

# impact

Behavioral  
Health  
Partners

## Impact Behavioral Health Partners Notes and News

### March 2021

#### IN THIS ISSUE

Spotlight	p. 1
IPS Success!	p. 2
Clinical Corner	p. 3
Covid-19 Vaccine Info	p. 4
Calendar	p. 5
ProduceMobile Flyer	p. 6

## Spotlight: Free Tax Help

If you worked in 2020 you could be eligible to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Last year, 25 million eligible workers and families received a combined \$63 billion through the EITC.

If you worked in the last 3 years and you did not claim the EITC in those years but were eligible, you can still apply for EITC benefits by filing an amended tax return.

For more information about the EITC, visit [www.irs.gov/eitc](http://www.irs.gov/eitc) or call (800) 829 – 1040.



Ladder Up provides free income tax preparation and electronic filing for individuals with annual incomes up to \$30,000 and families with annual incomes up to \$57,000. IRS-certified volunteer tax preparers assist in filing federal and state income tax returns for tax year 2020.

Visit [www.goladderup.org](http://www.goladderup.org) or call (312) 409 – 1555 for more information.

If you send Impact a rent check, please be advised that it may take longer than usual to clear your account.

This is because Impact is depositing checks only once per week, due to working remotely to stay safe during the pandemic. Also, please bear in mind that the U.S. Postal Service has been consistently late delivering mail.

Impact highly encourages our participants to get the Covid-19 vaccine. However, we recognize that vaccination is not mandatory.

Whether you choose to get the Covid-19 vaccine or not, Impact will continue to serve you either way. Your ability to receive services from us will not be affected by your choice to get or not get the Covid-19 vaccine.

# IPS Success!

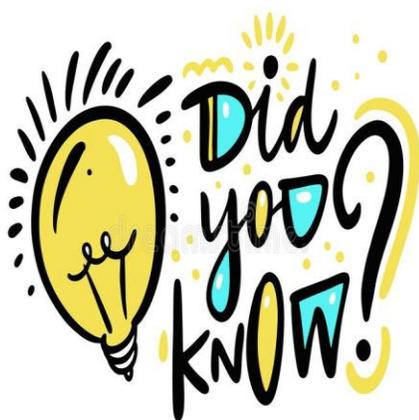
*By Paige Lauerman, Lead Employment Specialist*

Raymond joined the IPS program in October 2020 after being referred to employment services from his Turning Point clinician. When Raymond first joined the program, he was working part-time as a key holder in a retail position that he had been in for over two years. Raymond's primary goal was to find a different job that would help him become more financially stable. Raymond was also interested in finding a job that had skills that could translate to a future career.

Raymond committed to weekly meetings with his employment specialist and they developed a collaborative plan to work on his resume, cover letter, applications, and job interview preparation. After exploring different careers, Raymond learned he was interested in working at either an art store or a dispensary. Every week, Raymond and his employment specialist would work together during their weekly meeting to submit applications that matched Raymond's job preferences and skill set.

While Raymond and his employment specialist submitted applications weekly, Raymond did not hear back from employers for a few months. With continued persistence, determination, and optimism, Raymond heard back from a local dispensary and was invited to a job interview. Before Raymond's job interview, he and his employment specialist spent a session reviewing job interview skills, as well as developing questions for Raymond to ask the employer, which revolved around things that were important to him in a workplace. It is always important to remember that job interviews are also an opportunity for the candidate to ask questions to the employer to assess whether the job is a good fit.

A few days after the job interview, Raymond received a call from the dispensary manager offering him the position as a Full-Time Cannabis Consultant. Not only is this job an increase in hours, but it was also an increase in pay for Raymond by \$2 an hour from his previous position and offers benefits! Raymond started his training for this new position in February and is extremely excited to continue learning and developing a career in a field he is interested in and passionate about. Raymond and his employment specialist are continuing to meet weekly in order to continue processing through any work-related stress. While the pandemic has greatly impacted our lives and job market, there is still hope. Congratulations to Raymond, as he continues to work on and accomplish his employment goals!



