

# TOWNHALLER

*The official newsletter of Townhall II*



## Gaming: Benefits, Issues, and the COVID-19 Impact

*Amanda Burke, Ph.D., CTRS, CHES*

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#### **What Is Gaming?**

Gaming refers to playing electronic games, whether through consoles (PlayStation, Nintendo Switch, etc.), computers (downloaded or online), or mobile phone apps. A person who is into gaming is often called a gamer. There are literally millions of video games, and each game, regardless of category, will have vastly different themes and goals. Granic, Lobel, and Rutger (2014) explain that video games may be played cooperatively (a team to win) or competitively (against others to win), or alone. Even when alone, a person may play with other physically present players, or with thousands of other online players. Individuals interested in learning how to play, advance, or beat a game may turn to Twitch. This is a popular streaming platform where a gamer will broadcast" their gameplay or activity by sharing their screen with fans and subscribers who can hear and watch them play live.

#### **COVID and Gaming**

The number of global media consumers engaging in gaming due to the coronavirus pandemic, either watching online or playing, has hit a staggering high of 82%. New data also show that 46% of gamers say they are playing more video games now than before quarantine (Nielsen, 2020).

#### **Signs of a Gaming Issue**

The American Psychological Association (2019) has identified nine warning signs to watch for when it comes to recognizing an issue with gaming.

1. Preoccupation with video games.

**Signs of a Gaming Issue Continued**

2. Withdrawal symptoms such as irritability/anger, anxiety, boredom, cravings, or sadness.
3. Tolerance – the need to spend increasing amounts of time engaged in video games.
4. Unsuccessful attempts to control participation in video games.
5. Loss of interests in previous hobbies with the exception of, video games.
6. Continued excessive use of games despite knowledge of psychosocial problems.
7. Has deceived family members, therapists, or others regarding their gaming.
8. Use of video games to escape or relieve a negative mood.
9. Has jeopardized/lost a significant relationship or opportunity because of gaming.

**If you or someone you know struggles with gaming, resources are available through [Computer Gaming Addicts Anonymous](#) and [Game Quitters](#).**

## Happenings this Month

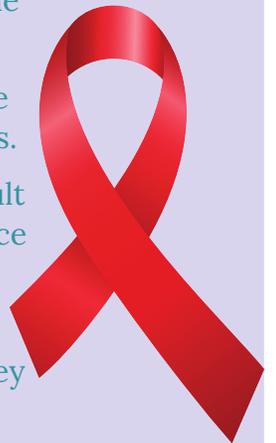
### National Substance Abuse Prevention Month

In an effort to ensure the health of our entire community, Townhall II believes in the power of prevention!

When a child or adolescent uses illegal substances, it not only can affect things like growth and development, but it can also lead to addiction and other risky behaviors.

Educating our K-12 population in substance abuse prevention can also keep our adult population healthier. By teaching students resistance skills as it pertains to substance abuse early in life, we can help prevent health issues in adulthood such as heart disease, respiratory issues and high blood pressure among other things.

Educating students in substance abuse prevention also gives them the skills that they will need to be productive adults such as goal setting, managing emotions and decision making.



### October 11th: National Coming Out Day

Celebrate diversity on this 32nd anniversary by raising awareness of the LGBTQ+ community.

Ways to observe the day:

Support someone coming out.

Show off a pride symbol through clothing, flags, pins, or a sign on your door.

Donate to the Human Rights Campaign.

Learn more [here](#).

### October 24th: National Make A Difference Day

One small gesture can completely change someone else's day!

Remember, we never know what someone else may be going through and how something very simple can make a big impact. Take the time to do something for someone else!

Suggestions: pay for someone's lunch, hold open a door, pick up the trash in the neighborhood, compliment someone, or send a text to someone you haven't talked to in a while just to let them know you care!



# Mental Health Tip of the Month

Sarah McCully, OCPS

## Yoga Nidra

This is a type of yoga that is designed not for your body but for your mind. I found this about 15 years ago when I was going through a very stressful time. This was an incredible help then and it is a go to for me today! My 12 year old daughter loves doing this with me and will often ask if we can do this from time to time. If you have access to You Tube, you can absolutely find this and utilize it! I suggest finding a time when you know that you will not be interrupted (if that is possible) and plugging headphones into your phone. You will be laying down flat so keep that in mind. There are several versions to choose from on You Tube. I will tell you the ones I have used but feel free to use what you like and what appeals to you!

