

# Your Wellness

Strategies for Mental Health, Career, and Family Success

Issue 136 May 2026

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## Dr. Recco's Corner

We are halfway through the year 2026 and boy have I learned a lot about myself, other people, life, and business entrepreneurship. One of the main lessons and truths I have learned is the need to be prepared. Like so many others, I can spend hours being busy and fail to be prepared.

Just because we are busy, grinding, or tired, does not mean we are prepared. As I talk with various friends who are excelling and moving forward in their dreams and hopes, I consistently hear a theme of "I was prepared, and I leaped on the opportunity when it was presented to me." They do not say they were busy, trying, or wishing. Rather, they were prepared.

To be better prepared, I have made several adjustments in my thinking and daily routine. For example, I now prepare my food instead of just cooking it. I prepare to play a round of golf, instead of merely going out and playing. I prepare for each day of the week instead of jumping into the day without a plan. It is the little things and adjustments in life that can lead to bigger returns for us.

Perhaps, just perhaps, being better prepared is what we all need right now to have more success. The break in life we have been waiting for might be wrapped in our being prepared. We should get it in our minds, hearts, souls, and desires a goal to be prepared.

I feel like shouting from the roof top "Prepare Ye, Prepare Ye, Prepare Ye." I earnestly believe that now is the time to prepare. Will you prepare for the outpouring that is coming? I will! Will you be prepared and ready to excel and dominate? I will! Will you be ready and prepared when chance, opportunity, destiny, and purpose call your name? I will!

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*"You can have victory  
over depression."  
Dr. Recco*

# A Look At Anxiety

By: Hannah Rau, Master's Level Counseling Intern

## What Anxiety Is (And What it Isn't)

Anxiety is an internal response that helps us anticipate and respond to perceived threats. At its core, anxiety is about protection and preparation, not pathology. It becomes problematic only when it is excessive, persistent, or interferes with daily functioning.

Anxiety is different from stress, although the two are often related. Stress typically refers to an external demand or pressure, whereas anxiety reflects an internal response that may persist even when no immediate threat is present. It is also important to note that anxiety is not a personal weakness or a failure of coping. Rather, it is a biologically ingrained system that can become overactive due to a variety of internal and external factors.

## How Anxiety Shows Up: Mind, Body, & Behavior

Anxiety is a whole-system experience that affects how individuals think, feel physically, and act in the world. Rather than existing solely as a mental state, anxiety reflects the interaction between cognitive processes, physiological responses, and learned behavioral patterns. These components continuously influence one another, often reinforcing anxious cycles over time. Understanding the stated helps us recognize that anxiety is not “all in my head,” but a coordinated mind-body response.

**1). Mind:** In the mind, anxiety often appears as ongoing worrying, overthinking, expecting the worst to happen, poor concentration, feeling mentally stuck, replaying situations repeatedly and being focused on uncertainty and “what if” scenarios that makes it hard to feel calm or present.

**2). Body:** Anxiety can show up in the body through physical sensations, often referred to as somatic concerns in counseling. Common experiences include a racing heart, tight muscles, shallow breathing, stomach discomfort, or feeling shaky or restless. Some individuals feel tense or on edge even when there is no clear danger.

**3). Behavior:** Anxiety can influence how people act to reduce discomfort or to make them feel safer. This can include avoiding certain situations, withdrawing from others, feeling vulnerable and uneasy in public, and seeking reassurance. While these behaviors may help in the short term, they often keep anxiety going by limiting opportunities to build confidence. Anxiety can also lead to procrastination or difficulty engaging fully in daily activities. Becoming aware of these behavior patterns is an important step toward change taking place within us.

## Culture, Development, & Contextual Factors

Anxiety is not caused by just one thing in life, rather, it is shaped by cultural, developmental, and contextual influences. Cultural values affect how anxiety is expressed, interpreted, and addressed. In some cultures, anxiety may be communicated through emotions or physical symptoms, or even a combination of the two. Some cultures are more or less accepting when talking about mental health, which can also influence how anxiety is expressed, or a lack of expression.



Hannah Rau  
Master's Level Counseling Intern

“It is critical that we understand anxiety.”

Developmental stages also play a significant role. What is considered developmentally appropriate anxiety in childhood, such as separation fears, may be viewed differently in adulthood. Contextual stressors such as socioeconomic instability, discrimination, trauma exposure, and systemic oppression can heighten anxiety and reduce access to coping resources.

