

# CATG BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH STAFF

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## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AIDE PROGRAM

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Red Ribbon Week "Crazy Hair" - Venetie & Fort Yukon

## RED RIBBON WEEK ACTIVITIES

In October, the Behavioral Health department sponsored five days of activities in recognition of the National Red Ribbon Week - which raises awareness about Drug Prevention. Activities were held throughout the week of October 23-27th (and during the first week of November in Venetie) and included a Crazy Hair day, Wear Red day and a door decoration contest. Donations from local organizations were used to provide door prizes and a pizza luncheon for winners of the door contest. Activities in November included movie nights, and a community "Gratitude" Lunch. Thank you to everyone who participated and to our generous donors!

## ANNOUNCEMENT

In October, the Behavioral Health Department was awarded an MSPI (Methamphetamine, Suicide Prevention Initiative) Generation Indigenous grant to "empower youth and families to be a catalyst for positive change." This grant will cover the cost of a full-time Project Facilitator and a part-time Project Coordinator.

This project has four goals:

1. To provide culturally based prevention activities
2. To engage families in understanding child development and increase knowledge of positive parenting
3. To provide youth with traditional knowledge to help foster leadership skills and develop positive self-esteem
4. To teach youth traditional values including collaboration, observation, conservation, and respect through participation in cultural activities.

This project will focus on providing prevention services to residents of the Yukon Flats villages of Arctic Village, Beaver, Birch Creek, Fort Yukon and Venetie. Keep an eye out for upcoming announcements and activities relating to this program!



In October, the Health Department held Health Fairs in Fort Yukon, Venetie and Arctic Village. In Fort Yukon, the BH department distributed over 120 brochures and other materials. We also had a "jail"—health fair participants received a "Get Out of Jail" card once they visited the BH table while our police officers gave out "Go to Jail" cards with different scenarios on them. Special thanks to the City of Fort Yukon Police Department who helped with this activity!

## TIPS TO MAKE STAYING SOBER A LITTLE BIT EASIER OVER THE HOLIDAYS

Remaining sober can be especially hard during the holidays. Family gatherings, holiday parties, and other social occasions can be very difficult for someone who is in early recovery, or for anyone trying to abstain from using substances. Thoughts of past holiday occasions often bring up memories of celebratory drinking, drugs, or gambling.

It can be very hard to get used to the idea of a sober holiday season, especially when other people around you are seemingly having a great time celebrating by using substances or gambling. But deciding to abstain from using substances or completing a stay at a treatment center is an accomplishment that you should be proud of.

Take this opportunity to celebrate not only the holidays, but also your new life of sobriety. This in itself is something really worth celebrating. If you find yourself struggling during the holiday season, please remember that you are not alone. Help is only a phone call away! Here are some helpful and practical tips to make staying sober a little bit easier.

- 1. Plan each and every day of your holiday season.** Plan to spend the majority of your time with friends and family who are supportive of your recovery.
- 2. Find a meeting in your area.** Many groups have special meetings during the holidays to share their experience, strength, and hope. Check the local papers for a meeting near you. Alaska AA telephone meeting from home, Mondays from 5:30-6:30pm. Call: 641-715-3273. Access code: 243831. Note: this is not a toll-free number. Or sign up for SMART Recovery online meetings ([smartrecovery.org](http://smartrecovery.org) > Forum > Meeting Schedule). Check with BH staff.
- 3. Ask for support from family and friends.** Those who are truly supportive of your recovery will be happy to help you throughout the holidays.
- 4. Have a list of ten people you can call.** Make a list and check it twice. Carry your cell phone and list of names at all times.
- 5. Don't forget about regular exercise.** Regular exercise is an essential component of any balanced recovery program.
- 6. Stay away from slippery places.** There is absolutely no reason to ever check out your former favorite establishments—including the homes of former drinking buddies.
- 7. Create new traditions to replace your old using patterns.** Buy a new board game or take the family on a snowmachine ride. Use your imagination, be creative, and have fun.
- 8. Write out a daily gratitude list.** The quickest cure to get you out of the holiday blues is by counting your blessings and be grateful for what you have every morning.
- 9. Volunteer your services to a charitable organization.** There are many people in your community who are less fortunate than you. You will be helping not only the needy but yourself!
- 10. Write a letter to yourself** – “How I stayed sober over the holidays.” The act of writing your ideas on paper is very powerful. Write down all the activities and events that will help you have a healthy, happy, and sober holiday season.
- 11. Avoid H.A.L.T.** – Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired. If you are hungry, get something to eat. If you are angry, talk to somebody about it. Feeling lonely? Go to a meeting or call a friend. If you are tired, get a good night's sleep.
- 12. Live one day at a time and enjoy your sobriety.** Stay in the moment and live one day at a time. Never mind about what happened or what could happen. Enjoy today. Live today. Celebrate your sobriety!

