating disturbance is not attributable to a medical condition, or better explained by another mental disorder

### Types of ARFID

#### Sensory Sensitivity

Avoid certain types of food due to sensory features. May be sensitive to smells, textures or appearance and color.

and/or

#### Fear of Aversive Consequences

Fear or attempt to avoid negative outcomes from food, such as: choking, nausea, vomiting, GI symptoms, or pain.

and/or

#### Lack of Interest in Food or Eating

Show little-to-no interest in food. May forget to eat, have a low appetite, exhibit extreme pickiness, or regularly get distracted during mealtime.





# Picky Eating or ARFID



(Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder)

## Persistence



### PICKY EATING:

preferences & avoided foods  
change from time-to-time

### ARFID:

prolonged & persistent  
avoidance of the same foods

## Appetite & Interest



### PICKY EATING:

typically still interested in food,  
and do report having appetite

### ARFID:

commonly report no appetite,  
or little interest in food/eating

## Nutrition, Weight, Growth & Functioning



### PICKY EATING:

typically does not impact level of nourishment, weight  
or developmental growth;  
little to no impact on psychosocial functioning.

### ARFID:

can result in nutritional deficiencies, chronic low-  
weight, or stunted developmental growth;  
strong impacts on social eating, quality of life, and  
psychosocial functioning.

F

For more information about ARFID  
visit [www.bana.ca/abouteatingdisorders](http://www.bana.ca/abouteatingdisorders)

# Embodied Self-Compassion

by Martha Munroe



While much focus has been given to the difficult relationship many of us have with our bodies and the negative experiences we may have inhabiting our bodies, there also exists positive ways of living as a body that are closely related to well-being, beyond the alleviation of negative body image. Positive embodiment describes attuning to self-care needs, comfort and connection to the body, and a felt-sense of agency and expression.

*Across the domains of the body, including how we move, feed, clothe, express ourselves and take up space; what seems to matter most is not the specifics of what we chose to do but the nature of how we do it. Is the way we engage with our bodies in the world coming from a place of freedom or control?*

With this paradigm, the same action (even by the same person) can be self-care or self-harm depending on the nature of the motivation to do so.

For example, sometimes, the self-care decision is to motivate yourself to exercise, other times, the better self-care decision is to take a rest, and to begin notice when the motivation is coming from a place of enjoyment and alignment versus body control and shame.

This noticing process, and beginning to unpick and unpack our embodied experiences, is a journey. On this journey, self-compassion is a powerful tool. What begins as a skill-set and exercises to work with, can over time become an orientation towards the self that is tremendously healing and freeing.

There are many definitions of self-compassion that are useful, but often, a salient place to start is recognising the opposite. Judgement, guilt, shame, and blame are the opposite of self-compassion.

If you've ever felt any of those feelings towards your body, you're not alone – research shows negative experiences of embodiment at some point (most commonly in the teen years) is universal as we navigate and negotiate what it means to exist in a world that objectifies, commodifies and judges bodies.

*There is hope though, and there are many paths towards a more integrated, peaceful, and positive relationship with our embodied self.*

With self-compassion we practice orienting our relationship towards ourselves with tenderness and kindness. We recognize that our relationship to our embodied self has included suffering, as well as a feeling of separateness.

At the beginning of the journey, it can be easier to start with compassion for our younger selves. We absorbed all kinds of messaging, both implicit and explicit, about bodies before we had the ability to understand or question these beliefs.

Maybe these messages were about which kind of bodies are okay; maybe they were about having to change or perfect our bodies; maybe they were about exercising control over the body; maybe they were about keeping safe; or about our value as an object for others to see. Choose just one of those beliefs and name it.



Using this example, you can imagine a young person telling you they believe this, and you can notice how that makes you feel. You don't need to have the answer of what you'd say to make it okay, it's noticing and validating that accepting that belief about how a person "should" dress feels painful, heavy or unfair.

If it feels right for you, you can place a hand on your heart or close your eyes and stay with that feeling of compassion for your younger-self. (Take a moment now if you feel safe and comfortable to do so).

*What you may notice, is that it's not a thought exercise, it's a feeling exercise, a feeling that is itself embodied.*

There is a felt sense of caring, love, and quite often a tinge of sadness or grief. In practicing self-compassion, we learn to recognize our own moments of suffering and develop our tolerance for turning towards ourselves with kindness and a love that isn't about judging ourselves or avoiding hard feelings, but noticing these small ways in which we have become disconnected from our bodies as an integrated part of ourselves.

We can begin to recognize the ways in which these beliefs came from somewhere; that they're not intrinsic to us and that we have the capacity to hold these wounded parts of ourselves so that we can begin to love ourselves into healing.

