



the modern domestic woman

OCTOBER 2025

October 2025 MDW MAG

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Dear MDW Family,

There's something undeniably special about this issue. Maybe it's the crisp edge of fall in the air, or maybe it's that this month marks not one, but two incredible milestones in MDW's story. After more than a decade of growing, evolving, and listening to the women in our community, we're stepping into a brand-new chapter, and it feels a little like coming home.

For the first time ever, The Modern Domestic Woman magazine is available both digitally and in print. What started as a small digital magazine, shared with a handful of readers who believed in this mission, has blossomed into a full-color, collectible publication filled with stories, resources, and reflections created to support the whole woman. I've always believed that what we hold in our hands can ground us, inspire us, and remind us we're not alone. And now, with this print edition, that belief has become something beautifully tangible.

But that's not the only reason this issue feels monumental. This month, we also celebrate something that has been more than ten years in the making: MDW is officially a nonprofit organization - MDW Cares.

Those words carry the weight of countless late nights, quiet doubts, and moments of grace. What began as a simple lifestyle blog written by a woman navigating postpartum anxiety has grown into a network of women supporting women through every season of life. And now, that mission has roots - real, legal, nonprofit roots - with MDW Cares providing mental health education, advocacy, and access to trusted resources across our community.

I've said it before, and I'll keep saying it: supporting women means seeing them fully, in mind, body, and spirit. It means recognizing that beauty, burnout, ambition, and anxiety can all exist in the same breath. It means creating spaces where honesty is met with compassion and where no woman has to walk alone through the hard parts of her story.

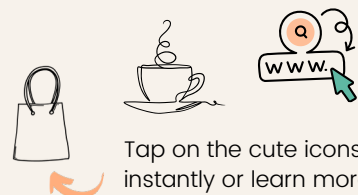
After years of fine-tuning and figuring out what truly resonates, I think we're onto something. :)

This issue is a love letter to everyone who believed in MDW before there was a name for it. To those who read, shared, donated, and showed up, I thank you. Your support makes it possible for us to continue turning empathy into action.

Here's to new beginnings, long-awaited milestones, and the kind of community that grows stronger with every story shared.

With love and so much gratitude.

Elizabeth Rago
MDW Founder & Editor



Tap on the cute icons to shop instantly or learn more about the product featured.

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— Profile



Meet Brooke Backsen

Walk into My Recess Therapy, and it doesn't feel like a clinic; it feels like home. There's a cozy family-room lobby, a cheerful sensory gym, and even a kitchen where kids can practice daily living skills or explore new foods. The atmosphere is intentionally designed for comfort, safety, and joy, because for founder Brooke Backsen, therapy should start with fun.

"When kids are having fun," Brooke says, "their brains and bodies are open and ready for new information and growth."

That belief has shaped every corner of My Recess Therapy's two locations in St. Charles and Elgin. Brooke, a licensed occupational therapist and yoga instructor, built her practice around empowering families, creating a space where children learn, parents feel supported, and progress feels like play.

The Heart Behind the Mission



“Empowering parents and fostering self-confidence in kids through reaching goals is what fuels my passion as an OT.”

Space for Every Child

Each My Recess Therapy location offers an environment that blends play with purpose:

- Sensory Gym: A bright, movement-rich space designed to help kids explore, regulate, and grow.
- Private Therapy Rooms: Spaces for focused, individualized sessions and open parent collaboration.
- Yoga Room: A calm, low-stimulation room used for movement, mindfulness, and social classes.
- Kitchen Therapy Space: A place where kids can practice real-world skills — washing, cooking, exploring new foods — in a supportive, sensory-aware way.
- Mini Garden (Elgin): A space to dig, plant, and connect with nature through hands-on play.

With nearly two decades of experience supporting children and families, Brooke Backsen leads My Recess Therapy with a spirit of collaboration and creativity. Rather than a top-down model, she sees the clinic as a living, breathing community, one where every therapist’s ideas, passions, and specialties help shape what comes next.

