

## “Staycation”- How to have a vacation in your own backyard

Manisha Rustagi, MA

Summer is here, and it is warm and beautiful outside. You can smell the fresh-cut grass in the air, children are out of school, and many people are getting ready to take a much needed summer vacation. As fun as it would be to fly to the Bahamas or Florida, for many of us, this kind of trip is way too expensive. However, it is possible to have a mini-vacation in your hometown without spending a lot of money, and it is important we all set aside time for some “self-care” and good, old-fashioned fun.



Taking time to relax and enjoy your family and friends can help reduce stress and prevent burnout. There are many ways to relax this summer in and around Muncie. The warm weather is perfect for many outdoor and indoor activities. For example, you can go fishing at a nearby lake or the White River. If you're in the mood for swimming, you could visit Tuhey Pool, the Prairie Creek



Reservoir, the Water Bowl, or even invest in a blow-up pool for your backyard. Some of you might also enjoy going to a local farm to pick strawberries or visit Minnetrista's Farmer's Market on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Summer also means grilling and cooking out with friends and family. It is also a great time to spend time with your neighbors by organizing block parties or neighborhood picnics. However, if you want to keep it simple and spend time with your family, consider planning a family field day with activities like tag, kickball, and relay races. You could host a family game tournament and play your favorite video games, board games, or card games. When it gets rainy, it can be fun to have a family pajama party, enjoy a movie marathon, pop some popcorn, and curl up on the sofa.

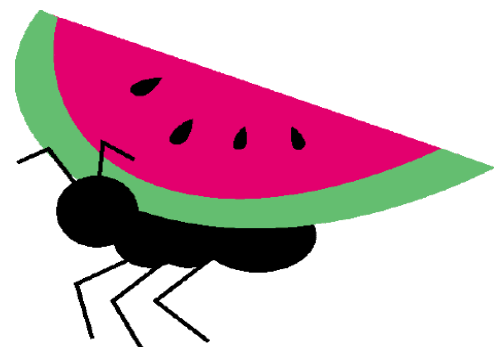
If you're looking for some other relaxing activities, you can turn your home into a spa, light some candles, turn on soothing music, and take a warm bubble bath.

Camping in the backyard, roasting some marshmallows, star gazing, and sharing fun stories with each other can be fun, too.

Other fun activities you can do on your “staycation”:

- Playing a round of mini golf,
- Going out on a bike ride along the Cardinal Greenway,
- Jogging along the White River or Minnetrista,
- Visiting the farmer's market on Saturday,
- Attending one of many free concerts
- Organizing a scavenger hunt for your friends and family,
- Cooking meals together
- Going to a movie night at Cannon Commons downtown.

Remember we all need some down time, and summer can be a great time to relax. You can enjoy the summer without having to make a huge dent in your wallet.



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# Monthly Guidance

Dear MG,

My beloved dog recently died, and I feel so sad. I can't stop crying about it, but I am embarrassed to tell people. What if they judge me for being so devastated over an animal? I know it's not like losing a family member, but it feels just as painful. Is this normal?

Sincerely,  
Tearful Puppy-Parent

Dear TPP,

Given the intense bond we share with our animals, it is natural to feel devastated by feelings of grief and sadness when a pet dies. While some people may not understand what you are going through, you should never feel embarrassed or guilty for grieving over the loss of your pet. For many people, a pet is not "just an animal." Pets are often important

members of the family, and when they die, it can feel like a traumatic, significant loss.

It is important to remember grief is a unique and individual experience. Not everyone will feel the same way, and not everyone will express their grief in the same way. Just keep in mind there is no "right" way to grieve.

Important points to know when it comes to grieving the death of your beloved pet

- The grieving process happens gradually. There is no "normal" amount of time for grieving. Be patient with yourself during this time, and allow the process to unfold.
- Feeling sad or lonely is a normal reaction. It is nothing to be ashamed about.
- Trying to ignore your pain will only make it worse in the long run. It is important to face your grief. You

can do this by talking to others or writing down your feelings.

- It can even be comforting to focus on the sweet memories you have with your pet to find balance
- It can be helpful to reach out to others who have lost pets. They may understand you better than others.

Just remember to be kind to yourself during the grieving process and look after your physical and emotional needs.