- The employment team has placed 40 individuals since July 2020!
- Employment Specialists have made over 930 contacts with employers since July 2020!
- *"There is no magic to achievement. It's really about hard work, choices, and persistence." - Michelle Obama*

## Clinical Corner

# Why Your Body Hurts During the Pandemic

If you're experiencing pain during this time of stress and sheltering—headaches, migraine, low back pain—you're not alone. Pain is commonly triggered, and amplified, by negative emotions like stress, anxiety, anger, and depression. And that's no coincidence: It's biology.

Emotions don't just live in your head—they also come out in your body. Nervousness before a presentation creates "butterflies" in your stomach. Depression can make your limbs feel heavy, and make you walk and talk slowly. Fear makes your heart race, eyes widen, breath quicken, palms sweat, and body feel jittery. Anger can make your face hot, jaw clench, and muscles tighten.

Anxiety and stress also manifest physically, and in different ways for different people. While the human stress response evolved to protect you, it can also wreak havoc on your body—particularly when sustained over long periods of time.

### Biological Explanations for Physiological Responses

**Stress Hormones.** When in a state of distress, the body releases the stress hormones adrenaline and cortisol into the bloodstream. This involves multiple involuntary changes: blood pressure goes up (which can trigger headaches and migraines), breathing becomes shallow (often resulting in light-headedness and dizziness), digestion halts and the Enteric Nervous System is disrupted (triggering stomachaches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or constipation), blood rushes away from your extremities to your core (causing cold hands and feet), heart rate increases, and muscles tighten, including those in your back. These physiological changes can result in body pain from head to toe.

**Brain Changes.** When stress and anxiety are high, brain sites that regulate pain – including your cerebral cortex (the part of your brain responsible for thoughts) and limbic system (your brain's emotional center) – send messages to your body, which makes your body feel worse. The opposite is also true: when you're calm and relaxed, experiencing positive emotions like joy and gratitude, the brain sends messages to the body to decrease body pain.

### How to Change Pain

Pain is not just "all in your head." But to regulate pain, we must find ways to regulate our emotions – particularly our stress, anxiety, and mood.

If you're one of the millions of people experiencing pain during this pandemic, it's critical to connect brain with body, emotional with physical.

One way to do this is to **identify coping mechanisms that help your body feel better.** These include going outdoors, exercising, finding ways to safely be with friends, and using relaxation and mindfulness techniques.

Research also shows that **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)** is a particularly effective treatment for chronic pain, is non-addictive, and has zero side effects. CBT is even associated with reduced need for pain medications, including opioids.



# Clarifying the Covid-19 Vaccine

*By Aaron, Master of Science, Impact Housing Participant*

I'm writing today as a fellow resident of the program to talk about Covid-19 vaccination. I happen to have a master's degree in biochemistry, so this is kind of my jam. There have been a lot of rumors and misinformation circulating about the Covid-19 vaccine and vaccination in general, so I wrote this to help.

Our immune systems work by recognizing foreign invaders in our bodies. The strength of this system is its ability to adapt, to recognize and repel new invaders as we encounter them. The weakness, however, is that there is a delay of 3-4 weeks for our immune systems to 'learn' how to recognize a new invader. What vaccination does is teach our immune systems about a new invader, which shortcuts the learning time. This gives us 3-4 weeks advantage repelling the invader.

Covid-19 kills people because it overwhelms them during this lag period. Then when their immune system finally does respond, the response is overkill. This causes massive inflammation which leads to death. One of the best parts about these new vaccines is that even if their efficacy is reduced against a Covid-19 variant, they still give the immune system a head start. This is usually enough to prevent the most serious outcomes. So for instance, even though a vaccine's efficacy might be reduced to 50%-60% against some variant, it likely is still 90%+ effective at preventing death or 'long Covid'.