*We build the skill of self-compassion by collecting these pieces, the stories, the struggles from our past. We start with some of the easier ones and practice turning towards ourselves with compassion and heartfelt care.*

As we gain experience and navigate closer to the present, we can attune to our embodied needs more sensitively with more awareness of the nuance involved in navigating the world in the unique body we are in.

We can, with patience and love, begin to imagine a way of being where we feel at home, at peace, and at ease in our bodies.

Photo Credit: Tommy Rau



Martha is passionate about cultivating more authenticity, joy, and belonging in the world. She has an MSc in Applied Positive Psychology and Coaching Psychology. She works as a wellbeing coach and wellbeing researcher. Her research focus is Positive Embodiment and Wellbeing. She is passionate about the wellbeing benefits of a more harmonious relationship with our embodied selves.

BANA IS SEEKING DYNAMIC INDIVIDUALS TO JOIN OUR  
VOLUNTEER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

# AND WE'RE LOOKING FOR YOU

BANA specializes in treatment programs, education and support services to individuals affected directly or indirectly by complex eating disorders.

BANA is seeking expressions of interest from individuals who would like to join the Board of Directors to assist in advancing the mission and vision of the organization as a governance volunteer for a three-year term.

Board meetings take place monthly from September to June.

If you are interested in being considered, please forward your resume and cover letter to [info@bana.ca](mailto:info@bana.ca).

We thank all individuals for their interest, however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

All expressions of interest will be kept in confidence.

[www.bana.ca](http://www.bana.ca)





# The Road That Led To Somewhere

## Why we need to learn from our Cultural History

By Patrick Kelly (with source material by Dr. Brian Walls)



Photo Credit: Nidia

This is a story about how a simple team building exercise can change the way you look at the world around you.

*Whether personal or geographical, cultural history can bring to life a past time and place. As community supporters, understanding where we live, work and establish relationships is paramount to understanding and helping those you hope to serve.*

This past June, as part of our ongoing staff development program, the team at BANA visited the John Freeman Walls Underground Railroad Museum in (Puce) Lakeshore, Ontario. I'm a little embarrassed to admit, but with most of our staff living less 30 minutes away from this hidden gem, none of us had ever visited.

The site was founded in 1976 when Dr. Bryan Walls, great-great grandson of runaway slave John Freeman Walls purchased the ancestral homestead from his Aunt Stella Butler, the family "griot " or storyteller (who passed away in 1986 at 102 years of age).

Through Aunt Stella's genealogical research and oral history, Dr. Bryan Walls was able to enhance her work with his own research in an effort to confirm the family legends as factual history.

As the author of the documented novel "The road that led to somewhere" published, in 1980, Dr. Walls traced the story of John (born a slave) and Jane Walls (a woman of Irish and Scottish Decent) as they made the perilous journey along the Underground Railroad from Troublesome Creek, Rockingham County, North Carolina to Maidstone Township (Puce) Ontario, Canada.

John had lost his first wife and children when they were sold as slaves further south and when he fell in love with the widow of a friend (Jane), they could not marry due to the slave laws in North Carolina preventing interracial marriage. So John escaped, and they left with Jane's children and headed north. (This unique love story was deemed an important part of Canadian and American history and a Historical Plaque designating the property a historic site was erected in 1982.)

As we walked these hallowed grounds, one is taken back in time through three stages: Slavery, the Escape and Freedom.

You travel along the historic walkway, reminiscent of the path fugitives fled along almost two centuries before. As you experience the overgrown brush you can almost hear the sound of blood hounds not far behind.

Here, you learn how runaways had to move by night and hide by day; kneeling down to drink from the hoofprints of cattle, the only way to quench their thirst, and following the north star and moss on trees on their journey to Canada.

Along the journey you travel to the Walls family cemetery where family members, friends, and fugitive slaves are buried. At the back of the cemetery marks the resting place of John, who passed away in 1909 at the age of 96, next to his wife Jane King Walls who passed away a year later at 88 of a broken heart.





So significant was this site, both in time a place, it became a favourite stop of Mrs. Rosa Parks, Mother of the modern Civil Rights Movement. Prior to her death in 2005, she would often bring people who are part of her Pathways to Freedom Educational Program and attend celebrations at the Historic Site.

Today, there stands a Peace Chapel dedicated in her honour and inside a large cross on the wall is made from bricks which were a part of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis Tennessee, where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.

*Decades after John Walls settled on this spot, the civil rights movement continued his journey home.*

Along the way, allies also took a role in history; both in support of rights for enslaved individuals and now the museum. Not far down the trail you'll come across the Simcoe Building.

This two story log cabin was built in 1798. The building was donated to the historic site by the Ministry of Natural Resources. This log cabin is dedicated to the memory of John Graves Simcoe who was the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada. In 1793, the First Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada, passed Canada's first anti-slavery law.

