



HCQU Northwest



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FLAG DAY WITH THE HCQU



We hope that you enjoyed yourselves at the event!

We were so pleased to be able to get together for Flag Day. This was the first year back and at a new location also.

We could not have such a wonderful event if it weren't for the volunteers and staff that make it possible for the individuals to attend. Thank you so much!

There is a lot that goes into such an event! We would love to hear your feedback. Drop me a line or call and let us know how we can improve or what you liked and even didn't.

We are looking forward to next year and have even started in the planning process.

We look forward to next year's 18th annual Event.

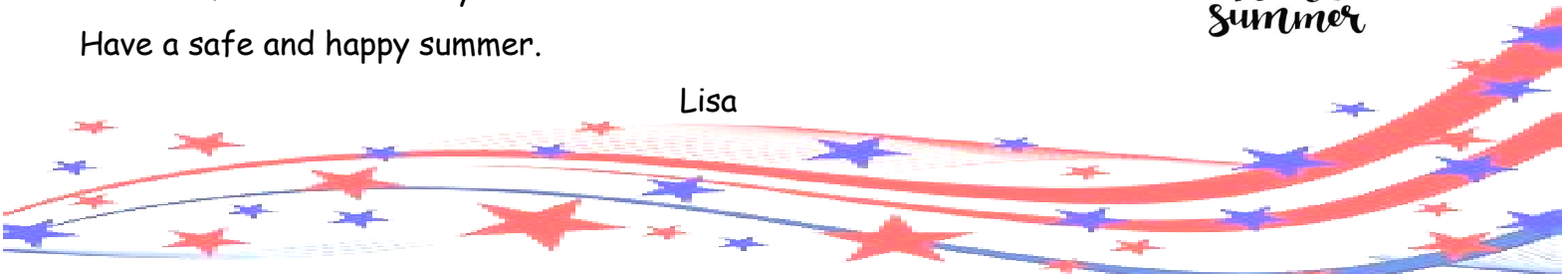
Have a safe and happy summer.

Lisa

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*Hello
Summer*



New at the HCQU

Hey Everyone! My name is Krista Fitzsimmons, and I am the new Training Coordinator here at Milestone HCQU Northwest.

I've spent the past 15 years in the banking industry, starting as a teller, working my way up to Office Manager, and Small Business Banker. I oversaw a staff of 10, while writing mortgages, home equities, personal and car loans. My office was consistently in the top 20 branches bank-wide in 2022, earning many leadership and results driven awards. I created a warm and inviting atmosphere for my customers and employees where I was their trusted advisor and mentor. I truly enjoy meeting and working with new people and am so excited to bring that here to the HCQU.



Before moving to Warren, I grew up just a couple hours upstate from New York City in a small town that only had a flashing light. Since living here in the beautiful countryside I've done everything from raising chickens, pigs, and cows, to camping and boating on the Kinzua Dam. I also spend a lot of time reading, exploring new culinary experiences with my significant other and trying to spend as much quality time as I can with my teenagers, Ryan and Carly. We enjoy traveling together and have been to many fun locations like Death Valley National Park and the beaches of Miami. When I'm not taking time for myself or family, you can catch me giving back to the community. I've been involved in volunteering and organizing the 12-hour food drive in conjunction with Erie News Now, or up on stage/behind the scenes of many productions for our local theater and the Warren Players. Although I typically run spotlights for these productions, this summer I'm heading back to the stage for the first time since 2018 in Footloose. I'm so excited to become part of the team here at Milestone and can't wait to meet each and every one of you!

Summer Safety Suggestions

After what feels like forever, it's finally summertime again! We can get outside again and enjoy sunshine and the beauty of nature that our area has to offer! We are fortunate to have so many places around us to go hiking, picnicking, or even boating/swimming. It seems like eve-ry weekend somewhere nearby has a fair or festival of some sort. Here are a few things to remember when enjoying the outdoors this summer.

One of the most important things to remember is the sun's UV rays. Protecting yourself and your family from them can prevent potential problem like sunburns and skin cancer. Using sunscreen with at least an SPF of 15, even on cloudy days, can provide protection from UV rays. Make sure to apply to any area exposed to the sun and remember to reapply every 2 hours and after swimming/water exposure. Wearing a hat and sunglasses helps keep the UV rays away. It's also important to not look directly at the sun, as this can cause damage to the retina.