One of the most asked questions about this vaccine is whether it is safe. The answer is that the ingredients are mostly substances that have been already shown to be safe in previous studies. The only unique component is the new Covid-19 mRNA, the active ingredient.

The science behind this says that it is very unlikely to cause problems in the long term. It will not get into your DNA. Individuals can be allergic to the other ingredients, and those people should not receive the Covid-19 vaccine, or wait for another version which has different ingredients.

Some people may be unaware that they are allergic to an ingredient, and may have allergic reactions. This is why people wait for 15 minutes after vaccination before leaving the vaccination site. Other side effects include chills and headaches, which are just symptoms of one's immune system getting to work 'learning'.

The bottom line is, nothing is perfectly safe, but the odds of dying from Covid-19 are much higher than dying of side effects from the vaccine. In summary, Covid-19 vaccines are relatively safe, much safer than being unvaccinated, and help reduce the spread of the virus.

Another frequently asked question is whether it will still be necessary to wear a mask after getting vaccinated for Covid-19. Unfortunately, the answer is yes. Vaccination does keep you from getting overwhelmed and sick from the virus, but does not prevent all virus replication and shedding from occurring.

However, there's little doubt it does reduce the odds of transmission by reducing its replication in an immune host, so getting vaccinated is also a 'team effort' for Americans to take back our lives as a nation. The more of us get vaccinated, the safer we all become from Covid-19, because of reduced spreading from vaccinated people.

# March 2021

## Important Dates, Groups, and Events

If you have an appointment scheduled with Dr. Solomon, someone from Impact will contact you about your appointment.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 1pm: Online Socialization Group with Nathaly  1pm: WRAP Group with Ana and Maria	5 11am: Knitting Online with Briana  2pm: Game Group with Tiana and Ana	6
7	8	9	10	11 1pm: Online Socialization Group with Nathaly  1pm: WRAP Group with Ana and Maria	12 2pm: Game Group with Tiana and Ana	13
14	15	16	17	18 1pm: Online Socialization Group with Nathaly  1pm: WRAP Group with Ana and Maria	19 11am: Knitting Online with Briana	20
21	22	23	24	25 1pm: Online Socialization Group with Nathaly  1pm: WRAP Group with Ana and Maria	26 11am: Knitting Online with Briana  2pm: Game Group with Tiana and Ana	27
28	29	30	31			

### To Join a Group, Contact the Group Organizer

Nathaly Shammo – email [nshammo@impactbehavioral.org](mailto:nshammo@impactbehavioral.org) or call (847) 971 – 6745

Ana Poulos – email [apoulos@impactbehavioral.org](mailto:apoulos@impactbehavioral.org) or call (224) 308 - 7995

Briana Hornsby - email [bhornsby@impactbehavioral.org](mailto:bhornsby@impactbehavioral.org) or call (847) 323 – 5682

Tiana Smith – email [tsmith@impactbehavioral.org](mailto:tsmith@impactbehavioral.org) or call (847) 440 – 6201

Maria Moreno – email [mmoreno@impactbehavioral.org](mailto:mmoreno@impactbehavioral.org) or call (847) 316 - 1497

\*Please note that other forms of crafting, such as crocheting or macramé, are welcome in Briana’s knitting group.

# FREE PRODUCEMOBILE! FRESH VEGETABLES & FRUIT

Levy Center Parking Lot  
300 Dodge Ave. Evanston, IL

9:30 am -11:30 am  
2nd Tuesday every month

- While supplies last
- Cook County residents only
- Drive-Up (PREFERRED) or Walk-Up (bring cart)
- Numbers distributed on arrival
- Drivers enter from Southbound Dodge only
- Face mask/covering required
- Outdoor distribution, rain or shine
- NO seating available

**NEXT DATE:**  
March 9, 2021

**FUTURE DATES:**  
April 13  
May 11

FOR MORE  
INFORMATION CALL  
**847-475-1150**  
OR **734-646-7170**



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