While this legislation did not outlaw slavery but harnessed it: it outlawed the buying of new slaves, and immediate freedom was granted to those slaves who outlived their masters. This act eventually led to the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire by 1834.

### The Homestead of John Freeman Walls

The focal point and final stop in our trip through time is the John Freeman Walls log cabin. This two story log cabin was built in 1846 on a foundation of four rocks and stands today as a testament to John's determination and legacy. You can still walk where the original floor was clay and later wood floors were added, immersed in the tiny rooms where John and his wife Jane raised nine children. It's no surprise that the homestead also doubled as the Puce Baptist Church.

John never allowed any pictures taken of himself because he was afraid of being discovered and taken back south to be enslaved again. In 1985 the Detroit-Windsor Police composite artist interviewed Aunt Stella and Frank Walls and created a picture of what John looked like from their description. This picture resides inside the log cabin.

*So why, might you ask, are we telling you this in a mental health and wellness magazine?*

In short...this experience was a lesson in understanding the world around us, and in our own backyard. It is moments like this that remind us how essential it is to fostering an understanding and appreciation for the past.

Recognizing achievements of different cultures is crucial in helping to eliminate racism and prejudice from our lives. The lessons we learn from the past have the ability to inspire and empower, and by learning from our collective history, we can strive toward a more equitable future for all. It is an approach that is holistic, empowering, strengths-focused, collaborative and reflective.

On this day, surrounded by farm lands, in the middle of nowhere, we found somewhere that mattered and along the way we gained a greater appreciation for humanity – its strengths and its perseverance.

Like the Underground Railroad, we too can be a part of a network of good people of different races and faiths working in harmony for freedom and justice...you just have to get onboard.

Visit the John Freeman Walls Historic Site and Underground Railroad  
859 Puce Road, Lakeshore, Ontario, Canada  
Phone: 519 727-6555  
Website: [www.undergroundrailroadmuseum.org](http://www.undergroundrailroadmuseum.org)



Patrick Kelly is the Public Relations and Communications Lead at the Bulimia Anorexia Nervosa Association and the Editor-in-Chief/Creative Director of the BANA Magazine



# 5 conseils

pour améliorer votre image corporelle pendant l'été

Le corps de plage n'existe pas.  
Si vous avez un corps et vous êtes à la plage,  
vous avez un corps de plage!

## Conseils :

- 1 Faites le ménage dans votre armoire et débarrassez-vous des vieux vêtements qui ne vous font plus plaisir. N'oubliez pas que vos vêtements doivent être à votre taille et non l'inverse. Les corps sont faits pour changer !
- 2 Faites preuve d'un esprit critique à l'égard des médias sociaux. N'oubliez pas que les applications telles que Instagram et Facebook sont souvent utilisées pour capturer les meilleurs moments d'une personne. Supprimez tous les comptes qui vous font vous sentir mal ou qui vous obligent à vous comparer à d'autres de manière négative.
- 3 Pratiquez la compassion envers vous-même et faites attention aux commentaires négatifs que vous avez adressés à votre corps. Vous trouverez des ressources à ce sujet dans la section intitulée « Références ».
- 4 Respectez votre corps. Concentrez-vous sur les façons auxquelles vous pouvez prendre soin de votre corps et non sur les moyens de le changer. Posez-vous la question suivante : « Comment puis-je prendre soin de mon corps même si je n'aime pas son apparence aujourd'hui ? »
- 5 Entourez-vous de bonnes personnes. Qui sont les personnes qui vous encouragent et qui vous vous faites sentir bien dans votre peau ? Passez plus de temps avec les personnes qui vous apprécient et qui vous soutiennent.

N'oubliez pas de prendre ça une étape à la fois ! L'expérience subjective que vous avez de votre corps peut varier de jour en jour, mais votre valeur intrinsèque en tant que personne ne change pas.



# 5 Tips

to improve your body image  
during the summer

There is no such thing as a beach body.  
If you have a body and you are on a beach,  
then you have a beach body!

## Advice:

- 1 Conduct a closet clean out and get rid of any old clothing that no longer serves you. Remember your clothes should fit you, not the other way around. Bodies are meant to change!
- 2 Think critically about social media. Remember that Instagram and Facebook are often used as highlight reels. Unfollow any accounts that make you feel bad or compare yourself in a negative way.
- 3 Practice self-compassion and be mindful of negative body talk. Please see the reference section for resources.
- 4 Practice body respect. Focus on caring for your body, not changing it. Ask yourself "how can I care for my body even if I don't love how it looks every day?"
- 5 Surround yourself with the right people. Who lifts you up and makes you feel good as you are? Spend more time around those that you enjoy and who are supportive of you.