### The Purpose of Anxiety

From an evolutionary perspective, anxiety serves as a critical survival function. It prepares the body to respond to danger by making us alert, engaged, and focused. This response, often referred to as the fight, flight, or freeze system, helps us survive real physical threats.

In modern life, however, this same system can be triggered by psychological or social stressors such as life's demands, upcoming deadlines, conflicts with others, reminders of trauma, or uncertainty.

Anxiety is less helpful when it is chronically activated without the presence of immediate danger. Recognizing the protective intention behind anxiety can help us shift our mindset from wanting to get rid of anxiety to learning how to regulate it and understand it.

### Grounding & Calming Techniques

Various techniques and strategies for managing our anxiety are well documented in research and clinical trials. Below are a few strategies and techniques that help us manage anxiety.

**1). Being Grounded:** Grounding and calming techniques aim to help us reconnect with the present moment and regulate our nervous system. These strategies are not about suppressing anxiety but about creating enough safety for the body and mind to settle. Slow, intentional breathing can activate the parasympathetic nervous system and reduce our physiological arousal.

**2). Sensory:** Sensory-based grounding, such as noticing physical contact with the floor or identifying sounds in the environment, can shift our attention away from anxious thoughts. The shift frees our mind and emotions of clutter and concerns.

**3). Movement:** Gentle movement, progressive muscle relaxation, and mindfulness practices can also support regulation. At the core, movement and being active promote healing and inner-peace.

When practiced consistently, the forementioned ideas can help us develop a greater awareness of our mental states and respond to anxiety with increased flexibility and self-compassion.

“Healthy anxiety helps us survive.”

# Welcome

To Our Team of Mental Health Therapists!



Jianda Leslie Hu, BA  
Master's Level Counseling  
Intern



Chaunjon'a Verdun-Jennings, BA  
Master's Level Counseling  
Intern



Hannah Rau, BA  
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effective & skilled."  
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## Therapist's Spotlight

Featuring: Shirley Lea-Lawson, BSW, MS, LPC

Shirley Lea-Lawson is the Therapist Spotlight for May. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor here in the State of Michigan. She works contractually part-time here at Recco S. Richardson Consulting (RSRC). Recently she began serving as the full-time Director at a local agency. Her duties include providing counseling services, building community relationships, and developing programs. She is dedicated to helping the community in any way she can and that can be shown with her experience in mental health. Shirley has experience working in substance abuse, which is beneficial for those seeking a therapist that understands substance use. In general, substance abuse treatment services are an area that is not studied by therapists often. However, having a background in this area can be beneficial to therapists and their clients.



Shirley Lea-Lawson  
BSW, MS, LPC

"Shirley is insightful,  
warm, and caring."  
Dr. Recco

### 1. What should a person no longer tolerate in their life?

Shirley shared that within life, we all start to just tolerate whatever we are experiencing, but we should not have to tolerate anything. We should not tolerate disrespect, manipulation, dishonesty, and emotional abuse. As professionals, these are things that we hear from our clients daily. Our job is to help guide them through setting boundaries so that they do not continue to experience disrespect, manipulation, dishonesty, and emotional abuse. Shirley added that she often ask her clients the following questions. Why do you tolerate being treated poorly by others ? Why do you feel like that it is ok? Would you tell a friend, family, or your children to deal with and accept it?

### 2. Why is it important for you and your clients to ask for what is needed?

Very calmly, Shirley offered that everyone needs something different, especially when coming to therapy. Not everyone needs help with their relationship, communication, psychoeducation on mental health, etc. Sometimes people just need to talk about their past, or the anxiety they feel when they get into their car every morning before work. She went on to say that asking for what is needed ensures that she and her clients find solutions that are beneficial and promote progress. It also helps ensure that clients are getting what they want and expect from their counseling sessions.

### 3. What is the best advice someone has ever given you?

With a smile on her face, Shirley said the best advice she has received was from her mother. Her mother told her that if she wanted an education, she had to work hard and apply herself to her studies. Her mother knew that Shirley wanted to attend college for her undergraduate degree and needed some direction. It was the advice that Shirley she needed at the time. Shirley went on to say that we all need a little guidance on what we should do. It is beneficial to have people and a support system that will listen and offer some suggestions when needed.

