

Lifestyle

Behavioral health then and now

This column is part of Healthy Adams County's 25-year anniversary monthly publications.

In 1996, when the foundations for Healthy Adams County were being laid, there were already concerns about the availability of mental health services for Adams County residents.

The Adams County Partnership for Community Health, as it was then known, had a committee centered around the area's spiritual and mental health needs.

Mary Stevenson and Barbara Schmitthener have shared with me about their early efforts to define those needs and begin to address them. They developed programs to raise awareness about things such as the incidence of depression and dealing with grief, meeting with diverse groups across the county.

By 2004, Healthy Adams County had been shaped into the organization we know today and that early spiritual

committee had coalesced into the first Behavioral Health Task Force, with Mary as chairperson.

That task force had the advantage of being able to shape itself around the challenges that were revealed by early needs assessment data, together with specific goals laid out in the federal Healthy People 2010 plan for health promotion.

The new task force resolved to improve mental health and quality of life through community-led processes. They identified key opportunities for improvement related to access to mental health care, community education, and advocacy on behalf of people with mental health needs. They found transportation sources to move people to points of care and searched out sources of funding to improve local services.

On the clinical side, they worked to de-stigmatize mental challenges, offering some of the first depression

HEALTHY ADAMS COUNTY

Julie Falk



screenings in the community. Dr. Margaret Swartz stepped into the role of chair around 2009 and, together with Jayne Wildasin, worked to bring more behaviorally-focused agencies and mental health providers to the table.

They developed a working committee on suicide-prevention, while continuing to sponsor mental health fairs, educational programs about drug and alcohol use and recovery, and depression. One of their key achievements was the publication of Adams County

Mental and Behavioral Health Providers, a useful guide distributed widely in the county.

Today, the task force continues in an environment that has grown steadily more complex, dedicating itself to advocacy, education, and service. Acknowledging the access issues, the shortage of mental health providers, and the socioeconomic stresses that are persistent in our area, the task force works to connect people with resources and to help people help themselves.

The behavioral health guide is updated and a new guide to behavioral health services for children was produced last year. We continue to support training in stress reduction skills and ensure the inclusion of mental health concerns in our Spring Summit fairs and other educational offerings.

This pandemic year has been especially challenging, with levels of anxiety and depression increased by

the rigors of isolation, illness, and job loss. We have worked to provide accurate information to the community about how to access help, producing handouts and newsletters for distribution through foodbanks and on the internet.

A diverse membership now includes representatives from counseling and service agencies, the Veterans Administration, senior services, school counselors, children's advocates, and behavioral health managers. We are very proud to be sponsoring a film series online to address the stress and anxiety of young people. The film "Angst" will debut online on May 16, followed by an expert panel discussion, with repeat presentations. We welcome you to this and to all our events and interactions in the year to come.

Julie Falk, Ph.D., teaches mindfulness and Focusing, and chairs the Behavioral Health Task Force.

The planting green scene with cover crops

Cover crops are a practice that many farmers in Adams County, and throughout the nation, use to help conserve soil and nutrients while building organic matter.

The practice involves planting a "crop" after harvesting the cash crop. This cover crop is not harvested. It is planted to cover the soil (thus the name) to provide the benefits listed above. So, in your travels around Adams County you may see these lush green fields this spring that turn into corn or soybeans in a few short weeks.

The management of the cover crops has a big impact on their success or failure, and sometimes even the best management can have poor results.

One of the biggest difficulties in dealing with that lush green cover is

when to desiccate (or kill) it. If you kill it too early the fields may stay wet for too long and planting of the cash crop can get delayed or additional tillage practices may be needed to dry the field. If you wait too long, the cover crop may draw out too much moisture resulting in dry conditions and germination problems for the cash crop.

Additionally, the longer you wait the thicker and taller the cover crop will get resulting in potentially difficult conditions for planting the cash crop.

One technique being used with more frequency in dealing with timing issues is "planting green". This concept centers on the idea that when the field conditions are suitable, when they are dry enough and warm enough

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Brian Sneeringer



for germination, the farmer plants his cash crop directly into the green cover crop.

The cover crop can be desiccated at the same time the cash crop is planted or the farmer can come back within a few days of planting to do it. By planting green, a farmer can better manage the crucial timing for planting the cash

crop. With cover crops and planting green, farmers need special planting equipment (drills and planters, by name) that are designed to cut through the cover crop, cut a slot in the soil, drop the seed in that slot and then close the slot again.

Even with the proper equipment, close monitoring of the process needs to be done in order to adjust for changing conditions to ensure proper seeding depth. Planting into a green, growing cover crop takes some patience, attention to detail and some would argue guts. The process is a far cry from traditional planting practices, and it takes some "getting use to."

The visual results of running down a cover crop can be disconcerting. A

newer equipment attachment gaining popularity is a cover crop roller. Used in front of the planter or drill, it lays the cover crop down in one direction for easier planting and provides a mulch to reduce moisture loss and to help prevent weed germination.

With agriculture being one of the oldest professions, one would think that we know all there is to know about how to do it. However, Adams County farmers are still learning and are still experimenting with new ideas that help not only themselves but the environment as well. Remember that when you see a farmer running equipment through a perfectly green field.

Brian Sneeringer is an agricultural conservation technician for the Adams County Conservation District.

Markets' reach impacts community

I first want to thank everyone who joined us on the opening day of the farmers market earlier this month. It was so amazing to see tons of people showing up to support their favorite vendors, despite some inclement weather. That level of community support is truly inspiring. So, what are the factors that contribute to a community-supported farmers market organization? This month I want to identify five aspects of our organization that demonstrate the impact of our work.