Remember to take it one step at a time! Your subjective experience of your body may fluctuate every day, but your inherent worth as a person does not.

For a list of article resources visit: [www.bana.ca/magazineresources](http://www.bana.ca/magazineresources)



Heather Leblanc (she/her) is a Francophone Clinical Therapist at the Bulimia Anorexia Nervosa Association (BANA) in Windsor, Ontario.





# Living Pozitive Pathways

## Firsthand Impact of Organizational Support on individuals affected by HIV/AIDS

By: Rich O'Brien, Peer Engagement Coordinator, PPCS

My lived experience at Pozitive Pathways Community Services, an AIDS service organization, continues to be transformative and has led to a fulfilling employment opportunity.

*Over the years, I have witnessed firsthand the incredible impact that this organization has on individuals affected by HIV/AIDS, including myself, and I am grateful to be a part of their mission.*

When I first encountered Pozitive Pathways over twenty years ago, previously called the "AIDS Committee of Windsor", I was a member of "Young and Proud", an LGBTQ2+ youth group.

I was searching for a way to contribute to my community and support those facing the challenges of living with HIV/AIDS. The organization's dedication to providing comprehensive support services, advocacy, and education was inspiring. I decided to become a volunteer, and eventually a board member, eager to make a difference in the lives of others.

I was also able to help create and sustain the "Red Ribbon Café", a weekly hot lunch program for clients. This program operated for over 10 years. It was not only a hot meal, but also a great way to break down social barriers and reinforce community.

Personally, it gave me a sense of purpose and allowed me to gain a deeper connection with my peers; it was a safe, stigma-free place to break bread together. Our team was even presented with the "June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Award for Voluntarism 2016" from the Government of Ontario.

During my time as a volunteer, I had the privilege of working closely with clients, engaging in one-on-one conversations, and assisting with various programs and events. It was through these interactions that I began to truly understand the importance of Pozitive Pathways' work and applied it to my own life.

The organization offers a safe and inclusive space where individuals affected by HIV/AIDS could access a wide range of services, including food security, medical referrals, support groups, and educational workshops.

Through my involvement with Pozitive Pathways, I continue to witness the resilience and strength of the individuals we serve.

I listen to their stories, witness their struggles, and celebrate their triumphs. Each person's journey is unique, and it became clear to me that the organization's holistic approach was making a significant difference in clients' lives.

*As I continued to volunteer, I tested positive. It was at that point that the staff and my fellow peers took me under their wings and made sure I really felt the circle of care all around me.*

I was able to attend PLDI (Positive Leadership Development Institute), a comprehensive leadership program designed specifically for PHAs (people having AIDS). My passion for the cause grew, and I realized that I wanted to contribute to Pozitive Pathways on a more significant level.

I expressed my interest in joining the organization as a staff member, and fortunately, an opportunity arose that aligned with my skills and aspirations.

I was thrilled to be offered a position at Pozitive Pathways, and it continues to be an incredibly rewarding experience. Working alongside a dedicated team of professionals who share the same commitment to the cause, I feel a sense of purpose and fulfillment that I have never experienced before.



*Everyday I have the opportunity to impact the lives of individuals affected by HIV/AIDS - including my own - supporting them in their journey towards better health and well-being.*

In my role as Peer Engagement Coordinator, I am involved in various aspects of the organization, from program development to community outreach.

I have coordinated support groups, facilitated educational workshops, and collaborated with healthcare providers to ensure comprehensive care for our clients. Witnessing the positive changes in individuals' lives and seeing the impact of our work has been immensely gratifying.

Moreover, working at Pozitive Pathways has provided me with invaluable personal and professional growth.

I continue to develop skills in leadership, communication, and empathy. I have learned to navigate complex healthcare systems, advocate for those in need, and foster a sense of belonging within our community.

The organization has also provided me with numerous training opportunities and continuing education, enabling me to stay informed about the latest advancements in HIV/AIDS care.

My lived experience at Pozitive Pathways continues to be a journey of personal growth, compassion, and empowerment. From volunteering to becoming an employee, I have seen firsthand the transformative impact that this organization has on the lives of individuals affected by HIV/AIDS.

I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to such a vital cause and to work alongside dedicated individuals who share the same passion.

*Pozitive Pathways has not only changed the lives of its clients but has also transformed my own life, inspiring me to continue making a difference in the lives of others.*

This article may read as sort of a love letter to Pozitive Pathways, and that is because it absolutely is. I helped to create and sustain this agency from the ground up for more than twenty years; it truly is family.

Rich O'Brien is a Peer Engagement Coordinator at Pozitive Pathways Community Services (a non-profit ASO-AIDS/HIV Service Organization) in Windsor Ontario. He is 44 years old and living with HIV.

