



WELCOME TO OUR

Monthly Newsletter

we're so glad you're here!

MONTHLY MENTAL HEALTH INSIGHT

How Can We Be Better Villagers?

People come into my office every week feeling alone and isolated and frustrated by the lack of community and belonging in their lives. We have unintentionally created so much distance and so many boundaries in our lives that we've also sacrificed community and how important it is for a person's well-being. Humans are historically social beings; we are not meant to be isolated or alone for prolonged periods. But because of the many isolative phenomena happening currently, many of us find ourselves alone, disconnected, and frankly, a little hopeless. Self-care trends that emphasize simplistic phrases like "if they wanted to, they would," "if it was meant to be, it wouldn't be this hard," or "protect your peace" are fostering a sense of division and disconnect when we really need more empathy and community in our lives. Similarly, we see this trend in other areas like the male loneliness epidemic and declining marriage rates or the economic landscape where a sense of job loyalty and community through one's occupation have weakened.

Community isn't just "nice to have," it's a core psychological need. In psychology, humans are understood as fundamentally relational beings; many empirically supported theories emphasize that a sense of belonging and secure connection shapes how we regulate emotions, form identity, and experience safety in the world (even when we experience trauma or go through difficult periods). When people feel seen,



known, and supported by others, their nervous systems can settle; stress becomes more tolerable, and difficult experiences are less likely to turn into chronic anxiety or depression.

Signs You Might Need More Community and Less Self-Care

- Thought patterns like “I should be able to handle this on my own,” feeling like socializing won’t be worth it, or assuming others are too busy, uninterested, or won’t understand
- Behavioral habits that are typically solo activities (e.g., doomscrolling, rotting at home, solo work outs), routines that do not involve unnecessary social interaction, flaking on plans or avoid making them even when you know you’re lonely, constantly needing to “reset” or feeling stuck
- Emotional themes like feeling persistently lonely or misunderstood
- Relationally feeling like most interactions are surface level, the transactional feeling never wearing off with time, or struggling to be authentic around people

How Can I Build a Community?

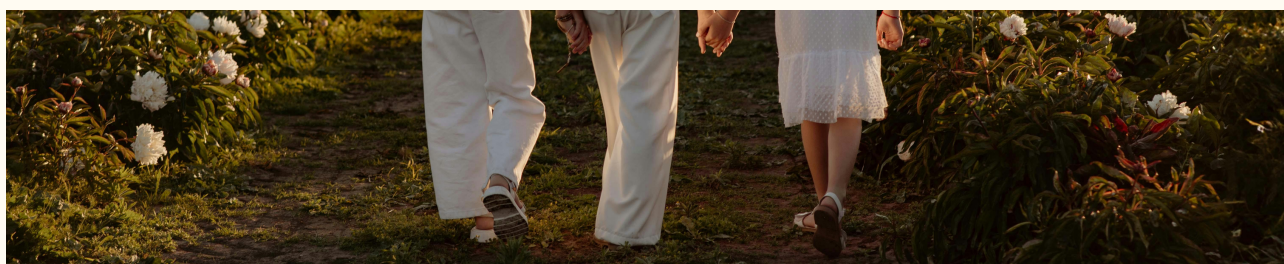
Building community is about putting yourself in places where connection can happen repeatedly and naturally. Here are keys to building community:

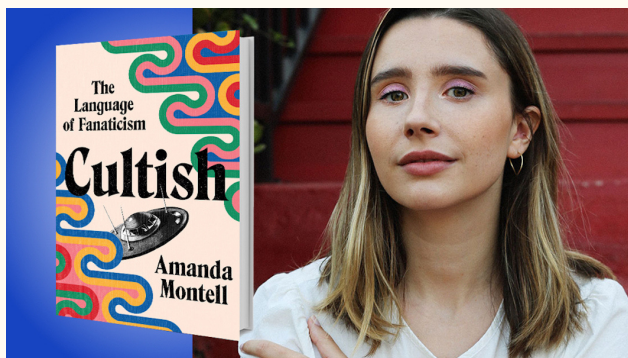
- Consistency & Proximity – showing up for people on a regular basis is paramount to building a community that you can rely on when you need it.
- Similarity – find and pour into people that have similar interests and values to you.
- Familiarity – you don’t feel familiar or comfortable with someone you just met and it will feel a little awkward when you’re first making friends but it’s important to keep spending time with them to build that comfortability and familiarity.
- Reciprocity – doing things without expecting something in return is key
- Lastly, bravery – you might have to go first. You might have to be the one to introduce yourself or the one that gets rejected a couple of times while finding your people

Why Does it Feel so Hard to be a Villager Sometimes?

Being part of a village does not mean you find a group of perfect people that you always mesh with. It can feel awkward to show up somewhere, to initiate plans, or to risk being rejected or pouring into someone that ends up not being there for you. Despite the scariness (and risk), it matters to have a village. Not because you should force yourself into exhausting social situations, but because humans aren’t wired to move through life in isolation. The kind of support, grounding, and meaning that comes from being part of something bigger with others can’t be fully replaced by self-reliance. Even small steps toward connection like showing up, reaching out, or staying a little longer can begin to shift the depth of relationships over time.