Monthly Guidance [MG] is here to answer questions about relationships and personal issues. If you would like to ask MG a question, you may call the Ball State Counseling Practicum Clinic and leave an anonymous message for MG. Or, you may send your question in writing to the address on the back page of this newsletter. If you choose to ask MG a question, the identity of the person submitting the question will remain completely anonymous. Please keep in mind when writing your questions that space is limited. Due to time constraints, MG cannot answer all questions, but will try to choose questions that are representative of a broad range of issues. If your question does not get answered and you would like to discuss it, please call Ball State Counseling Practicum Clinic at (765) 285-8047. Please be advised that MG is neither a crisis/emergency service nor a correspondence therapy service. If you need either immediate attention or ongoing therapy, call Ball

## Featured Youth Issue: Facebook: Friend or Foe? Youth and Social Media

By: Nathan Walters, M.A.

"Is it harmful for children and teenagers to spend so much time on social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter?" This is a question parents may find themselves asking. As a society, we hear many stories about cyberbullying and "sexting" on social media sites, which makes it easy to assume using social media sites are bad. However, there are a lot of positives from networking through social media. The goal here is to come up with some ideas to help parents assist their kids in having fun and be safe while using social media sites.

Many researchers have studied the reasons for using social networking sites. Most agree there are some rewards from using these sites. For example, such sites can make people feel supported and feel like they belong in a certain group. Interacting on the sites may also help teens express themselves with a voice they might not have had before.

These sites can also help people stay connected with friends and can even strengthen friendships.

Considering all people have different experiences with social media, a few practical suggestions might be helpful:

**Talk:** If you have given permission to your teen to use social media sites, it is important to create ground rules about using them. For example, is there a time limit for using social media sites within a given day? Are there certain social media sites that are allowed and certain ones that are not? The rules should be discussed and agreed upon.

**Location:** If you have a computer in your home, consider moving it to a public part of your home, like the family room or kitchen, so you can monitor what your teen is doing online.

**Support:** Are you worried your teen prefers talking with friends through social media instead of face to face?

Supporting healthy offline interactions can be a helpful and clever way to help teens meet their social needs while also decreasing time online.

**Teach:** Take time to understand the privacy settings on social media sites. If you're not comfortable with the sites, find a trusted friend or librarian to help you learn. Also, make sure your kids understand everything posted on the Internet can be seen by the whole world! Making personal posts and pictures "public" instead of "private" can have long lasting, negative consequences.

**Lead by example:** If you post inappropriate comments or photos on social media, your kids will likely see them at some point. Be conscious of your own social media activity so your kids realize the importance of monitoring what is online.

While social networking sites can have clear benefits, this is not always true. For these reasons, communicating and being aware of online behavior becomes very important for people with teens who engage in online social networks.

## Featured Mental Health Issue:

### Bipolar Disorder: Clearing up the Misconceptions

By: Kerry Smith, M.A.

**Fact #1:** Bipolar disorder is NOT the same as having mood swings.

Ever hear someone say, "I think I have bipolar disorder- my mood changes all the time!" The person who says this likely does not understand the severity of the symptoms of bipolar disorder. The mood swings of bipolar disorder are very different from those in individuals without the disorder- they are severe, can last up to months or years at a time, and they are likely to interfere with the person's ability to work, manage a home, or be a student.

**Fact #2:** People with bipolar disorder do NOT switch between mania and depression frequently.

One myth about bipolar disorder is the Jekyll and Hyde personality, or someone who changes from sad to extremely happy on a dime. Every person who has bipolar disorder experiences it differently, but most people have very few manic or depressive episodes in one year. Depression episodes are much more common than mania episodes in individuals with bipolar disorder. About 10 to 20% of people with bipolar disorder experience "rapid cycling," which means they have four or more episodes of mania or depression in one year. In addition, the pattern of manic or depressive episodes a person has can change throughout the person's life.

**Fact #3:** Manic phases are NOT always fun and exciting for the person experiencing them.

While some people are very happy in the manic phase, others become very irritable and even scared because they are losing control of their thoughts and actions. The manic phase can include lack of sleep, increased energy, and disorganized or reckless behavior including spending sprees, using poor judgment, and abusing drugs or alcohol. A person's sexual drive or behavior can also be out of character from what they usually are.

**Fact #4:** Bipolar Disorder is NOT very rare.

Contrary to what many people believe, in a given year, bipolar disorder affects about 2.6% of the United States adult population, or about 5.7 million Americans.

**Fact #5:** Medication is NOT the only effective treatment for Bipolar Disorder.

While medication can be an effective treatment for bipolar disorder, counseling is also recommended to help people with bipolar disorder recognize their personal warning signs that a shift to depression or mania may be coming on. In addition, building a healthy lifestyle routine involving regular exercise, sleeping routines, and a healthy diet can help regulate stress and mood.