My favorite is **The Wholeness of Your Nature – The Little Yoga Nidra by Swami Janakananda**. This one is the shortest, coming in at 20 minutes and 23 seconds. He has a thick accent, but he is very soothing to listen to (as well as the soothing sounds playing in the background). It is very similar to mindfulness if you have ever participated in one of those activities.

He also has a 45 minute one called **Discovery of Your Self – The Deep Yoga Nidra**. I recently tried one for deep sleep that was really helpful. My suggestion is to NOT listen to this one with headphones. I would get comfortable and get ready for bed. Lay in bed while you listen and participate. You will most likely fall asleep while doing this and falling asleep with headphones on makes me so nervous! The sleep one is called **Yoga Nidra for Sleep – Guided Meditation to Fall Asleep Fast**. It is 1 hour long. Again, these are just suggestions as they are ones that I have used. There are many to choose from. Try them out and find one that works best for you!

# Fall Family Fun

Juliana Myers, CHES

There are many activities families can do together to make the most of autumn. This season in Ohio comes and goes quick! A fall staple ingredient in Ohio is apples. What better way to share this with the family than making different apple recipes. Indulge in some apple crisp, apple pie, caramel apples, or even homemade cinnamon apple chips. [Here](#) is a list of easy apple recipes.

It's never too soon to start preparing for the spookiest day of the year! The schedule for Freeform's 31 Nights of Halloween 2020 begins October 1st and includes many family-friendly favorites like Hocus Pocus, Beetlejuice, The Hotel Transylvania and more. Check out the full list of movies [here](#) to plan your movie nights!

A super easy, and traditional activity to do with the family includes pumpkin carving. There are a few places in Portage County that you can pick your pumpkin from the farm, or just stop by your local grocery store and pick up a pumpkin from there! It may take a minute to find ideas of what to carve or how to decorate. There are so many free prints and templates you can find online. Click [here](#) for a list of free beginner templates to use with the family. If you would like to try something different, click [here](#) for a list from Pinterest that includes many other decorating ideas that you may not have ever thought of!

[Here are 55 more activities to try this year!](#)

# Support those in Recovery

*Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services / Portage County Mental Health and Recovery Board*

Oftentimes, individuals who experience a mental illness or substance use disorder feel isolated and alone. Yet, every year, millions of Americans experience these conditions. Families and communities can make a difference by creating environments and relationships that promote acceptance.

With commitment and support, people with these disorders can achieve healthy lifestyles and lead rewarding lives in recovery. By seeking help, people who experience mental health and substance use disorders can embark on a new path toward improved health and overall wellness.

Support from families is essential to recovery, so it's important that family members have the tools to start conversations about prevention, treatment, and recovery. Too many people are still unaware that prevention and treatment works, and that mental illness and substance use disorders can be treated, just like other health problems.

"Mental illness and substance use disorders affect people of all ethnicities, ages, genders, geographic regions, and socioeconomic levels," stated John Garrity, PhD, executive director of the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County. "We want people to know that help is available. These individuals can get better, both physically and emotionally, with the support of a welcoming community."

**Free and confidential help is available 24 hours a day through the Townhall II Helpline at 330-678-HELP (4357) and the Crisis Text Line at 741741.**

## Staff Spotlight

### Barb Wensel



**Start Date:** August 8th, 1999

**Current Title:** Chief Financial Officer & Chief Operating Officer

**Previous Job Titles at Townhall II:** Billing Manager, Financial Systems Manager, Finance Director

**Background in the field:** "I ended up in accounting by accident. I went to Bowling Green for 4 years but never had enough classes in one subject to have a major. I took one accounting class but I didn't like it. I moved to Chicago and started working at the Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company, in the accounting department. I discovered that I kind of liked accounting after all. So when I decided to go back and finish my degree, I majored in accounting. When I moved back to Ohio, I started working for another non-profit agency. And I liked feeling like I was making a difference. I actually worked at Children's Advantage for a few years (when it was called Portage Children's Center). I started working as a consultant at Townhall II, helping to straighten out some Medicaid billing. And I just stayed."

**Fun Fact about Barb:** Her bowling average is 190!!

**Favorite Quote:** "It is what it is."