### 4. Share your thoughts about success and how to secure it.

Success looks different for everyone since everyone has different goals in life, said Shirley. She believes that success is achieved by setting goals, being consistent and persistent, and by hard work. We are not going to be handed what we want in life. We must work for it. We must know what we want in life and out of life. This is something clients and their therapist talk about and work towards.

## **5. When in doubt, what do you encourage your clients to do?**

When in doubt, Shirley encourages her clients to validate their feelings and focus on their strengths. She argued that clients often move towards being negative. The negativeness plays out as thinking that their feelings are not acceptable, having counter-productive self-talk, or feeling like they did something wrong. Shirley added that she helps her clients work on being more positive and making the right choice for themselves.

## **6. Why is it difficult for some people to apologize to others?**

Unapologetically, Shirley said that no one wants to or likes to apologize to others. She feels that it is difficult for people to apologize to other for fear of appearing weak. In reality, it takes the bigger person to apologize. It is not easy to apologize, but it is worth it to keep the problem and argument from continuing.

She stated that she often asks her clients, “What do you gain by refusing to apologize?.” Shirley has learned and often tell others that most of the time, we lose something or lose someone because we do not apologize. She encourages people to move on from issues by apologizing. A wholesome apology and communication often are the best thing for a relationship.

## **7. Share with us the importance of having a mentor.**

Shirley stated that not everyone has access to a mentor. As a result, when one is presented to you be sure to take advantage of the opportunity. She said that having a mentor helps guide us through the challenges of life, offers active listening which soothes, and provides constructive criticism that enhances our professional and personal growth. One of the most valuable aspects of a mentor is that they hold us accountable for your goals and life decisions.

## **8. What should a person do who desires more peace in their life?**

According to Shirley, when a person desires more peace in their life, they can develop a relationship with a higher power. They can also practice mindfulness. She went on to say that life can get chaotic, thus we have to make sure we have a quiet space to decompress and secure peace.

**“Being positive and making good choices is important.”**

**Dr. Recco**

# Patience, A Pathway to Happiness & Mental Health Wellness

By: Recco Santee Richardson, Ph.D., LPC

## Introduction

The exploring of words has always been interesting to me. I can spend hours reading, reviewing, defining, and playing with the root meaning and importance of a word. Over the last few weeks, the word patience has come up during my counseling sessions with clients.

## Definitions

To get started, a strong working definition of patience is needed.

**1). Webster's Dictionary:** Patience is the state or quality of being patient. It is the ability and power to suffer with fortitude. Patience implies uncomplaining endurance of evils, wrongs, toil, pain, poverty, insult, oppression, and calamity. It is the act of contently waiting for something due or hoped for. As well, it is the act of persevering and constancy in labor or application.



**2). Hebrew Dictionary:** The Hebrew word for patience is savlanu. It means to literally bear or suffer. Derived from the root word sevel (which means pain, suffering, agony), patience is the ability to wait quietly in the face of rejection or delay.

It is exercising self-control when dealing with frustrating and upsetting situations.

**3). Greek Dictionary:** Makrothumia is the Greek word for patience. It means long suffering, forbearing and to have self-restraint in the face of provocation and wrong doing.

Another source, the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, reports that patience is the determination of our will to suffer, endure, or wait because we should.

**4). Clinical Treatment Dictionary:** There is a clinical therapy definition of patience. Psychologists, clinical therapists, and others in the field of health and human services often serve clients who must improve their level of patience. In clients' diagnoses and treatment plans, the patience presents itself as impatience and other derivatives.

For clients, impatience takes on the form and becomes known as intolerance, irritability, agitation, isolation, lose interest, anger, and fatigue. The below mental health diagnosis feature a reference to patience (the presence of impatience).

**1). ADHD:** At the root of an ADHD diagnosis is the inability to wait. This diagnosis also features struggling with impulsiveness due to things taking too long to happen.

**2). Oppositional Defiance:** This diagnosis features our patience eroding and being replaced by intolerance, blame, testing the limits, stubbornness, frustration, and poor self-control.

**3). Depression:** Poor life experiences can move us to levels of depression due to our patience being worn down. Once worn down, a door opens for the arrival of fatigue, irritability, frustration, agitation, annoyance, and moodiness.

"We should not underestimate the importance of being patient."  
Dr. Recco

**4). Bipolar:** One of the more popular mental health disorders, bipolar features our being unable to be patient, remain calm, and self-regulate when plans do not work out. Like an erupting volcano, this diagnosis moves us to experience emotional highs and lows, anger, excessiveness, and an inability to endure.