Many of My Recess Therapy’s signature programs, like their nature-based sessions and sensory social groups, began as team ideas brought to life together. This shared approach not only benefits families but also nurtures the therapists themselves, giving them space to balance career and family while developing projects that align with their own areas of expertise and joy.

At its core, My Recess Therapy is a collaborative environment where professional growth, creative expression, and family-centered care all thrive in harmony.

Every detail is designed to help children feel safe, capable, and inspired.

Therapy that Extends Beyond Four Walls

An idea born from shared inspiration, My Recess Therapy's Nature-Based Occupational Therapy program began as one of Brooke's passion areas, a way to merge her love of sensory integration and movement with the restorative power of the outdoors. What started as her vision has since evolved through the creativity and dedication of the entire team, who developed and expanded the program. Together, they've transformed nature into a living classroom, a space where children can explore, regulate, and grow through play that feels both grounding and joyful.

A Community of Care

Brooke is deeply rooted in the local community and passionate about collaboration. My Recess Therapy partners with other trusted practitioners and organizations through their Partners in Care network, ensuring families have access to a continuum of support and education.

Her team of seasoned therapists shares that same heart for holistic, family-centered care, each with specialized training in areas like feeding therapy, sensory processing, social-emotional learning, and motor skill development.

Together, they've created something rare: a place where evidence-based therapy meets joy, curiosity, and compassion.



Learn more or
schedule a visit:

St. Charles – 1601 E Main Street, Unit G
Elgin – 2018 Larkin Avenue

myrecess.com





LIFESTYLE

RINGS



With sculptural forms and quiet symbolism, Fiat Lux turns fine jewelry into narrative art. These stacking rings whisper of nature, protection, and transformation. Reminders that what we wear can carry the stories we keep.