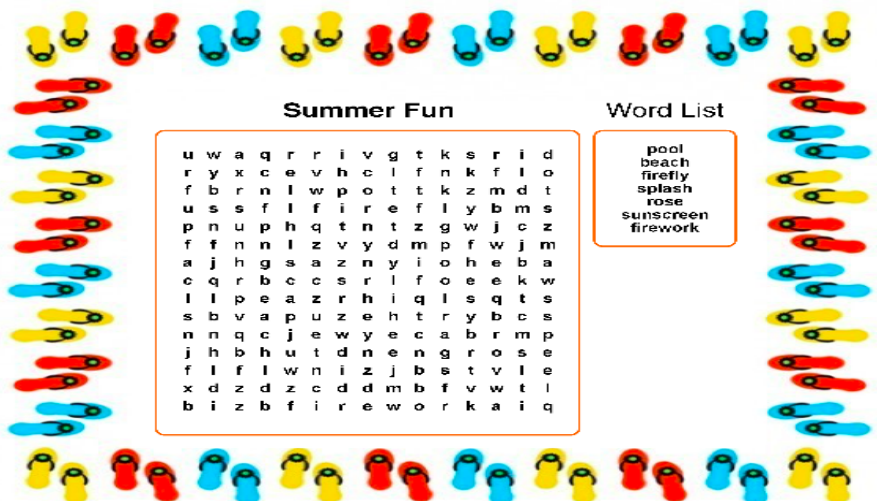
**Fact #6:** Bipolar disorder is NOT a disorder that only affects adults.

According to the Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation, at least 750,000 American children and teens may have bipolar disorder, although many may not be diagnosed. The diagnosis of bipolar disorder is rising dramatically in children and teens. When children are diagnosed, it is called early-onset bipolar disorder. Young people with bipolar disorder may have symptoms more often and switch moods more often than adults with the disorder.



For more information, talk to your counselor or physician or go to <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/bipolar-disorder>

## Kids Corner: Summer is Here!





## Featured Profile

### Andrew L. Brimhall, M.A.

By: Sean Jones, M.S./Ed.S

*This column is a way for the community to learn about the diverse talents, both master's and doctoral students, employed at Ball State's New Combined Clinic.*

Andrew is currently a third-year doctoral student in the Department of Counseling Psychology. The following is a discussion with Andrew, one of our many talented individuals employed at the Ball State University Combined Clinic.

#### **How did you decide to pursue your PhD in Counseling Psychology?**

I decided to pursue my PhD in Counseling Psychology because, in addition to counseling, I want to take on professional roles that require a PhD. I really enjoy teaching and supervising and am even getting to like research. Eventually I hope to teach in a university setting where I can pursue my research interests and continue to counsel privately.

#### **Are you currently doing any research?**

My research focuses on the influence culture has on gender roles. Currently, I have two projects in the works. The first project is looking at masculinity in Mexican men, and my second project is looking at attitudes towards women's gender-roles in Kazakhstan. I love international

research because it helps me feel connected to my own humanity.

#### **What are your clinical interests?**

Clinical interests of mine range from neuropsychological assessment to counseling. As a counselor, I enjoy working with couples and individuals who are struggling with sexual difficulties. Sex can have a huge impact on people's lives, and I hope to help navigate some of the challenges sexual issues can create.

#### **What has been your most influential (or exciting, or enjoyable) work experience?**

The most influential work experience so far took place during my time in Mexico as a master's student. I was working with kids in Tepito, one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in Mexico City. These kids were living in an impoverished environment where domestic violence or being robbed at gunpoint were normal experiences. I gained valuable perspective by working with the people in that community.

#### **Are there any populations that you especially enjoy working with in counseling?**

I really love working with adolescents and young adults. They are at a perfect age to make changes that will last. Beginning in the fall, I will be counseling High School Students at the Indiana Academy, and Ball State Students at Lucina, the University Counseling Center. I am very excited about these new opportunities.

#### **What do you hope to do after you graduate?**

After I graduate, I would like to become a professor of counseling psychology. Ideally, after internship, I will find a postdoctoral position in neuropsychology to continue my assessment training. When I am able to obtain a faculty position with a university, I hope to specialize in international research and building students' multicultural competencies.



