



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

December 2024

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Through our monthly newsletters, Let's Talk About aims to educate and connect with our clients by raising awareness on issues that pertain to mental health - our specialty.

Your story matters and so do YOU!

DECEMBER IS SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD) AWARENESS MONTH

December is recognized as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) Awareness Month. This observance aims to raise awareness about the impact of S.A.D., a type of depression that occurs at specific times of the year, usually during the fall and winter months when daylight hours are shorter. It is more commonly known as seasonal depression. We discuss strategies on how to mitigate some of these side effects in an effort to endure these gloomier times.



MINDFUL GIFTING: INTENTION AND LOVE TIPS AND TRICKS

In a world where consumerism often dominates the holiday season, mindful gifting offers a refreshing, heart-centered alternative. A meaningful gift leaves a lasting impression, making both the giver and receiver feel valued. It's about being intentional, thoughtful, and conscious of how we choose to express our love and appreciation for others.



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS ROOTED IN GROWTH, NOT PRESSURE

New Year's resolutions are a tradition in many cultures, offering a fresh start and the opportunity to set new goals or improve existing habits. However, many people find that resolutions are difficult to



maintain beyond the early weeks of January. In this newsletter we discuss some tips for setting realistic, sustainable resolutions and making lasting changes in the New Year.

LET'S TALK ABOUT LITERATURE ATOMIC HABITS BY: JAMES CLEAR



Atomic Habits by James Clear focuses on the power of small, incremental changes to build good habits and break bad ones. By focusing on systems rather than goals, Clear shows how tiny habits compound over time to create significant personal growth. He helps readers design habits that align with their identity and lead to lasting transformation.



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Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) Awareness Month

A.K.A. SEASONAL DEPRESSION

As the days grow shorter and darker, many people experience shifts in mood and energy levels. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression linked to changes in seasons, typically emerging in the fall and winter months. Common symptoms include low energy, difficulty concentrating, increased sleep, and feelings of sadness or irritability.

If you or someone you know experiences these challenges, it's important to recognize the signs and take steps toward self-care and support.

Strategies to Help Combat S.A.D.:

Maximize Exposure to Natural Light

- Spend time outdoors during daylight hours, even on cloudy days. A brief walk in the morning can make a big difference.
- Keep your curtains open and sit closer to windows to let in natural light.

Consider Light Therapy

- Light therapy boxes mimic natural sunlight and can be highly effective. Use one for 20-30 minutes in the morning to boost mood and energy.

Maintain a Healthy Routine

- Consistent sleep, regular exercise, and balanced nutrition are key to managing symptoms.
- Incorporate mood-boosting activities like yoga, meditation, or journaling into your daily life.



Stay Connected

- Reach out to friends, family, or support groups. Social interaction helps reduce feelings of isolation.
- Schedule regular check-ins with loved ones to stay engaged.

Seek Professional Support

- Therapy is a powerful tool for addressing the emotional challenges of SAD. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has been shown to be particularly effective.
- Consider speaking with a wellness professional about whether medication might be right for you.

Practice Self-Compassion

- Understand that it's okay to feel off during the darker months. Be patient and kind to yourself as you navigate your emotions.

Clinician Corner



"At Let's Talk About, we understand how challenging the winter months can be. If you're struggling with S.A.D. or feeling overwhelmed, our team is here to help. Contact us today to

learn more about our services, including different types of therapy and resources to brighten your winter season.

Michelle Asencio, L.M.H.T.C.

Mindful Gifting: Giving with Intention and Love

HOW TO MAKE SOMEONE FEEL SEEN

Gift-giving is a universal way to express care and appreciation, but not all gifts are created equal. A thoughtful gift resonates deeply, showing the recipient that you value their uniqueness. On the other hand, rushed or generic gifts can sometimes feel impersonal, missing the opportunity to strengthen your bond.

This season, let's explore how to gift with purpose and love, creating meaningful connections through the act of giving.

Why Mindful Gifting Matters

It Reflects Your Relationship

- A well-chosen gift demonstrates that you've listened, understood, and cherished the recipient's preferences and interests.
- Careless or generic gifts can unintentionally send the message that the relationship was an afterthought.

It Builds Emotional Connection

- Research shows that meaningful gifts strengthen relationships by fostering gratitude and mutual appreciation.

It Creates Lasting Impact

- Thoughtful gifts are memorable because they carry emotional value, not just material worth.

How to Gift Mindfully

Listen and Observe

- Pay attention to their interests, hobbies, and values. What have they mentioned wanting or needing? Have they expressed excitement about a specific topic or activity?