Stackable Rings

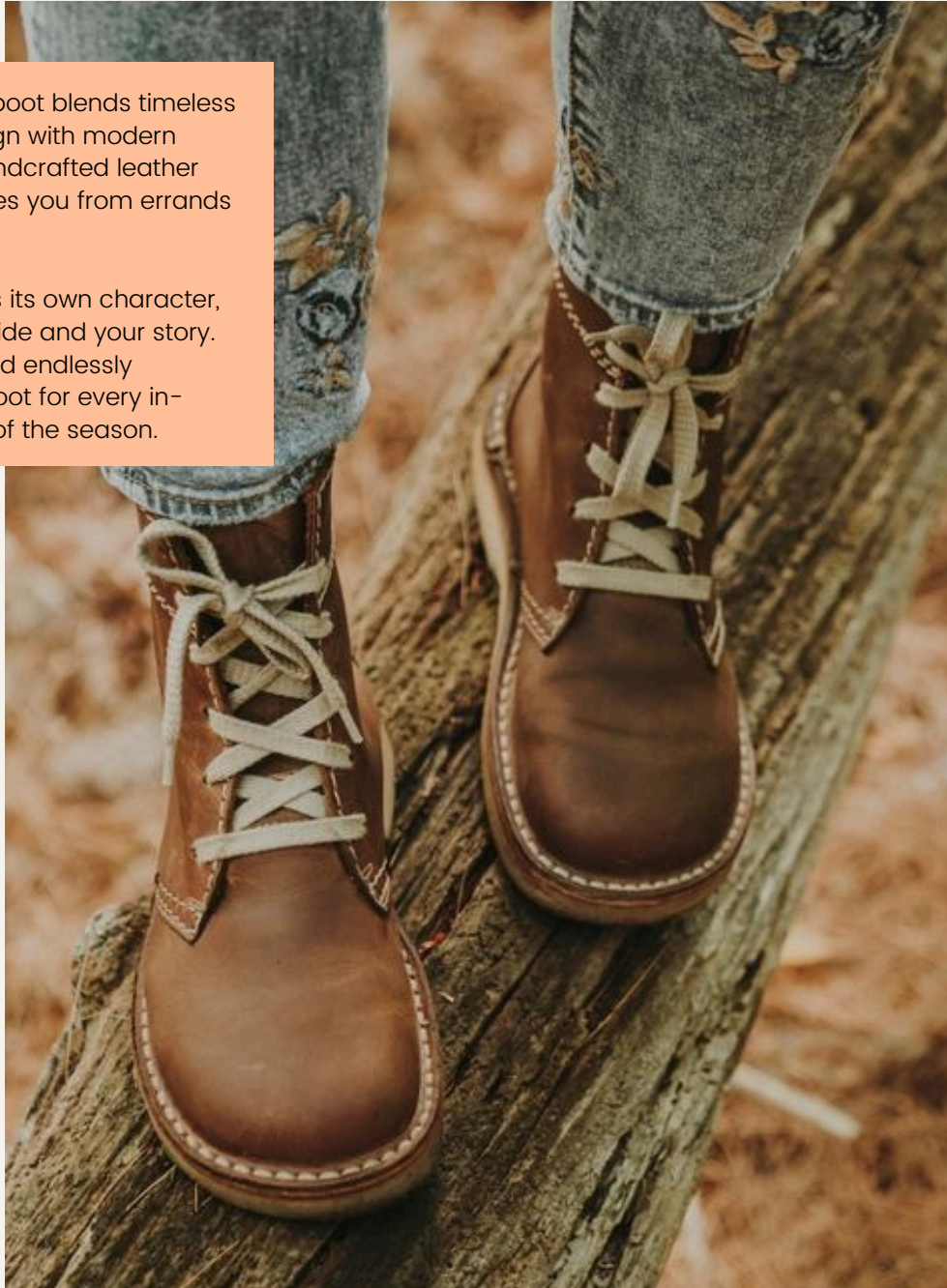
FIAT LUX



BOOTS

Duckfeet's Fåborg boot blends timeless Scandinavian design with modern sustainability, a handcrafted leather essential that carries you from errands to adventures.

Every pair develops its own character, molding to your stride and your story. Durable, classic, and endlessly wearable, it's the boot for every in-between moment of the season.



Fåborg Boot

DUCKFEET USA



HANDBAG

"I have the Sofia Bag in the most gorgeous dark pumpkin shade, and it's become my go-to this season. With its sleek crescent shape and easy, hands-free strap, it's the perfect mix of modern and practical.

Roomy enough for the essentials without ever feeling bulky, it's one of those rare bags that looks effortless whether I'm running errands or heading out for the evening."

– Elizabeth



Sofia Bag
Renew in Glen Ellyn



PINS

1



Moth Girl Enamel Pin
by Stasia Burrington
Illustration



2



Lavender Enamel Pin
by Wild Ship



3



Spinning Daisy Pin
by Occasionalish



4



Old Soul Club Pin
by Mister Robinson



5



Ruth Bader Ginsburg
Brooch
from Madepants



GIFTING



Shaped like a plump cluster of grapes, this cold-processed soap is a sudsy tribute to Syrian soap-maker Omar Nassar and generations of olive oil alchemy.

Each bar blends age-old tradition with playful design. 100% natural, entirely handmade, and almost too cute to lather.

It's everyday indulgence with a twist. Nurturing, natural, and irresistibly giftable (if you don't keep it first).



Grape Soap
PLANET FIX PROJECT





Tea as a Ritual

It's time to start sipping with Intention. Tea isn't just a drink; it's a pause button. The few minutes you wait for your tea to steep are an invitation to slow down, breathe, and check in with yourself. Use this time to turn an everyday moment into a ritual that nourishes more than your body.

Green tea + Mint - a gentle wake-up and fresh start.



While you steep: Open a window, take three deep breaths, and picture how you want your morning to feel... steady, calm, or energized?

Reflect: What's one word that could guide your day today? Whisper it into your mug as if you're infusing your tea with that energy.

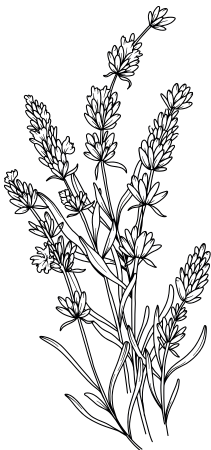
Black tea + Cinnamon - a warm hug of motivation.