He has volunteered for more than 20 years at PPCS, wearing a number of different hats throughout the years, including becoming a Board Member as well as a client.

Last year he was hired as a Peer Engagement Coordinator. Rich hopes that his efforts in this industry, over the years will help his peers better themselves and will make a difference in ending stigma.



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COMMUNITY SERVICES





# A Silent Epidemic: Shedding Light on Elder Abuse

## Understanding the Forms, Causes, and Solutions of Protecting our Senior Citizens

By Family Services Windsor-Essex

Elder abuse is a distressing and profoundly concerning issue that affects some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

It's an unfortunate reality and it needs our attention.

This article aims to shed light on the different forms of elder abuse, their causes, the consequences, and most importantly - what we can do to prevent and address this pervasive problem.

### Types of Abuse:

Elder abuse can manifest in several ways, including physical, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse, as well as neglect.

**Physical abuse** involves the use of force that can result in pain, injury, or impairment.

**Emotional abuse** can include verbal threats, humiliation, and isolation.

**Sexual abuse** refers to any non-consensual sexual activity forced on an older person.

**Financial abuse** involves the misuse or exploitation of an older person's assets often by family members, caregivers, or scammers.

**Neglect** is the failure to fulfill a person's basic needs, such as providing food, medication, or the necessary attention - whether it be medical, empathetical, or self-care.

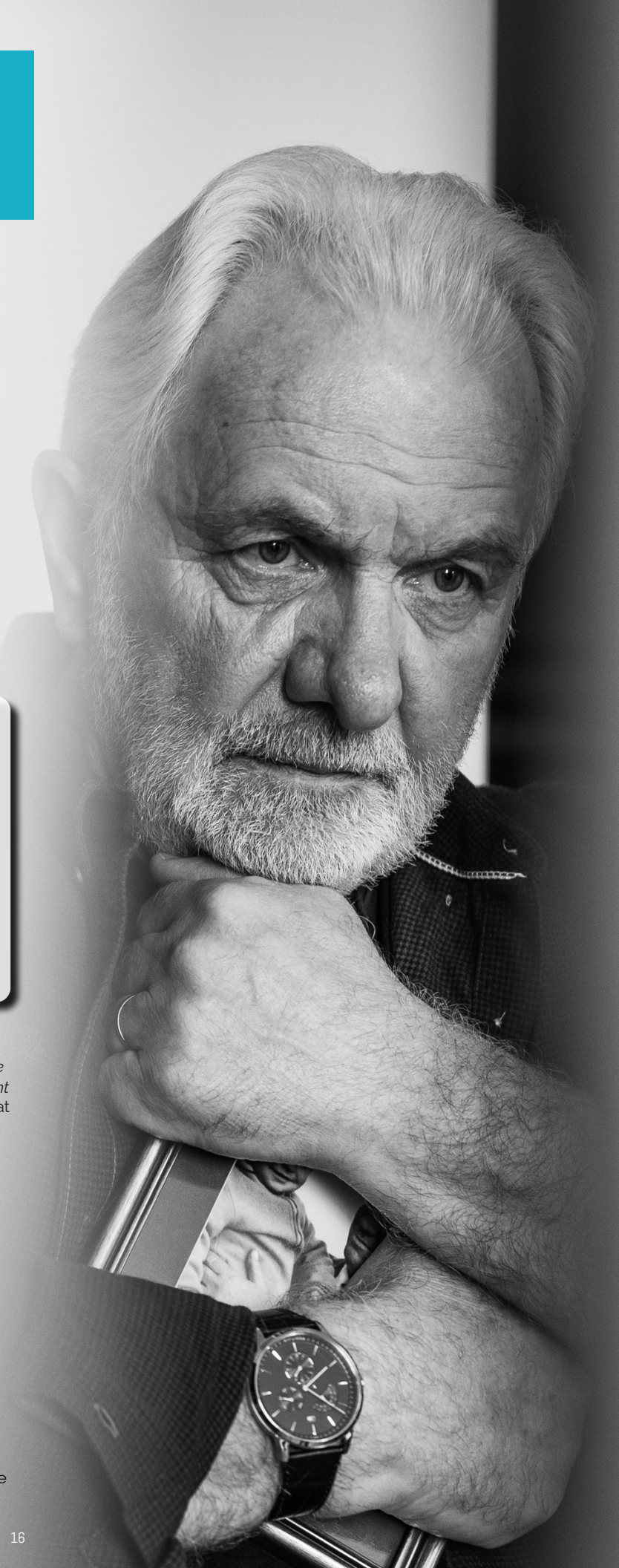
*"Elder abuse is not a new phenomenon; however, we hear about it more due to our aging demographics and increased information on the subject in print and social media," said Mehnaz Rafat, Manager of Community Programs at Family Services Windsor-Essex (FSWE). "Despite this, elder abuse continues to be an under-reported issue as often the perpetrator is a close family member and/or a caregiver."*

According to Statistics Canada, 10 per cent of Canadian seniors are victims of crime every year and about 45 per cent of seniors report experiencing some form of abuse from the age of 65-years-old and up.