Ticks seem to be everywhere these days, even in your own backyard. It is important to check yourself, your family, and pets for ticks after outside excursions. Ticks are tiny parasites, usually measuring between 3 and 5mm, that can transmit diseases, including Lyme Disease. When checking for ticks, make sure to look thoroughly at all areas, especially "warm" areas like inner elbows, belly button, groin, or webbing between fingers and toes, as these are areas they like to be. They may be crawling on the skin or clothing. If you should miss one and it becomes embedded, it is important to remove it completely and correctly. Visit https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing_a_tick.html for easy removal directions. If a tick is removed, monitor the area for the next few days for a rash. If a rash or fever develops, notify your primary care provider, as an antibiotic may be needed.

When outside on a hot day and/or in direct sunlight, most people sweat, causing your body to lose fluid and electrolytes. Drinking water or a sports drink can help replenish what is lost through sweating. Remember, if you're in the woods, there may be many water sources, but these do not always provide safe drinking water. These can be contaminated with many different types of bacteria. It's best to bring your own drink(s) with you. It is recommended to drink half of your body weight (in ounces) normally, but you may need to drink more than that when you're sweating.

When spending time outdoors, having a basic first aid kit available is also a good idea. There are many different hazards outside, not just in the woods. It's easy to get a cut or scrape from a "pricker" bush or a fall. Cleaning an open wound and covering it can keep germs out and prevent infection (especially if an antibiotic ointment is applied). Some small first aid kits even have supplies for a sling or splint. First aid kits can be purchased, or you can make your own.

If you're swimming or boating/kayaking, remember water safety as well. Accidents can happen so quickly. Never swim alone. Make sure to supervise children, even if they are good at swimming. Have life jackets available for everyone who may be on a boat/kayak. Be mindful that depths of bodies of water can quickly change.

Have a wonderful summer!

Allison Gentz





Speaker of the Month Webinars

July 19, 2023

9:30AM – 11:30AM

"Supporting People with IDD Through the Justice System"

presented by

Shawn McGill

August 16, 2023

9:30AM – 11:30AM

"Using Grounding Techniques (tent)"

presented by

Connie Copley

September 20, 2023

9:30AM – 11:30AM

"Vicarious Trauma"

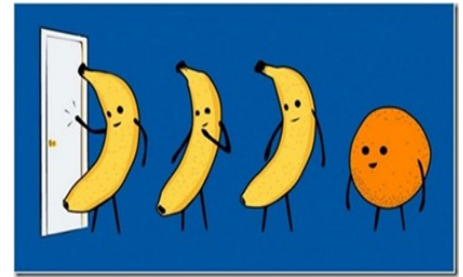
presented by

David Delveaux

To register for this **free** event, go to <http://northwesthcqu.learnupon.com>.

By Amy Tobolski

By now, you may have heard about the health benefits of laughter. A good belly laugh engages our diaphragm, bringing more oxygen into our lungs to benefit our brain, heart, and other organs. It causes the release of endorphins - our body's "happy chemicals" (and pain reliever). It reduces our risk of heart attack and stroke and improves the functioning of our immune system. One of the best things we can do for our health is to laugh more. While there are benefits to hearing a funny joke, are there any benefits to *telling* a joke?



August 16th is National Tell a Joke Day. Learning to tell a good joke can have multiple social benefits:

- Social connection - A joke provides a "scripted" interaction that creates a connection between people. Laughing together unites people, creating a buffer against disagreements and disappointment.
- Conversational skills - A joke can work as a conversation starter, making people more likely to engage. It also provides a sense of the back-and-forth nature of conversation.
- Language development - Jokes typically rely on puns and word play. Learning that a word can have more than one meaning can help increase vocabulary and comprehension.
- Non-verbal communication - Using your tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures, and timing are part of telling a joke, which can help individuals see how non-verbals enhance communication.
- Positive feelings - Developing a good sense of humor improves one's ability to handle stress, adapt to changes, and problem-solve more creatively. It also has been shown to improve self-esteem and decrease symptoms related to mood disorders. It feels good to make someone else laugh!