While you steep: Stand up, stretch, and roll your shoulders back. Imagine shaking off the first half of the day and creating space for fresh energy.

Reflect: What's one small thing you can do this afternoon to feel accomplished? Even if it's just crossing a tiny task off your list?

Chamomile + Lavender - the ultimate exhale in a cup.



While you steep: Dim the lights, light a candle, or put on soft music. Take this moment as permission to slow down and transition into evening.

Reflect: What do you need to let go of before bed? A lingering worry, an unfinished to-do, a tough conversation replaying in your mind? Imagine releasing it with every inhale and exhale.



Skincare, Simplified: Natural Ways to Care for Your Skin

by Blakely Kresl



LESS HYPE, MORE HARMONY: FINDING BEAUTY IN THE BASICS.

Have you ever walked down the skincare aisle and wished it all felt... simpler? So many products promise instant results with shiny labels and glossy claims, yet it can be hard to know what ingredients or products are actually beneficial to the skin. What if, instead of chasing trends or buying into quick fixes, we looked at skincare as something more grounding – a way to care for ourselves without all the advertising noise?

Part of the challenge is that the beauty industry thrives on keeping us searching for the “next big thing.” Wrinkles are cast as flaws, before-and-after photos are exemplified, and buzzwords are everywhere. It’s easy to feel caught up in the collective cycle of products that are hyped as must-haves, only to be replaced by the next trend a few months later.

For me, the shift came when I realized skincare didn’t have to be complicated or expensive to be effective. By slowing down, getting curious, and experimenting with more natural, simple ingredients, I discovered products that not only supported my skin but also helped me feel more confident in myself.

A Simpler Routine

I’m excited to share a few natural, science-backed products that I have implemented into my skincare routine and seen beneficial results in my skin texture and feel. These aren’t prescriptions or quick fixes but products to inspire, explore, and fit into your own routine.

Water: The Foundation

Before serums and oils, the simplest tool is one we often overlook: water. Hydration keeps the skin plump, helps flush out toxins, and supports that healthy “glow” people chase in expensive bottles. Most dermatologists agree that aiming for about eight glasses a day is a good place to start. It sounds almost too easy, but your skin feels the hydration.



If plain water feels like a chore, add a squeeze of fresh lime! It gives your glass a bright, zesty twist, refreshing enough to make hydration feel like a treat instead of a task.



Manuka Honey

Raw Manuka honey isn't just a sweetener. It's packed with antimicrobial, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory properties. Doctors even use medical-grade honey to manage wound infections.

A recent study from 2023 found that manuka honey naturally soothes irritation, fights bacteria, reduces redness, and supports a healthy skin barrier, which can be especially helpful for sensitive, acne- or eczema-prone skin.



Quick Tip: It's important to choose raw or unpasteurized honey, since pasteurization (heating) removes many of the natural enzymes, nutrients, antibacterial, and antifungal properties that make honey so beneficial for the skin.

Personally, I like applying a thin layer of raw honey as a duo face wash/face mask for 5–10 minutes. It leaves my skin soft, calm, and nourished.



Rose Water

Rose water has been used for centuries, and science is catching up to why. It has anti-inflammatory properties to soothe redness, antioxidants that protect against environmental stressors, and a slightly acidic pH that helps balance skin.

Spritzed lightly as a toner, it brightens, refreshes, and tones without that harsh, tight feeling.

 *Worth the Hype (and Then Some)*

Rosewater is a true classic for a reason. Heritage Store's version feels like a soft exhale for your skin. Made with Damask Roses sourced from Europe's most fragrant fields, it hydrates, refreshes, and adds a hint of everyday luxury to your routine.

We love that this brand keeps things clean and kind, cruelty-free, vegan, and made without dyes or alcohol, so your skin gets the glow without the extras. Buy at [Heritage Store online](#).