*"Considering the statistics and as Family Services Windsor-Essex has an Elder Abuse Response Program, we know that the issue is very much prevalent in our region," said Rafat. "On average, we support over 200 seniors through our Elder Abuse Response program each year."*

Most of these crimes against seniors are not reported to the police but are often reported to health professionals, community groups, and financial institutions.

Much research remains to be done in Canada on the issue of the prevalence of crime and abuse against the elderly, but understanding the causes and risks of elder abuse is crucial in addressing or preventing its occurrence.





It's important to recognize that elder abuse can happen in any setting, be it at home, in public, in nursing homes, or in any other care facility.

Preventing elder abuse requires a multi-faceted approach involving us as individuals, the community, and institutions. It begins with raising awareness and educating the public about the signs, risks, and consequences.

Here are some tips on how we can contribute to this effort:

- 1 Educate ourselves: start by learning about the different forms of elder abuse, its signs, risks, and impact.**
- 2 Stay updated on relevant news, studies, and initiatives dedicated to elder abuse.**
- 3 Share that information: use social media and other channels to reach a broader audience.**
- 4 Be a supportive neighbour: keep an eye out for signs of elder abuse in your community. If you suspect abuse or neglect, report it to the appropriate authorities or helplines.**
- 5 Lead by example: treat older adults with respect, kindness, and dignity.**

Encouraging respectful and empathetic attitudes toward elders can help foster a culture that values and protects their rights.

The Elder Abuse Response Service at FSWE helps older adults process and work through their experiences of neglect, bullying, and abuse.

A team of professionals is there to provide options, guidance, and support to handle any concerns of neglect, bullying, or abuse - while working to stop any issue or form of abuse from taking place.

The service also teaches older adults how to exercise their rights and freedoms to maintain independence, how to recognize arising issues, and how to deal with abuse, neglect, or bullying.

*"It is important to raise awareness as it is a global social issue which affects the health and human rights of millions of older persons around the world irrespective of age, sex, race, cultural background, or religion,"* said Rafat.

Every year on June 15, we mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. This year's theme **Rights Don't Get Old** focused on continuing the conversation and mobilizing resources on how we, as a country, can end elder abuse and protect the rights of older people.

Since its inception, communities around the world used this day as an opportunity to raise awareness of elder abuse and neglect of older persons, by sharing information about the facts of elder abuse, the rights of older persons, and promoting resources and services to support seniors' safety and well-being.

It is our moral duty to protect and empower our elderly population by offering them the respect, care, and support they deserve in their golden years.

Together we can eradicate the shadow cast on elder abuse and shape a brighter, more compassionate future for all.



Family Services Windsor-Essex (FSWE) is a non-profit, charitable organization serving Windsor and Essex County. We help people to restore their ability to choose their own place in the world through counselling and individual support services. For organizations of all sizes, we offer Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and wellness solutions.

# NURTURING SELF-ESTEEM AND A POSITIVE BODY IMAGE IN CHILDREN

We know that building and nurturing self-esteem and a positive body image in children is crucial for their overall well-being and confidence. We also know how incredibly difficult it is to do that in this day and age.

This collection of 10 tips offers practical guidance on how to promote healthy self-esteem and body image in your child. Parents play an active role in their child's self-esteem journey.

By encouraging open communication and modelling positive self-talk you can create a safe and healthy environment for your kids. By implementing these tips, you can help your child develop a strong sense of self-worth.

## ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION:

Create an environment where your child feels comfortable discussing their feelings and concerns openly. Be a good listener and show empathy.



2

## MODEL POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM:

Children learn by observing their parents. Display a positive self-image and practice self-acceptance to set a good example.

## FOCUS ON STRENGTHS:

Help your child recognize and celebrate their unique strengths and talents.

3



4

## AVOID NEGATIVE BODY TALK:

Avoid making negative comments about your body or the appearance of others. Especially avoid comments about size and shape. Even comments about other people can negatively impact a child's self-esteem.

## PROMOTE A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE:

Enjoy regular, joyful, physical activity, a balanced diet, and sufficient sleep. Teach your child about the importance of taking care of, listening to, and honouring their body for all the things it can do, not the way it looks.

