

APRIL - JUNE 2023

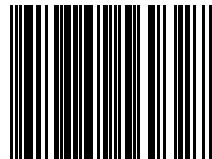
# Serene

MENTAL HEALTH AND DISABILITY

## SUSTAINABILITY

What challenges do those with mental health and disabilities face by living sustainably?

THE DANGERS  
OF METAL  
STRAWS



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# Contents

## cover story

- 6 FOR SOME PLASTIC STRAWS ARE A NECESSITY, NOT A LUXURY**  
How the ban of plastic straws affect the disabled community.

## features

- 3 ECO-FRIENDLY MENTAL HEALTH**  
Being sustainable can make a positive impact on our mental health.
- 3 THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF SHAMING**  
Shaming people with mental illness for not being sustainable.
- 3 SHOP SECONDHAND FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE**  
Be sustainable by shopping secondhand.
- 3 ANIMAL SHELTERS ARE LOOKING FOR ADOPTERS**  
Help a furry friend today.
- 4 WHY AN ECO-FRIENDLY LIFESTYLE MIGHT BE HARDER WITH ADHD**  
What ADHD is and how it complicates living an eco-friendly lifestyle.
- 6 FOR SOME PLASTIC STRAWS ARE A NECESSITY, NOT A LUXURY**  
How the ban of plastic straws affect the disabled community.
- 8 THE BEST PART OF MY DATE TODAY WAS DRIVING MYSELF HOME**  
Was driving myself home. I rolled down all the windows and played a song I know.
- 12 I DON'T WANT MY HEART IT'S SELFISH AND ITS CRUEL**  
When it tries its best to love it doesn't know what to do.
- 14 I DON'T WANT MY EYES, THEY JUDGE AND THEY CONDEMN**  
They say what my mind thinks so I might as well cover them.
- 15 LET THE WORLD SEE YOU AND NOT ME**  
Because I want to be a reflection of you.



# ECO-FRIENDLY MENTAL HEALTH

**Mental health is a crucial aspect of our overall well-being, and it is essential to take care of it in an eco-friendly manner.**

Mental health eco-friendliness refers to taking care of our mental health while also being mindful of the impact we have on the environment. There are several ways in which we can achieve this. For instance, spending time outdoors and connecting with nature has been shown to improve mental health while also promoting environmental awareness. Additionally, engaging in sustainable practices such as recycling and reducing waste can help reduce stress and anxiety associated with environmental concerns. Moreover, incorporating eco-friendly practices into our daily routines can promote a sense of purpose and fulfillment, which is essential for good mental



*Today on proper medication Anna is living Photo: Markus Spiske much more sustainable lifestyle than only.*

health. By adopting a more sustainable lifestyle, we can reduce our carbon footprint and contribute to a healthier planet while also improving our own well-being. In conclusion, taking care of our mental health in an eco-friendly manner is

not only beneficial for us but also for the environment. By making small changes in our daily lives, we can create a positive impact on both ourselves and the world around us.

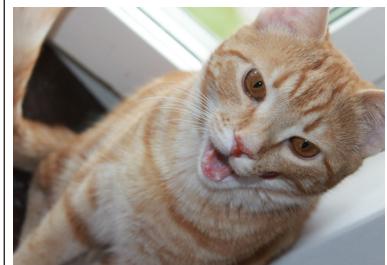
*Text: Chat AI*

**Shop secondhand for a more sustainable lifestyle.**

**SECONDHAND ITEMS ARE** often overlooked and undervalued, but they offer many benefits that new items cannot match. First and foremost, buying secondhand is an environmentally conscious choice. It reduces waste and the demand for new products, which in turn reduces the amount of resources needed to produce them. Additionally, secondhand items are often more affordable than their brand-new counterparts, making them accessible to a wider range of consumers. Finally, buying secondhand can be a fun and unique way to express personal style and creativity. Overall, choosing secondhand is a smart and responsible choice that benefits both individuals and the planet.

*Text: Chat AI*

**Animal shelters are looking for adopters!**



*Photo: Sara Burman*

## THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF SHAMING

**In recent years, there has been a growing trend of shaming individuals who are not eco-friendly.**

While the intention behind this movement is to promote environmental awareness and encourage people to adopt more sustainable practices, it can often have negative consequences. Firstly, shaming is not an effective way to change behavior. People are more likely to become defensive and resistant when they feel attacked or judged. Instead

of shaming, education and positive reinforcement can be more effective in promoting eco-friendly habits. Furthermore, shaming can create a sense of guilt and shame that may lead to feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. This can actually discourage people from taking action towards sustainability. Lastly, it is important to recognize that not everyone has equal access or resources to make eco-friendly choices. Shaming individuals for their lack of sustain-

ability ignores the systemic issues that contribute to environmental degradation. Overall, while the intention behind shaming non-eco friendly behavior may be good, it is important to consider the potential negative consequences and focus on education and positive reinforcement instead.