<https://projectturnabout.org/12-tips-for-staying-sober-during-the-holiday-season/>

## DEALING WITH GRIEF DURING THE HOLIDAYS

For many people, the holiday season is one of the hardest times in grief. We miss our loved ones even more than usual. How can you celebrate togetherness when there is none? When you have lost someone special, your world loses its celebratory qualities. Holidays only magnify the loss. The sadness feels sadder and the loneliness goes deeper. The need for support may be the greatest during the holidays. You can and will get through the holidays. It is not the grief you want to avoid, it is the pain. Grief is the way out of the pain. There are a number of ways to help get you through the holidays.

**1. Be honest about your grief.** There's pressure to have a joyful holiday even when nothing has gone wrong in life. You're not a Grinch, you're in grief! Don't feel the need to fake it or be happier than you actually are. You don't have to have holiday joy!

**2. Include the loss into your holidays.** The grief is there anyway. Light a candle in their honor. Dedicate the prayer before dinner to your loved one. Have everyone at the dinner table share a favorite story about your loved one that died.

**3. Take your grief online.** Facebook in the new town square. Share photos of past holidays with loved ones now gone. Also there are many closed Facebook groups, just for those grieving. Also many pages have messages to help you navigate loss. You will quickly see others are also feeling loss during the holidays.

**4. For events, always have an exit strategy.** You don't have to stay. Feel free to say, you just wanted to drop by or you have another event to get to. You can even text yourself if you need to...time to go!

**5. Re-evaluate your rituals.** Choose what works and doesn't. You can even cancel a holiday. You don't have to do those 200 Christmas cards. You don't have to cook the dinner. Free yourself.

**6. “No” is a complete sentence.** You should not have to do anything you don't want to do. And you don't have to explain it. “No, thank you” also works well.

**7. Pay attention to the children.** They are often the forgotten grievers. We think since kids seem busy in school they are fine. Or it's easier to focus on the adults. But children feel the grief and have less life experience and tools to deal with the loss.

Holidays are clearly some of the roughest terrain we navigate after a loss. The ways we handle them are as individual as we are. These holidays are part of the journey to be felt fully. They are usually very sad, but sometimes we may catch ourselves doing okay, and we may even have a brief moment of laughter.

[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-kessler/7-tips-for-those-dealing-with-grief-during-the-holidays\\_b\\_13688346.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-kessler/7-tips-for-those-dealing-with-grief-during-the-holidays_b_13688346.html)



# 2017 IN REVIEW



Cookie decorating in Venetie



Elders day in Venetie



Choose Respect march in Venetie



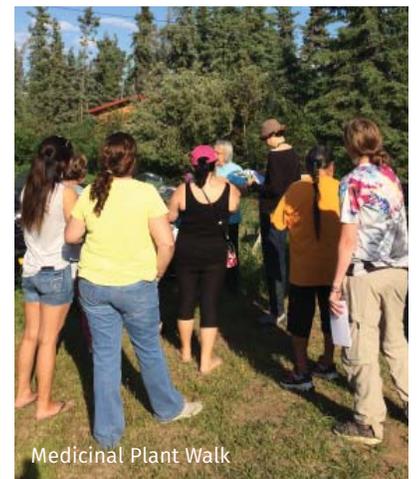
Choose Respect march in Venetie



Game night!