Think about your village and how you can better contribute as a villager or what you want your ideal village to look like and how you can start finding it.





Book of the Month

CULTISH BY AMANDA MONTELL

A comprehensive history of cults in America and why lack of community in our culture has allowed for indoctrination.

[READ HERE](#)



Free Resource

COMMUNITY EVENTS IN BALT CITY

A noncomprehensive lists of places to build community in Baltimore City. Stay tuned to the website for additional lists for Balt County and AA County.

[CLICK HERE](#)

Exciting Practice Updates

WORKSHOPS & EVENTS COMING SOON!

Grace is partnering with several other therapists and businesses in the community to offer some workshops and events beginning later this summer. Tune in for updates!



Is Anger Really a Secondary Emotion?

BETWEEN LIFE AND THERAPY NEWSLETTER FEATURE

Many people who have been in therapy before or consumed any sort of wellness media have heard the phrase "*anger is a secondary emotion*." To many, that feels invalidating. Their anger is hot and simmering. It's protective and safe. It is true in its own form and also a mask for other emotions that feel more vulnerable. This is when another lovely therapist saying comes in "*two things can be true*." We can be incredibly angry and frustrated while at the same time, hold a lot of hurt. Oftentimes, we miss the other emotions because anger



takes the driver's seat. Anger confronts; Anger is loud and anger protects. Anger makes itself known and feels actionable while sadness, grief, and insecurity are quiet beasts that keep to themselves.

What is Intellectualizing and What Does it Have to Do with Being Angry?

Intellectualizing is the act of thinking through your emotions rather than truly feeling them. When you grow up in a household that is emotionally avoidant or does not allow for the expression of emotion safely, many people unconsciously turn to intellectualizing. You might know why you are the way you are. This is completely normal and also perpetuated by American culture. Our society emphasizes productivity, efficiency, and not letting emotions "get in the way." Because of this, sometimes anger is deemed the only "safe" emotion. It is very tangible and sometimes the only accepted emotion in our

culture. This makes anger generalize to all situations where we feel strong emotion. Eventually, any time we feel any overwhelming emotion we automatically assume that it's anger.

Anger is often the big brother or sister of emotions. It protects all the other emotions. And it protects us from having to share more vulnerable emotions. We think of all the reasons we should be angry rather than acknowledging all the reasons we should also be sad or disappointed. We don't hold those more blue emotions with the same time and effort.

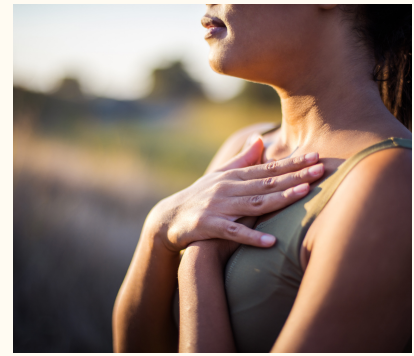
Signs You Might Feel More Emotions than You Realize

- "I know why I am the way I am"
- "I'm not really an emotional person"
- You are an automatic problem-solver/"fixer"
- Avoiding emotional conversations
- Feeling confused about how you feel
- Difficulty identifying emotions
- A family that was emotionally avoidant
- Long-term relationships that still feel surface-level
- Only entering short-term relationships because they just feel "easier"
- Conflicts become very analytical
- Difficulty being taken care of/receiving care

Holding Multiple Emotions at Once

We don't want to demonize intellectualizing. At one point this was your only tool and it's likely gotten you a long way. However, the key to fully processing emotions is recognizing that you can hold them all at once - knowing that you can hold anger and sadness on an even playing field. Trusting that when you stop leading with anger, you can handle the grief and all the emotions that are going to come up after. Feeling empowered that those feelings are valid and authentically you in a way that the anger was more of a mask. First, you have to practice noticing your anger.

Sometimes when anger is so present in our lives we don't even realize that it's there. Recognizing the anger and asking yourself what else am I feeling? Second, we start managing the anger and all the other emotions. Some of that management is communicating with people in your life, setting boundaries, making actionable steps, or finding peace with those emotions in therapy. A lot of people hate the phrase "where do you feel that in your body?" or "are you really feeling your emotions?" It sounds ambiguous and gatekeep-y. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but it's true. You have to consider these questions. Get really humble and and honest with yourself and try to feel something that's not anger. Sink into it and embrace it. Not every emotion has to be felt in the body but every emotion needs to be felt and given time in the spotlight to be digested.



Ways to feel and embrace emotions more thoroughly:

- **Riding the wave** – The more you embrace the hard emotions, ride the wave, let it crest, and let it crash into the beach, the more readily you can feel them and move on.
- **Picking that emotion and journaling on it** – dig deep even if it feels random & unrelated
- **Creating a ritual** – when we have made it a habit to avoid our emotions, sometimes we have to be very intentional about unlearning. Creating a ritual where you put a specific playlist/song on or going on a drive and letting your mind wander.
- **Focusing on the area of your body that feels like it carries the most stress or tension** – feeling the sensations and tightness there, sitting with the discomfort and reflecting on what the pain is telling you.
- **Talking through it out loud** – this can be alone or with a loved one. but naming the emotion and talking through it

Work with me today

HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

Reach out for an consulting inquiries or interest in therapy
today!

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