Aloe Vera

Most of us know aloe as the go-to sunburn remedy, but its benefits extend beyond a beach sunburn. Aloe vera supports collagen production, speeds up wound healing, calms irritation, and hydrates deeply (since it's mostly water). It's especially good for sensitive or inflamed skin, offering that immediate cooling and hydrating effect when your skin feels stressed ([Hekmatpou et al., 2019](#)). The best kind of aloe is fresh, right off of the plant.

Apply a thin layer as a face mask for 10–20 minutes, smooth it onto dry patches, or use it as a light moisturizer. I've also found that layering aloe under a richer cream helps lock in hydration and keeps skin feeling fresh longer.



Castor Oil

Castor oil may not have the glam factor of luxury creams, but it delivers immense hydration. Rich in fatty acids and antioxidants, [Goyal et al. \(2022\)](#) found that it helps fight wrinkles, reduce puffiness, soothe sunburn, and even combat acne due to its antibacterial properties.

I've found it especially helpful as an under-eye serum and overnight treatment on dry patches.

The Oil That Gently Does It All

Heritage Store also has a Castor Oil that deserves a spot in your self-care lineup. Cold-pressed, organic, and hexane-free (that's a chemical sometimes used in oil extraction, and one I'm happy to skip), this nutrient-rich oil is as clean as it gets.

Whether you're using it for a skin-soothing massage, a deep hair treatment, or a nourishing castor oil pack, it's a gentle, multipurpose staple that keeps wellness simple. Get it [here](#).

Jojoba Oil

Jojoba oil is unique because it closely mimics the skin's natural sebum. That means it absorbs quickly, hydrates without clogging pores, and helps balance oily or acne-prone skin. A study conducted in 2021 found its antifungal and antioxidant benefits as well, finding it a versatile everyday moisturizer.

Apply as needed in the morning and night for light moisture.

Simple Ingredients. Serious Results



US Naturals Organic Jojoba Oil is USDA-certified organic, non-GMO, and completely free from additives, just pure, nutrient-rich hydration in a bottle. Packed with Vitamin E, antioxidants, and omega fatty acids, it delivers deep moisture that leaves skin soft and hair glossy without any heaviness. I also love the eco-chic dark amber glass bottle - sustainable, stylish, and made to keep this glow-booster fresh and potent. Get it [here](#).

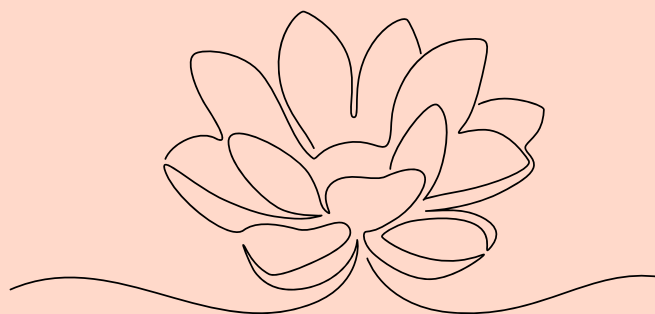
Why Simple Matters

The more I shifted toward natural, uncomplicated ingredients, the more I noticed a change that was not just in my skin, but in my mindset. Instead of scanning long ingredient lists filled with unpronounceable chemicals, I knew exactly what I was putting on my face. That sense of clarity brought peace.

Another benefit is that it's cost-effective too. A jar of raw honey or a bottle of jojoba oil lasts weeks, sometimes months, compared to pricey creams packed with fillers, fragrances, and hormone-disrupting additives. Holistic skincare doesn't just simplify your routine; it makes it more sustainable too!

Other Worthy Mentions:

- #1 Oatmeal: Colloidal oatmeal baths or masks can soothe eczema, itchiness, and irritation.
- #2 Coconut Oil: Excellent for moisturizing the body, though best avoided on acne-prone facial skin.
- #3 Shea Butter: Deeply nourishing for dry, flaky skin and gentle enough for sensitive areas.



About the Author:

Blakely Kresl is a contributing writer for The Modern Domestic Woman and a rising voice in women's health communication and community storytelling. With hands-on experience in marketing, PR, and brand strategy, Blakely is passionate about helping purpose-driven organizations connect with their audiences through authenticity and impact.