*Text: Chat AI*

**ANIMAL SHELTERS ARE** a crucial part of our society, providing a safe haven for animals in need. Not only do they provide temporary homes for lost or abandoned pets, but they also offer medical care and rehabilitation services to ensure that these animals are healthy and ready for adoption. By adopting from an animal shelter, you are not only giving an animal a second chance at life, but you are also helping to reduce the number of animals that end up on the streets or in overcrowded shelters. So next time you're considering adding a pet to your family, consider adopting from an animal shelter – it's a decision that can make all the difference in the world.

*Text: Chat AI*



*Photo: Dmitry Ganin & Svitlana*

Today on proper medication Anna is living a much more sustainable lifestyle than only three years ago. "Even if you can always live more sustainably, if you have the right mindset and try to do your best within your capabilities that should be good enough.", she says.

Organizing her kitchen with sustainable containers and other practical tools is something Anna enjoys doing and is something that keeps her ADHD occupied and happy.



# WHY AN ECO-FRIENDLY LIFESTYLE MIGHT BE HARDER WITH ADHD

**ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)** is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Individuals with ADHD often find it difficult to remain focused, structured and organized. These symptoms can make it challenging for them to follow an eco-friendly lifestyle.

The term eco-friendly, also known as environmentally friendly or green living, refers to a way of life that involves taking responsibility for environmental issues. This includes being conscious of the impact of your actions on the environment, as well as implementing practices that reduce your carbon footprint.

The goal of eco-friendly living is to reduce the negative impact we have on our planet, and create a sustainable future. For individuals with ADHD, it can be difficult to maintain the structure and attention needed to live an eco-friendly lifestyle. However, there are many strategies that ADHD patients can use to achieve their goals.

One of the most effective strategies is to establish a routine. Individuals with ADHD often struggle with time management and planning. By establishing a daily routine, you can reduce decision fatigue and create a structured environment that minimizes distractions. This structure can help you to incorporate eco-friendly practices into your daily routine, such as recycling, reducing energy consumption, and reducing waste. Another strategy for achieving an eco-friendly lifestyle with ADHD is to make use of technology.

There are numerous apps available that can assist with time management, organization, and planning. For example, apps like Forest and Plantie can help users focus on their tasks by simulating a virtual ecosystem and encouraging users to stay focused for a set amount of time. These apps can be a useful way to stay motivated and focused on your goal of living sustainably.

Additionally, involving family and friends in your eco-friendly journey can be a great way to stay motivated and on track. Individuals with ADHD often benefit from social support, and having a support system can help you stay motivated and engaged. You can also collaborate with others to make eco-friendly choices, such as carpooling or purchasing eco-friendly products in bulk.

**WE VISITED ANNA** in her cozy two room apartment to get some insight into living a sustainable life with ADHD. Anna is 22 years old and just recently diagnosed and medicated, she says that this has made a serious impact on her well-being and how control she feels of her life, including her sustainable choices, but there are still challenges.

“Don’t get me wrong, My ADHD makes me feel larger than life. It makes me take beneficial risks, make me naturally curious and I can enter modes of hyperfocus where I get a ton of work done.”, she says and smiles “The only problem is that I struggle remembering to carry my reusables everywhere I go, or to tell the waiter that I don’t want a straw in my drink or to switch the lights off everytime I leave a room.”

These things sometimes lead to judging looks or lectures about being sustainabe of course, but instead of being helpful these comments only leave Anna with guilt, imposter syndrome and sometimes even anger. Explaining yourself doesn’t work well

either, people without these struggles can’t properly understand the way our brains work. And it’s not like Anna isn’t doing anything to be eco-friendly. She has found through research, inner contemplation and pattern recognition a strategy that helps her be eco-concious despite her ADHD.

“The longer the gap between stimulus and response, the easier it is for me to remember my eco-conscious beliefs” Anna says. “Grabbing my reusable bag when I go shopping may not happen, but I can curb impulse buying because online checkout process usually give me enough time to evaluate if I really need that product or not.”

It was also easier for Anna to switch to being a vegetarian than it is to always remember to say no to a straw in her drink, because it is a prolonged decision and activity.

“These techniques might not work for everyone, but talking about how I handle my ADHD struggles might inspire others with ADHD to try to come up with things that work for them.” Anna says.

In conclusion, individuals with ADHD can take concrete steps to achieve an eco-friendly lifestyle. Establishing a routine, using technology, and involving friends and family can all be effective strategies for overcoming the challenges of ADHD and implementing environmentally responsible practices. By making these changes, individuals with ADHD can make a meaningful contribution to a sustainable future.

*Text: Chat AI & Partners in Clime*



*Photo: No Revisions & Noah Buscher*

# For some, plastic straws are a necessity, not a luxury.



*Jessica has tried every straw there is and none of them compare to the straws made of plastic, but when she is able she uses biodegradable, glass or silicone straws instead. "Which straw I use depends on my current condition and need."*

**PART OF MY CONDITION** means I have to drink between 8 to 10 litres a day. I drink everything through a straw because my wrists are quite weak and my hands shake. If you're able-bodied or have a disability that doesn't require the use of straws you're probably a little confused about how talk around a tiny luxury has blown so out of control. Fun fact: the first targeted sales of bendable straws in 1947 were to hospitals, as the bend means patients can drink in bed; they're sterile; don't disintegrate; and can be used with hot liquids.