Keep in mind that the kinds of jokes people find funny will depend on their developmental level. For some, physical humor ("slapstick") might be what cracks them up. They may need someone to explain jokes based on puns or word play. Don't wait until National Tell a Joke Day! Start telling jokes with the people you support. Start at home so you can explain if needed. This also gives them a chance to practice telling jokes to get inflection and timing right (and ensure that it is an appropriate joke to be told in public).

Here are a few to get you started:

1. *What kind of lion doesn't roar?*
2. *When do ducks wake up?*
3. *What is an old snowman called?*
4. *Why didn't the skeleton go to the dance?*
5. *If you have 13 apples in one hand and 10 oranges in the other, what do you have?*
6. *Knock, knock. Who's there? Howl! Howl who? Howl you know if you don't open the door?*



1. A dandy-lion
2. The quack of dawn
3. A puddle
4. He had no body to dance with
5. Really big hands

If You Haven't Registered to Vote, Now is the Time!

Did you know? National Voter Registration Day is celebrated on the fourth Tuesday in September. This is a civic holiday that recognizes our right to vote and therefore, to have a say as to who our local, state, and federal leaders will be. Voting is one of the most important rights we have as American citizens. Many brave people fought and died to preserve our rights and freedoms, so we should not take them for granted.

If you are already registered to vote, great! If not, you can become a registered voter here in Pennsylvania. To do so, you must: be a United States Citizen, have lived in Pennsylvania and your particular election district for at least 30 days before the next election, and be at least 18 years old on the day of the next election.

So, how do you register to vote? Easy! You can register in person, register by mail, or register online.

To register in person, visit the local county registration office, which is usually located in your county courthouse. You can also go to the PennDOT Photo License and Driver's License Center nearest you. You will need to provide a form of identification when you register in person (driver's license, photo ID, or birth certificate). When you arrive, they will ask you to present your identification information and fill out a voter registration form. After you complete the form, you can expect to receive your voter registration card in the mail.

To register by mail, you can download the voter application at this site:

<https://www.vote.pa.gov/Resources/Documents/>

[Voter Registration Application English.pdf](#). Then you will need to print the form, fill it out, and mail it to your county voter registration office.

Be sure to put a stamp on the envelope before you mail it! As above, you can expect to receive your voter registration card in the mail.



To register online, visit the following website: <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/>

[VoterRegistrationApplication.aspx](#). Follow the instructions and complete the form. Again, you will receive your voter registration card in the mail.

There you have it! Three simple ways to be able to make your voice heard in the next election. Once you are registered to vote, you can cast your vote in the next election. Good news: No one has the right to prevent you from voting because of your race, religion, or sex, or because of a mental or physical disability! So, if you haven't registered to vote yet, now is the time!

Tim Juliano

It is important for people to take care of themselves, but sometimes it can be difficult to practice self-care, especially when life gets stressful. A self-care plan can be a helpful tool. A self-care plan is a well thought-out set of practices one uses to care for themselves. Not only can creating a self-care plan be very helpful when trying to create consistency in developing self-care, it can also help create a balance for your mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health. The following are the steps needed to create a self-care plan. First, you need to take a look at how you cope with stressful situations when they arise. Do you use positive or negative coping strategies? Be sure you are honest with yourself. Next, recognize your daily self-care needs. Are your needs professional, physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, or social? Decide what kind of support you need for your overall well-being on a daily basis. What coping skills do you currently use? Are they helpful? What coping skills would you like to try? When a crisis arises, it is helpful to understand what is most beneficial for you. It is helpful to know both what to do and what not to do. What helps? What makes things worse? Make a list of positive coping skills, such as walking, yoga, exercising, taking a bath, listening to music, etc. Stay away from negative coping skills such as, smoking, drinking, yelling, swearing and so on. Make a list of what works for you. The sooner you recognize that you need to use these coping skills, the more successful you will be at using them. Also, if you want to continue being successful, practice. Practice using these skills and practice using them before a crisis begins. If you want to have a preventive measure, feel more in control in crisis situations, and establish a routine, you may want to create a self-care plan.