**How Being Patient Helps Us**

Over the years, I have found that there are myriads of helpful and beneficial things associated with our being patient. Below is a chart of the stated (*see chart #1*).

*Chart #1 The Helpfulness of Patience*

Pushes to be aware	Helps take responsibility	Encourages to trust
Promotes being calm	Settles our soul	Reduces stress
Instills true realities	Promotes excellence	Improves energy level
Helps figure things out	Resolves problems	Enhances our memory
Protects boundaries	Slows down speech	Reveals options
Promotes clarity	Can bring peace	Attracts success
Minimizes distractions	Solidifies dreams	Instills confidence
Helps process things	Strengthens our resolve	Manage disappointment
Explores the heart	Reveals truths	Promotes endurance
Improves our beliefs	Helps consider things	Regulates our mind
Enhances planning	Builds tolerance	Promotes happiness
Soothes the soul	Liberates the mind	Empowers our will
Addresses trauma	Helps bear burdens	Stabilizes thoughts
Offers support	Mitigates frustration	Escape oppression
Improves focus	Cancels out anger	Makes things plain

**Patience, A Pathway to Better Emotions**

The following steps, coping skills, solutions, and pathways can help us move away from being impatient and towards better emotions, social interactions, spirituality, and financial security.

**1). Get Quality Rest:** Things in our lives can turn ugly quickly when we are not well rested. It is imperative that we get quality night-time sleep, rest through-out the day, and take part in activities that revive us. The fastest way to stay impatient is to be deprived of good sleep and fatigued all the time.



**2). Active Waiting:** While waiting on answers, people, and opportunities, it is important that we be active. Active means to engage in something that helps us pass time. When waiting, it is good things, release emotions, ground ourselves, reflect, listen, focus, think, ponder, process, and identify our values.

When examined, the life of people who are respected, filled with purpose, carefree, and successful, often features them having a commitment to intentional waiting and planning their next move. They are rarely in a rush.

**“We have to let patience have its perfect work.”  
Dr. Recco**

**3). Keep Hoping:** Hope is a powerful concept that helps us remain patient during tough times. It helps us to continue and believe for better outcomes regardless of the current circumstances. When there is a slimmer of hope, our emotions have a chance to endure longer and not wear down.

**4). Be Consistent:** When seeking better emotional outcomes, it is easy to trip, give up or try the wrong thing and the wrong time. The successful person has learned to be consistent day in and day out and steadfast in their convictions. When we are consistent, our emotional life becomes more stable, and we can validate our experiences properly.

**5). Seek Support & Comfort:** Life as we know it can be difficult. As a result, we must be willing to reach out for support and comfort at critical times. It is in the bowels of support and comfort that our emotions and mental well-being can be nourished, protected, cared for, managed, treated, and healed.

**6). Forgive:** The forgiving of ourselves and others can be a difficult thing to do. In the short term and long run, unforgiveness does not help us. As it runs its course, it only hurts us and our emotional life. For this and other reasons, it is best to forgive and move on.

People that walk in unforgiveness in too many areas often find themselves given to impatience, anger, despise, physical pain, addictions, drama, employment struggles, relationship problems and the list goes on.

**7). Being Gentle:** One of the best ways to experience better mental health is to embrace being gentle. Gentleness is the decision to extend mercy and goodness to other people instead of using our words and power to oppress them. With the help of being gentle, we should endure, love, suffer, and tolerate the frailties and inabilities of those that annoy and frustrate us. Why should we be gentle? Because we too annoy, frustrate, and grieve someone.

**8). Expected A Reward:** We often forget that acts of kindness and patience often lead to our receiving a recompense or reward. While we would love to name and claim the expected reward, it is best to let fortune, time, the law of sowing/reaping, and karma do the selecting. So long as the earth remains, there will always be seed time, harvest time, fruitfulness, and rewards for those of us who are patient and who deliberately do what is right.

**9). Be Sure to Mature:** There are several ways for humans to mature. One way is via patience. Patience works things in us and works things out of us. The complete work of patience helps us mature beyond our years and experiences. It also on some levels perfects our desire system, encourages hope, helps keep things in perspective, relieves stress, promotes acceptance, and eases our troubled minds.

**“We all need to  
enhance our  
emotions and  
behaviors.”  
Dr. Recco**

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## How to Contact Us

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"Your life is  
important."  
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