Think About Their Love Language

- Gifts that align with their love language can be especially meaningful. For example:
 - Acts of Service: A handwritten coupon book offering help with tasks.
 - Quality Time: Tickets to a shared experience, like a concert or class.
 - Words of Affirmation: A heartfelt letter or personalized item with a meaningful quote.

Prioritize Experiences Over Objects

- Experiences, like a spa day or a cooking class, often bring more joy than material possessions, as they create lasting memories.

Add a Personal Touch

- Handmade or personalized gifts show effort and thought. For example:
 - A photo book capturing shared moments.
 - A handwritten note explaining why you chose the gift.

Focus on Utility and Joy

- Practical gifts can also be meaningful if they simplify the recipient's life or bring daily joy. For instance:
 - A high-quality item for a hobby they love (e.g., art supplies, cooking gadgets).
 - A subscription to something they enjoy, like a streaming service or monthly wellness box.

Avoid Gifting Out of Obligation

- Mindful gifting means giving because you want to, not because you have to. If your heart isn't in it, consider a simple, heartfelt gesture instead of a physical gift.

Breaking Free from the “New Year, New Me” Mindset

REALISTIC RESOLUTIONS

The new year often brings a rush to set resolutions, but studies show that 80% of resolutions fail by February. This high failure rate is often tied to toxic expectations, lack of proper planning, and setting goals that are more rooted in societal pressures than personal growth. Research from the University of Scranton emphasizes the importance of making resolutions specific, attainable, and intrinsically motivated to sustain them over time.

Instead of falling into the trap of traditional resolutions, let's explore how to set yourself up for success with goals that inspire growth and foster well-being.

The Science Behind Why Resolutions Fail

Unrealistic Expectations

- Research shows that extreme, outcome-focused goals—like “lose 20 pounds in a month”—are less likely to be achieved because they ignore the process of gradual change.

All-or-Nothing Thinking

- Studies indicate that rigid thinking patterns, such as expecting perfection, lead to feelings of failure when inevitable setbacks occur. Behavioral flexibility is a stronger predictor of long-term success.

Lack of Intrinsic Motivation

- Goals driven by external pressures (e.g., societal ideals) are less sustainable than those aligned with personal values and intrinsic rewards.

Neglecting the Power of Habits

- Resolutions that rely on willpower alone often fail because they don't incorporate habit-building strategies, which are critical for long-term behavior change.



How to Set Resolutions You Can Stick To

Make Resolutions SMART

- Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound (SMART) goals are proven to increase the likelihood of success. For instance, instead of “be healthier,” try “cook one nutritious meal at home three times a week.”

Focus on Systems, Not Just Outcomes

- Build habits rather than obsess over end results. For example, if you want to improve fitness, commit to scheduling workout time weekly rather than fixating on the scale.

Tie Goals to Personal Values

- Identify why the goal matters to you. Research shows that intrinsically motivated goals—like “spend more time with family to feel connected”—are more effective than extrinsic ones.

Track Progress with Self-Reflection

- Journaling or using habit-tracking apps can improve accountability and provide a tangible record of growth, reinforcing motivation.

Practice Self-Compassion

- Self-compassion reduces anxiety and increases resilience, making it easier to bounce back from setbacks.

By reframing resolutions as opportunities for steady progress rather than drastic transformation, you're more likely to experience success. Remember, achieving small, meaningful changes can lead to significant improvements in your overall well-being.

At Let's Talk About, we're here to support your journey with evidence-based strategies and resources. Whether you're looking to create sustainable habits or overcome challenges, our team is ready to help. Contact us for more information.



Let's Talk About Literature



Atomic Habits

By: James Clear

Atomic Habits by James Clear is a comprehensive guide on how to make small changes in your habits that can lead to remarkable results over time. The book outlines practical strategies for building good habits, breaking bad ones, and mastering the tiny behaviors that lead to success. Clear's central thesis is that habits are the compound interest of self-improvement—small changes add up to big results. It's a great resource for anyone looking to make lasting improvements in their personal or professional life through small, manageable changes.