Food access programs – Expanding access to locally produced food is at the core of what we do. Over the years, our food access programs have proven to be extremely impactful. The ACFMA currently serves more than 1,000 income-eligible shoppers and administers nearly \$50,000 in food access benefits per year, with a total

increase of over 350% since 2011. Our food access programs are made possible by collaborating with our community partners such as the Gettysburg Hospital Foundation and Healthy Adams County.

Gateway to agritourism – Our market acts as an effective conduit for agritourism destinations around the county. Vendors at our market are able to direct visitors to other areas of interest, such as pick-your-own locations, retail farm markets, craft beverage retailers, farm-to-fork restaurants, and more. Over 750 customers visit the market every weekend, many of whom are visitors who want to experience all that Adams County has to offer. We are also excited to be taking part in Destination Gettysburg's Crop Hop passport program to further connect folks with a variety of agritourism experiences.

AT THE FARMERS' MARKET

Reza Djalal



Inclusive marketplace – We cultivate a welcoming marketplace by holding free, family-friendly events and educational programming to supplement our regular shopping experience. We also host many community organizations so that they can reach a wide audience while helping customers discover valuable resources.

We were recently awarded a \$15,000 grant from South Mountain Partnership (SMP) to help fund additional educational programming from SMP partners at the market and expand this important component of our work.

Small business incubator – Historically, our market has served as a small business incubator where agribusiness startups can begin to develop their business model. At the farmers market, vendors can test the popularity of new products, build up their customer base, and generate revenue, and do this all with extremely low overhead costs. To date, more than 40 small business startups have gotten started at our market. This year, for instance, we were proud to host the official grand opening of Ziggy Donutz.

Data-driven operations – Our work is data driven, based on proven

methods from the Farmers Market Coalition (FMC) and PA Farm Markets. We collect data to track the growth of the market, determine how best to support our vendors, and take informed steps towards sustainability. According to a report from the FMC, our market is one of only 10% of farmers market organizations in the country that systematically collects data this way. Clearly, the accomplishments we have been able to achieve and grant funding secured are evidence that this is an effective way to operate a strong, community farmers market.

Reza Djalal is the market manager for the Adams County Farmers Market Association. If you have any questions about the ACFMA you can reach him at manager@acfarmersmarkets.org or visit our website: acfarmersmarkets.org.

Mask Mouth: Truth or Fiction?

Is there such a thing as "mask mouth?"

In today's column, I will address this timely, popular question, and explain how the pandemic is affecting our dental health.

Masks provide a barrier that keeps respiratory droplets from spreading to others. The CDC's guidelines call for mask wearing in public places as a critical key to preventing the spread of COVID-19.

While masks can protect our overall health, are they affecting our dental health? I've had many patients ask if "mask mouth" is truly a syndrome.

Some patients describe "mask mouth" as:

- Feeling like their mouth is

- constantly dry
- Experiencing their own bad breath

While the American Dental Association (ADA) does not recognize "mask mouth" as a syndrome, some dentists—including myself—are fielding questions from patients. So the short answer is "no," masks are not causing these conditions—however, wearing masks may increase your awareness of dry mouth or bad breath.

First, let's address dry mouth. Also called xerostomia, dry mouth is basically an inadequate flow of saliva. It's often experienced by people who take specific medications, such as antihistamines, decongestants, pain killers, or diuretics.

Why is saliva so important to our dental health? It's your primary defense against tooth decay because it maintains the health of your mouth's soft and hard tissues.

"Saliva washes away food and other debris, neutralizes acids produced by bacteria in the mouth and provides disease-fighting substances throughout the mouth, offering first-line protection against microbial invasion or overgrowth that might lead to disease," according to the American Dental Association.

You can stimulate your saliva and help alleviate dry mouth by:

- Drinking water frequently
- Eating healthy foods that require chewing—like carrots or apples
- Having sugar-free gum or hard candies

Now let's tackle a subject many of us like to avoid: bad breath. While masks don't con-

HEALTHY SMILES

Dr. Rita Tempel



tribute to bad breath, they may make you more aware of your own bad breath. What causes bad breath? The offenders include: odors from the food we eat, bacteria naturally found in your mouth, and smoking. If bad breath is something you are constantly noticing, it may be a warning sign of advanced gum disease, which is caused by plaque—a cavity-causing bacteria.

Tips for sweetening that bad breath include:

- Be sure to brush and floss your teeth twice a day. This is the number one way to get rid of the bacteria causing your bad

breath!

- Quit smoking to not only improve your breath, but your overall health as well.
- Regular dental checkups can help stop bad breath from becoming a more serious issue such as

gum disease. But the pandemic is causing much bigger dental concerns than mask mouth.

Stress is leading to dental issues in record numbers. According to the American Dental Association (ADA) Health Policy Institute, more than 70% of dentists surveyed say they are seeing an increase in patients experiencing teeth grinding and clenching as a result of stress. And, more than 60% of dentists are treating more patients with chipped and cracked teeth, as well as symptoms of TMD (temporoman-

dibular joint disorder) such as headaches and jaw pain.

"As the pandemic continues, dentists are seeing stress-related dental conditions more and more," said Marcelo Araujo, D.D.S., M.S., Ph.D., ADA chief science officer. "It's more important than ever for people to maintain their dental health, including seeing the dentist regularly to address any issues that could have long-term impact."

Dr. Rita Tempel is an Accredited Member of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry and owner of Gettysburg Smiles Cosmetic & Family Dentistry as well as a Diplomate of the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine and owner of Sweet Dreams Gettysburg, 2018 York Road, Gettysburg. For more information, visit GettysburgSmiles.com, follow @ritatempel on Instagram or like her Facebook page @Gettysburgsmiles or call 717-339-0033.

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