5

6

## TEACH MEDIA LITERACY:

Help your child develop critical thinking skills to analyze media messages and understand that many images are unrealistic. Discuss how the media distorts our ideas about beauty, and instead emphasize and celebrate the importance of diversity in all ways of life.



### ENCOURAGE SELF-CARE:

Teach your child the importance of self-care activities like relaxation, mindfulness, and taking breaks. This helps them develop a positive relationship with themselves and understand the importance of setting limits and boundaries.

7



8

### ENCOURAGE POSITIVE SELF-TALK:

Teach your child to challenge their negative self-talk, and instead find more neutral positive alternatives. Challenging negative self-talk can make them feel more confident and empowered. Help them recognize their strengths and challenge negative thoughts.

### TEACH RESILIENCE:

Help your child develop resilience by teaching them how to cope with setbacks and failures. Encourage them to learn from their mistakes and move forward.

9



10

### CELEBRATE UNIQUENESS:

Emphasize that everyone is different and that diversity is what makes the world interesting. Teach your child to embrace their unique qualities and celebrate the differences in others.

### BONUS TIP:

Seek professional help if needed: If your child's self-esteem and body image issues persist or worsen despite your efforts, consider seeking the help of a qualified therapist or counselor who specializes in working with children. It's healthy and normal to seek outside support with these concerns.



In conclusion, as parents, we hold a vital role in shaping our children's self-esteem and body image.

By implementing these 10 tips, we can create a nurturing environment that promotes positive self-perception and empowers our children to embrace their individuality.

Remember to be patient and consistent in your efforts, as building and maintaining self-esteem is a lifelong process.

Together, let's guide our children towards a healthy self-image, resilience, and a deep sense of self-worth that will support them throughout their lives.



Adriana Grande is a Health Educator with the Bulimia Anorexia Nervosa Association and has a undergraduate degree in Human Kinetics from the University of Windsor and a Doctor of Naturopathy Degree from the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine







# Staying Informed on Hep-C

By: The Windsor Essex Community Health Centre

Hepatitis C (HCV) is a life-threatening liver infection caused by the hepatitis C virus, which affects approximately 58 million people worldwide. It can range from a mild illness lasting a few weeks (acute) to a serious, long-term illness (chronic). The virus is spread through blood-to-blood contact with an infected person.

The liver is the second largest organ in the body. It's responsible for cleaning your blood, breaking down chemicals, absorbing nutrients, and making proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. The Hepatitis C virus slowly damages the liver, starting with inflammation and sometimes proceeding to permanent scarring. Untreated HCV can cause liver damage, cirrhosis (liver scarring), liver cancer or even death.

## Canadian Statistics:

An estimated 220,000 – 245,000 Canadians are living with chronic hepatitis C. That is the equivalent of six to seven people out of every 1,000 Canadians.

An estimated 44% of people living with chronic hepatitis C infection were unaware of their status. People who inject drugs (current and past) comprised 42.6% of all antibody-positive cases. People born in a country outside of Canada comprised an additional 35% of all antibody positive cases. There is also a high rate of hepatitis C infections within our Federal and Provincial correctional facilities.

## Who is at Risk?:

More than half of people who become infected with Hepatitis C will develop a chronic infection. Individuals with the highest rate of transmission are those who share drug injection or inhalation equipment, and individuals who obtain tattoos and body piercings with unsterile tattooing & piercing equipment. Less common ways of transmission include, sharing personal hygiene tools with an infected person, blood products or organ transplants prior to 1992, physical altercation where blood is present, mother to baby (> 5%), sex where there is blood involved, and workplace exposure.

## Be Aware:

The spread of HCV can only be through blood-to-blood transmission. To reduce the risk of contracting HCV, ensure you are practicing safe sex with the use of condoms; always use new, un-used drug inhalation or injection equipment; use regulated, clean and professional tattooing and body piercing establishments; and do not share personal hygiene items with someone you know is infected or could be at possible risk of infection.

Most individuals with hepatitis C infection are asymptomatic. HCV is a very slow-moving virus that can sometimes take 15-20 years to produce any symptoms, if any at all. Advanced stages of liver cirrhosis can include yellow skin/eyes, loss of appetite, throwing up, and stomach or side pain. The only way to know if you have been exposed to hepatitis C is through a blood test, and treatment.



## Community Treatment & Our Programs:

Hepatitis C can only be diagnosed through a blood test. Our team utilizes "Point of Care" antibody kits to test for antibody positivity. If the person presents as positive, we will perform a secondary test to assess for viral load by using a "Dry Blood Spot" test.

We use these tests as they allow our team to meet clients where they are in the community, instead of sending them to a lab for a traditional blood draw.

The medications that are prescribed by our Nurse Practitioner are called direct acting antivirals (DAAs), most of which are between 95 – 98% effective in curing the hepatitis C infection. weCHC's community service area covers Windsor, Essex County, Chatham Kent, and Walpole Island.