Key concepts Clear addresses are:

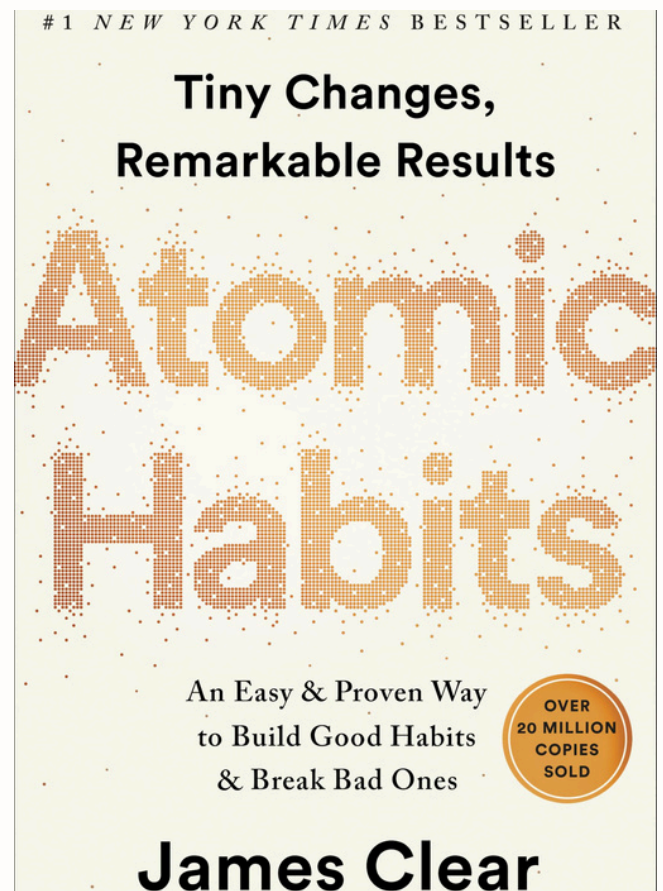
- The Power of Atomic Habits
- The Four Laws of Behavior Change
- The Importance of Identity
- Habit Stacking and the Two-Minute Rule
- The Plateau of Latent Potential
- Environment Design
- The Role of Tracking and Feedback
- How to Break Bad Habits

How can this book help you?

Reading *Atomic Habits* by James Clear and using the accompanying workbook can significantly help you in making lasting changes to your habits and achieving your personal or professional goals. Many people are not even aware of the workbook's existence and how impactful it can be in your self-improvement journey.

The book itself provides a deep dive into how habits are formed, why they stick, and how they can be changed. Clear presents the Four Laws of Behavior Change (Make it Obvious, Attractive, Easy, and Satisfying), which help you understand the mechanics behind good and bad habits.

The workbook translates these concepts into actionable steps. It helps you reflect on your current habits, identify the triggers and rewards, and then design new habits or strategies for breaking bad ones.



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Mental Health Counseling
Psychological Immigration Evaluations



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OUR CLINICIANS

Michelle Asencio

Specialties: Anxiety, Depression, Mood disorders, Sexuality issues, Sex Therapy, Couples, Marriages, Adjustment Disorders, Pre- Marital. **Spanish Speaking. 13 years old +**

Modality: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Sex Therapy, Solution Focused Therapy, Client Center Therapy, Brief Solution Therapy, Couples Therapy

Kaiza Canales

Specialties: Anxiety, Depression, Anger Management, Mood Disorders, Adjustment Disorders, Pre-Marital, Couples Therapy, Trauma Focus, Parenting, Social Skills - **Spanish Speaking. 6 years old +**

David Gomez

Specialties: Anxiety, depression, Anger Management, Mood Disorders, Adjustment Disorders, Behavioral Issues, Parenting Issues, Parenting, Autism, Social Skills. **Spanish Speaking. 3 years old +**

Breckin Crowley

Specialties: Anxiety, Depression, Mood disorders, Anger Management, Mood Disorders, Adjustment Disorders, LGBTQIA+, Transgender, Substance Abuse, Trauma, Alternative Lifestyle, Sexuality, Couples Therapy, Social Skills . **Adults 18 +**

Paola Balseca - Registered Mental Health Counselor Intern

Specialties: Anxiety, Depression, Pre & Postpartum Depression, Anger Management, Mood Disorders, Adjustment Disorders, Behavioral Issues, Parenting Issues, Social Skills, Couples, Domestic Violence. **Spanish Speaking. 6 years old +**

Tisifenee Taylor - Registered Mental Health Counselor Intern

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

At Let's Talk About, our mission is to provide compassionate, evidence-based mental health therapy that empowers individuals to overcome challenges, cultivate resilience, and live fulfilling lives. We are committed to creating a safe and supportive space where clients can explore their thoughts, feelings, and experiences without judgment. Through collaborative and personalized treatment approaches, we strive to promote healing, growth, and positive change. Our goal is to empower clients to harness their strengths, develop effective coping skills, and cultivate meaningful connections with themselves and others. Together, we work towards fostering a community where mental health is prioritized, stigma is challenged, and individuals thrive.



WE APPRECIATE YOUR REFERRALS!



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