She has supported mission-based brands like FemPAQ, a sustainable menstrual health company focused on period equity and destigmatization, and Asami Naturals, an African tea brand rooted in tradition and wellness. From curating content and coordinating events to managing farmers market outreach and digital campaigns, Blakely brings curiosity, empathy, and creativity to every project.

Blakely's work celebrates the connection between women, brands, and communities, reminding us that meaningful change often starts with a shared story.

Connect with Blakely on [LinkedIn](#).



The background of the entire page is a photograph of a two-story blue house with white trim, identified as 'The Victorian Fox'. The house has a prominent front porch with white columns and a dark door. A small window above the door shows a warm interior light. To the right, a porch area is visible with outdoor furniture and a small table. The house is surrounded by greenery, and the scene is lit with warm, ambient lighting, suggesting dusk or night. Overlaid on the upper half of the image is the title 'The Victorian Fox' in a stylized, ornate font. The word 'The' is in a smaller, simpler font, while 'Victorian' is in a large, flowing script. 'Fox' is in a smaller, bold, serif font. A circular logo featuring a fox's head wearing a top hat and a red jacket is positioned to the right of 'The'. Decorative flourishes and lines extend from the text and logo across the image.

The Victorian Fox

A Storybook Stay in the Heart of St. Charles

The Victorian Fox in downtown St. Charles is a lovingly restored 1895 home that blends historic elegance with modern comfort.

This guest-favorite Airbnb offers attainable luxury through its refined design, thoughtful details, and proximity to the best local dining, shopping, and culture. Every stay feels like a step back in time, with all the amenities today's travelers love.

Where Timeless Beauty Meets Modern Comfort

Nestled just three blocks from the Fox River, The Victorian Fox feels like stepping into another era. One where craftsmanship, charm, and hospitality still reign supreme. This meticulously restored 1895 home blends the grandeur of Victorian architecture with the ease of modern comfort, offering guests an experience that's equal parts timeless and indulgent.

Owned and lovingly curated by Samantha Cocroft, The Victorian Fox has quickly become one of Airbnb's most-loved homes, and for good reason. From the moment you arrive, it's clear that every detail reflects Samantha's passion for preservation, comfort, and attainable luxury.

The house itself is a love letter to St. Charles' history, thoughtfully restored with the help of local architects, artisans, and the city's historic preservation committee.



Each space tells a story: handpicked antiques, curated photographs of St. Charles' iconic landmarks, and luxurious modern touches that make guests feel both pampered and at home.

As one guest put it best:

"Quaint, yet elaborate...we felt like royalty."

Sleeping up to twelve guests across five bedrooms, The Victorian Fox is a perfect blend of elegance and ease. Guests enjoy a sunlit kitchen with a coffee bar, a parlor stocked with vintage glassware, and a backyard oasis complete with a pond and professionally designed landscaping.

Every corner showcases Samantha's meticulous eye, from the original glass porch door to the marble bench in the entryway, creating a home that feels both grounded in history and refreshingly modern.



Distinct Spaces with Local Soul



Each bedroom has its own personality: the jewel-toned Arcada Cove pays homage to the beloved Arcada Theatre; the Baker Burrow glows with olive warmth; and the attic-level Norris Nook charms with vintage sports nostalgia. Every room is a carefully curated retreat, designed to reflect both local heritage and individual character.

Hospitality That Feels Like Home

Guests are greeted with thoughtful details, from locally made treats and handmade soaps to personalized itineraries highlighting the best of St. Charles. It's the kind of hospitality that feels both indulgent and entirely within reach.

Antique woodwork meets smart TVs, and a marble-topped entryway opens to a bright, fully equipped kitchen—seamlessly blending historic charm with modern comfort.

Whether you're gathering with friends, hosting a weekend retreat, or sneaking away for a quiet reset, The Victorian Fox delivers the best of both worlds: historic beauty and contemporary ease.