Our goal is to establish Hepatitis C care and treatment services that will help curb the spread of Hepatitis C virus by ensuring people are diagnosed and treated effectively.

Our objective is to increase access to hepatitis C care and treatment. Our efforts are actively increasing community awareness to help stop the spread.

Our priority populations include individuals who use drugs, Indigenous communities, street involved youth, individuals who are homeless and under-housed, and individuals involved in the correctional system.

weCHC's Hepatitis C Treatment and Support team conducts community outreach from Tuesday to Friday. Their services include Hepatitis C Testing, Harm Reduction distribution, Housing Information, Naloxone Distribution & Training, Hygiene Products and so much more!

### We have two upcoming Hep C events:

Friday, July 28th: Hepatitis C, Addiction & Sexual Health Fair. Join us at 400 Wyandotte street east, Windsor and engage with services focused at addressing Hepatitis C, HIV, STIs, and Harm Reduction

August 2nd: Hepatitis C Education and Testing Event. Join us in Chatham at Hope Haven, 183 Wellington Street west for Hep C testing, treatment connection and outreach services!

Windsor Essex Community Health Centre  
Centre de santé communautaire de Windsor Essex

**weCHC**  
Healthcare for You  
Des soins de santé pour vous

Article statistics sourced from CATIE fact sheet: The epidemiology of hepatitis C in Canada. For visit our resources page at: [www.bana.ca/magazineresources](http://www.bana.ca/magazineresources)



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Centre de santé communautaire de Windsor Essex  
**weCHC**  
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Des soins de santé pour vous

## HEPATITIS C OUTREACH

Hepatitis C can only be diagnosed through a blood test. Our team utilizes "Point of Care" antibody kits to test for antibody positivity



Our outreach team provides free testing and quality client care!

**Interested? Check out our website:**  
**[www.wechc.org](http://www.wechc.org)**  
**or call to register for an upcoming program**  
**519-890-6392**



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# 10 TIPS FOR Intuitive Eating

Intuitive eating is an approach that teaches you how to create a healthy relationship with your food, mind and body, where you ultimately become the expert of your own body's hunger

## 1. Reject The Diet Mentality

Throw out the diet books and magazine articles that offer you false hope of losing weight quickly, easily, and permanently.

Diets interfere with intuitive eating.

## 2. Honour Your Hunger

Keep your body biologically fed with adequate energy and carbohydrates.

Otherwise you can trigger a primal drive to overeat.



## 3. Make Peace With Food

Give yourself unconditional permission to eat. If you tell yourself that you can't or shouldn't have a particular food, it can lead to intense feelings of deprivation that build into uncontrollable cravings and often, bingeing which can result in overwhelming guilt.

## 4. Challenge The Food Police

The Food Police monitor the unreasonable rules that dieting has created.

Chasing the Food Police away is a critical step in returning to Intuitive Eating.



## 5. Respect Your Fullness

Listen for bodily signals that tell you that you are no longer hungry.

Observe the signs that show that you're comfortably full.

Pause in the middle of a meal and ask yourself how the food tastes, and what is your current fullness level.

## 6. Discover The Satisfaction Factor

When you eat what you really want in an environment that is inviting and conducive, the pleasure you derive will be a powerful force in helping you feel satisfied and content.

By providing this experience for yourself, you will find that it takes much less food to decide you've had "enough".

## 7. Honour Your Feelings Without Using Food

Find ways to comfort, nurture, distract, and resolve your issues without using food.

Food won't solve the problem.

If anything, eating to meet an emotional need will only make you feel worse in the long run.

## 8. Respect Your Body

Accept your genetic blueprint.

It's hard to reject the diet mentality if you are unrealistic and overly critical about your body shape.

## 9. Exercise-Feel The Difference

Forget militant exercise. Just get active and feel the difference.

Find an activity you enjoy (it can be as simple as going for a brisk walk!)

## 10. Honour Your Health - Gentle Nutrition

Make food choices that honor your health and taste buds while making you feel well.

Remember that you don't have to eat a perfect diet to be healthy. You will not suddenly get a nutrient deficiency or gain weight from one snack, one meal, or one day of eating.

It's what you eat consistently over time that matters; progress not perfection is what counts.





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healthily  
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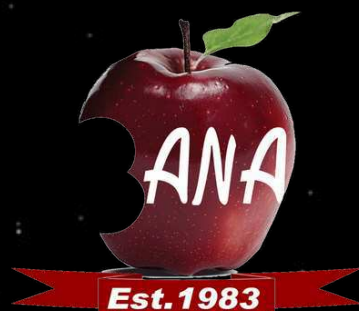
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