Plastic is seen as cheap, wasteful and harmful to the environment. These things are all true, but plastic is also an essential part of my health and wellness. We should all reduce our plastic consumption but disabled people who use straws aren't just

saying, "Screw you!" to the environment. They genuinely want to help the planet, but they can't sacrifice themselves in the process. The majority of us have taken up reusable straws and it's only in a pinch that we need the disposable ones, but it really is a need.

Yes, it would be better if someone could invent something that functions as well as a bendable plastic straw and has little environmental impact. But, until that happens we can't just outright ban something people need.

For those of you who don't actually know what the straw ban is; In 2015 a video of a sea turtle with a straw stuck up its nose went viral. Campaigns to eliminate straws soon followed. Across the world, various companies and cities have decided that the best way to reduce their plastic is to ban

**"THE FIRST  
PLASTIC STRAWS  
WERE MADE FOR  
HOSPITAL PATIENTS"**

plastic straws. Starbucks plan to faze out plastic straws by 2020. McDonald's will ban plastic straws in its UK and Ireland restaurants. Alaska Airlines will be the first airline to faze out the use of plastic straws and the entire city of Seattle has banned them. An entire city.

Since 8 million tons of plastic flow into the oceans every year, it is very right that we do something about it. But straws are only 0.025% of that number.

Ian Calderon, the Democratic majority leader in California's lower house has introduced a bill to stop restaurants from offering straws to customers unless they specifically request one. Under Calderon's law a waiter who serves a straw that has not been asked for could face up to six months in prison and a 1000 dollar fine.

Although our ban on plastic straws does come from a wonderful place – concern for our ecosystem – it inadvertently harms those with disabilities. Plastic straws are considered unnecessary items, used by environmentalists as a gateway plastic to engage the public in more of a conversation about environmentalism. But one person's ecological conversation starter is another person's nutritional lifeline.

Going without straws can mean struggling through the physical motion of getting a drink up to one's lips or aspirating on the liquid and choking. For many people who need straws, materials other than plastic just doesn't do the job.

See the provided graph for why the alternatives doesn't work for everyone. Meanwhile single use plastic straws were created to not cause the problems the alternatives do. They have no danger of aspirating or being injured by them during a seizure, they're cheap and they are positionable so that you can drink in almost any position.

There's pros and cons to every type of straw, but the important thing is not to shut down a person when they are trying to talk about their own lived experience. I personally use plastic straws. I put them in the dishwasher and then I reuse them over and over again until they get a hole or grow mould. Because I need

a straw that bends back on itself, since I spend an awful lot of time lying down.

A few days ago I cried, because I saw an online poll that phrased the debate as, 'Are environmental issues more important than disabled people's needs?'. 12% of the answers said 'Yes'.

## WHY CAN'T STRAWS BE 'REQUEST ONLY' YOU MIGHT ASK.

If we go back to how Seattle has handled this. The ban in Seattle comes with an exception for people with disabilities, where restaurants can provide straws if they're needed for medical reasons. But that's actually just optional. The likelihood that any restaurant would bother buying in plastic straws after the ban is minimal. Also the restaurant can just shrug in your face and say no if they want to. And even if the restaurant do provide straws for disabled people that means that the person has to prove their medical need for one, which in some cases might be very hard as well as very personal and not something you'd want to bring up.

# CAN'T DISABLED PEOPLE JUST BRING THEIR OWN THEN?

This puts the burden of accessibility on an already overburdened group of people. I can barely remember to take my phone and money when I leave the house and even though I rely on straws I can't always remember to put them in my bag. I can't describe the horrid feeling when I am out somewhere, I'm desperate for a drink and when I get it I realize I have no straws. Plus the reusable straws have to be sterilized before and after use.

## **BUT WHY CAN'T YOUR CARER CARRY IT?**

A large majority of the disabled community do not qualify for a carer.

## WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE THEM AVAILABLE THROUGH PHARMACIES AS A MEDICAL DEVICE?

It would be hard to implement, disabled people would have to go out of their way to get them and it is already hard enough for people to get medical devices approved for their insurance.

**YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM** is worthy, valid and needed, but in this case a little bit misguided. Reminding disabled people that their presence is a burden on society is not needed, they already feel it on a daily basis and the ban on plastic straws is just one more thing to add to it.

Please do continue to do the very valid and worthwhile job of raising awareness for environmental issues and campaigning for a more sustainable society. But do bear in mind that "A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members."

*Text: Jessica Kellgren-Fozard*

# PROPERTIES OF DIFFERENT STRAW TYPES

## **Angelica archangelica**

In the language of flowers, Angelica is associated with inspiration. Giving the gift of angelica flowers means that you're hoping to inspire and encourage someone.



## **Aquilegia (Columbine)**

The purple columbine symbolizes peace and how we sometimes have to make sacrifices to achieve goals.