Area of Self Care	Current Practices	Practices to Try
Physical - eat regular and healthy meals, good sleep habits, regular exercise, medical check-ups, etc.		
Emotional - engage in positive activities, acknowledge my own accomplishments, express emotions in a healthy way, etc.		
Spiritual - read inspirational literature, self-reflection, spend time in nature, meditate, explore spiritual connections, etc.		
Professional – pursue meaningful work, maintain work-life balance, positive relationships with co-workers, time management skills, etc.		
Social – healthy relationships, make time for family/friends, schedule dates with partner/spouse, ask for support from family and friends, etc.		
Financial - understand how finances impact your quality of life, create a budget or financial plan, pay off debt, etc.		
Psychological – take time for yourself, disconnect from electronic devices, journal, pursue new interests, learn new skills, access psychotherapy, life coaching, or counseling, etc.		

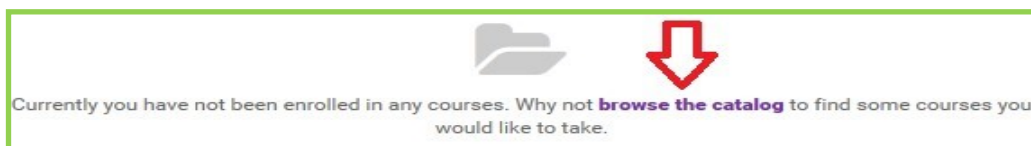
FLAG DAY



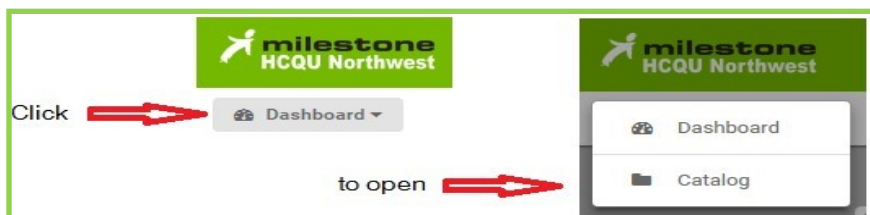
WITH THE HCQU



Welcome to the Milestone HCQU Northwest Online Training Portal. It can be accessed at <http://northwesthcqu.learnupon.com>. The first time you visit our portal, you will need to create an account by clicking the "Sign up now>>" link. Once you have completed your registration and verified your email account, you will be directed to your Dashboard, where you can access our catalog by clicking here:



Or here:



When you find a course you're interested in, you can click the Enroll button to take the training, or click on the training title for more information about it. Once enrolled, just click Start to begin the course. You can download and print the material to read at your leisure or read it online. Then you take a short quiz to test your knowledge. If you pass the quiz with at least an 80% score, you will be directed to our evaluation. Once you submit the evaluation, you will be able to download your certificate to file or print.

If you experience any problems when trying to access our training portal, please contact us at hcqunw@MilestonePA.org, and please check back often as we continue to add new content to the portal.

Webinars

July 2023	6	Tim Juliano	Sleep/Sleep Disorders
	13	Connie Copley	Autism 101
	20	Amy Tobolski	Social Stories
	27	Allison Gentz	Hepatitis
August 2023	3	Tim Juliano	Balance
	10	Connie Copley	Grief and Loss
	17	Amy Tobolski	Trauma and the Brain part 1: Hurt
	24	Allison Gentz	Long COVID
	31	HCQU staff	HCQU Question Session
Sept. 2023	7	Tim Juliano	Alzheimer's Dementia
	14	Connie Copley	Suicide Awareness
	21	Amy Tobolski	Trauma and the Brain part 2: Helping
	28	Allison Gentz	Prostate Health/Cancer

Letter from the Director

Now that summer is here, my non-work thoughts move toward gardening, and hopefully harvesting some fresh food that is good for me (those who know me also know that I also love baked goods and coffee; balance is my target, so that I can enjoy both food groups). In some ways working for the HCQU is just like gardening. Instead of taking care of plants by watering, fertilizing, and weeding we take care of people by providing trainings and technical assistance to caregivers so that you can help the individuals that you serve. By taking classes and learning new topics, you can better recognize more of the things that impact the individuals and then help them be the best that they can be (or "Be all you can be," just like the US Army).

While it is too bad that I cannot pick fresh vegetables in January, I do enjoy what we are given and do my gardening in the summer. While I admit that my garden is not perfect, I always work toward making it better - just like you do with people. If there is a way that the HCQU can help you anytime during the year feel free to call us to schedule a training or request other assistance. Stay safe, drink water, eat vegetables, and keep on moving.

Darryl

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Hello
Summer