Andrew L. Brimhall, current doctoral student in the Department of Counseling Psychology

# Featured Wellness Issue

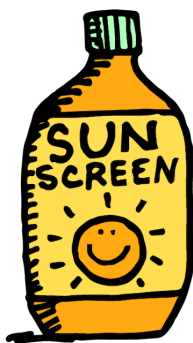
## Summer Safety Tips

By: Anca Barsan-Cayro, B.A.



Summer is a wonderful time of year for many reasons. It can feel great to have the warm sun on our skin after a long, cold winter. It is time to re-energize our bodies and minds while having fun in the sun. Just like plants, humans need sunlight, but we use it as a source for vitamin D. Sunlight is also known to uplift mood, ease mild depression, reduce agitation, increase sleep efficiency, and decrease nighttime wakefulness.

However, too much time in the sun can lead to sunburns and dehydration. It also is important to eat healthy and balanced meals to keep up energy for your outdoor activities. So if you are someone who likes to spend time outdoors, whether you are planning a backyard barbecue or spending the weekend at the beach, it is important to remember a few summer safety tips.



### **Exercise and take walks in the early morning or late evening hours.**

The temperature is the coolest at this time. Avoid exercising midday because it's the hottest part of the day.

**Make sure to use sunscreen even if you will be staying in a shaded area.** Ultraviolet rays will still reach you. Also, should you enjoy time at the pool, keep in mind you will get sunburned faster if you are in the water. Water reflects sunlight, so you will get added exposure to your head, shoulders and any other areas that remain uncovered while you are swimming.



**Drink up! Do not wait until you are thirsty to start hydrating.** Drink two to four glasses of water each hour. If you are exercising for an extended period of time, drink a sports beverage to replace the salt and minerals you lose through sweat. If you are on diuretics or a low-salt or fluid-restricted diet, talk to your doctor first about your specific fluid needs.

**Drink unsweetened, green tea instead of sweet tea.** Green tea has a natural component that helps speed up your metabolism.

**Don't skip breakfast.** When you wake up in the morning, your body is running on fumes. Eating a breakfast with protein, carbs, and

healthy fat kicks your metabolism into high gear and provides energy for the day.

### **Enjoy summer fruits and veggies.**

It's easy to sink into a vegetable rut, eating the same boring veggies week after week, but with summer comes fresh choices. Including a mix of in-season colorful veggies in your meals gives your body and minds a nutrient kick.



**Enjoy more seafood.** Summer is the ideal time to get the freshest catch from your local grocer. Grill salmon, tuna, lobster, steamer clams, and calamari for a low-calorie, protein-packed lunch or dinner that keeps the mind agile and the body young and lean.

**Cook meals together.** Involve your friends and family in your healthy lifestyle this summer. Turn the planning, shopping, and cooking with your spouse and kids into a path to wellness, while celebrating the great outdoors.



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## **Mind Matters**

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### **Ball State University Counseling Practicum Clinic: Serving the Community Since 1969**

#### **Mission**

- The clinic is a training and research facility for the Department of Counseling Psychology and Guidance Services.
- The clinic provides high-quality, low-cost psychological services to the Delaware County community and beyond.

#### **Service Providers**

- Over 50 graduate student counselors under the supervision of faculty.
- Faculty supervisors are licensed psychologists and counselors.

#### **Services Offered**

- Individual Counseling
- Couple Counseling
- Family Counseling
- Child/Adolescent Counseling
- Group Counseling with a focus on:
  - Parenting
  - Social skills
  - Anger control
  - Issues of concern to children and adolescents

#### **Hours of Operation**

- August-May (Spring & Fall)
  - 9 AM to 9 PM M-Th
  - 9 AM to 12 PM Fri
- May-August (Summer)
  - 9 AM to 8 PM M-Th
  - Closed on Friday
- The clinic is closed during university vacations and holidays.

*All clients have the right to receive timely, competent counseling services consistent with the ethical principles and guidelines established by professional organizations. All counseling services provided at the Counseling Practicum Clinic are guided by the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct, the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the American Counseling Association, the American School Counseling Association, the American Rehab Counseling Association, the General Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services, and the Specialty Guidelines for the Delivery of Services by Counseling Psychologists.*

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#### **We're on the Web!**

[http://cms.bsu.edu/Academics/  
CollegesandDepartments/Teachers/  
Departments/CounselingPsych/  
Practicum.aspx](http://cms.bsu.edu/Academics/CollegesandDepartments/Teachers/Departments/CounselingPsych/Practicum.aspx)

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