Archery in Fort Yukon



Medicinal Plant Walk

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Monday & Tuesday, December 18 & 19 - Fort Yukon Cookie & Ornament Decorating

4:00-6:00pm

Addie Shewfelt Building

Join us in preparing for the Christmas holiday!

All ages welcome!

Materials will be provided!

Co-sponsored by CATG EHS and ICWA

### Tuesday, December 19 - Fort Yukon Elder Social

12:00-2:00pm

Addie Shewfelt Building

Join us for a movie & luncheon!

### Wednesday, December 20 - Fort Yukon Christmas Caroling

5:00am-7:00pm

Meet at Addie Shewfelt Building

Time to sing holiday favorites!

### Friday, December 22 - Fort Yukon Holiday Baking

2:00-4:00 pm

Addie Shewfelt Building

Everyone welcome! Join us in making holiday treats!

### Friday, December 22 - Fort Yukon Christmas Decoration Contest!

Entries due by noon - judging at 5:00pm

Call 662-7545 to enter your home for the contest!

Winner will receive \$200 cash, 2nd place - \$100 AC gift card, 3rd place - gift basket

Sponsored by BH, GZGTG, AC Value Center, Snowdrift Bed & Breakfast, and the City of Fort Yukon

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

The CATG Behavioral Health Program provides professional, confidential, and culturally appropriate mental health and substance abuse services. Through a variety of services the program promotes healing, personal growth, and healthy living for the individual, family, and community.

All services start with a basic screening and information gathering session. If you would like to make an appointment, please contact our office at 662-7545.

**If you feel that you are experiencing a crisis, please call the Yukon Flats Health Center: (907) 662-2460. After hours crises may be directed to the on-call number (907) 662-2462.**

CareLine (suicide hotline):  
877-266-HELP (4357)

National Child Abuse Hotline:  
800-25-ABUSE (22873)

National Domestic Violence Hotline:  
800-799-SAFE (7233)

## Coming soon! SMART Recovery Program

SMART Recovery® is a program dedicated to helping people gain independence from harmful addictive behaviors through safe, friendly mutual support meetings, science-based and secular SMART Recovery 4-Point Program® and principles and tools, all of which are proven to help people overcome their addictive behavior.

SMART Recovery® is:

- The leading self-empowering support group in addiction recovery. Participants learn tools for recovery based on the latest scientific research drawn from outcome research on addiction treatments and observational studies of "natural recovery" and participate in a worldwide community that includes free, self-empowering, science-based mutual help groups.
- A program that helps people recover from all types of addictive behaviors, including: alcoholism, drug abuse, drug addiction, substance abuse, alcohol abuse, gambling addiction, cocaine addiction, and addiction to other substances and activities.
- A secular program without spiritual or religious requirements; we neither encourage nor discourage religious or spiritual beliefs, but religious or spiritual proselytizing has no place within our program. SMART Recovery® is entirely separate from the 12-Step or "Anonymous" programs.
- Able to serve as either a primary or a supplemental recovery program, so everyone is welcome! It is up to each individual to determine whether our program and its meetings will serve as their only self-help and mutual-support group or as a supplement to professional treatment or other recovery programs.

SMART Recovery® meetings (both face-to-face and online) provide:

- Mutual support. Our meetings allow people to find and to give social support to those in the group who wish to change (or who are considering changing) harmful habits and improving their lives.
- For the discussion and exchange of useful information and the dispelling of misinformation. Our meetings allow the introduction of proven and practical tools and techniques for change. People appreciate the opportunity to participate in our open discussions and return for additional discussion and exchange.
- Modeling and acceptance. Our meetings allow participants to meet both models of change and success along with other people who share their problems, concerns and successes. In this way, our meetings provide hope by example and the realization that people are not alone in their struggles with addictions or addictive behaviors.

The SMART Recovery 4-Point Program:

1. Building and Maintaining Motivation
2. Coping with Urges
3. Managing Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors
4. Living a Balanced Life

Meetings  
starting in  
January!



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