Just steps from downtown's restaurants, theaters, and boutiques, it's an invitation to experience St. Charles through the lens of attainable luxury, where every stay feels like stepping into a beautifully preserved story, made for modern travelers.

In addition to full-home rentals through Vrbo, Airbnb, and Booking.com, The Victorian Fox is also available to rent by the hour for private parties, photo shoots, and intimate gatherings, a dream backdrop for creating memories or capturing timeless images.



Follow @TheVictorianFox on Instagram for updates on local collaborations, community events, and behind-the-scenes peeks at this storybook home.

thevictorianfox.com



ADVOCACY





RENEW: WHERE THREADS OF HOPE BECOME STORIES OF STRENGTH

by Elizabeth Rago



Walk into the Renew studio in downtown Glen Ellyn and you'll hear the hum of sewing machines mingling with the sound of laughter, conversation, and the clinking of teacups. It's a space alive with creativity. Where refugee women from across the world gather each week to sew, learn, share meals, and build new lives.

Founded in 2009 by Rebecca Sandberg and a team of Christian women, Renew was created from a simple but powerful conviction: that every woman deserves the chance to rebuild her life with dignity, purpose, and belonging. What began as a few sewing classes has grown into a flourishing nonprofit that provides refugee women with artisan training, part-time employment, English language classes, and a deep sense of community.

Each handcrafted bag, accessory, or home good made at Renew carries a story stitched into its seams. Stories of courage from women who have journeyed from countries like Myanmar, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Georgia. Eight nations, seven languages, and one shared heartbeat: the desire to create something beautiful out of change.

For Arzo, a former elementary school teacher from Iraq, Renew became more than a workplace – it became a second family.

“When I found Renew, that’s when I began to feel like I was home,” she shares. “Everyone was so patient, and I was able to practice my English. Renew has become my second family.”



Finding Home Through Hands and Heart

That sense of belonging is intentional. Each week, Renew's workshop becomes a haven where women gather for sewing, English classes, Bible study, and shared lunches. Coffee breaks turn into moments of laughter and encouragement.

Lessons in English flow naturally between stitches and stories. Volunteers, staff, and artisans alike practice what the organization calls its core values: leading humbly, embracing curiosity, creating together, and pursuing excellence.

A New Chapter for a Growing Community

In 2024, Renew marked a new chapter, refreshing its brand from Re:New Project to simply Renew. The change reflects both growth and clarity: a deeper commitment to helping refugee women flourish in creativity, dignity, and peace.

This new season has also brought a refreshed leadership team, thoughtful system updates, expanded student programs, and a beautifully renewed store and studio space, all designed to better serve the women and community at the heart of Renew's mission. Visitors are always welcome to stop by, see the artisans at work, and learn more about how Renew is weaving together opportunity, friendship, and hope.

What sets Renew apart is its holistic approach. Women aren't just taught a trade; they're welcomed into a family that nurtures their faith, confidence, and independence.

The Artisan Program offers dignified, flexible employment for graduates of the sewing classes, allowing them to earn income while balancing family and personal growth. Around the sewing tables, friendships bloom. Around the lunch tables, conversations bridge cultures and build trust.

Carrying the Story Forward

From eight countries and seven languages, the women of Renew are weaving a new kind of tapestry. One made of resilience, faith, and shared purpose. Their handcrafted pieces are beautiful, yes, but their true artistry lies in what they represent: community, courage, and renewal.


When you shop at Renew, you're not just buying a bag or a piece of home décor. You're carrying a story – one of hope, dignity, and peace.





Every stitch is a small act of courage — and a reminder that creativity can rebuild what's been broken.



Visit their storefront at 483 N. Main Street in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, explore their collection online at renewproject.org and donate to the Year End Campaign here 



Meet the Makers: A Global Tapestry

Behind every Renew creation is a story stitched with care, resilience, and hope. The women who gather around the sewing tables each week bring the world to Glen Ellyn – one conversation, one friendship, one handcrafted piece at a time.



Countries Represented:

Myanmar · Iraq · Afghanistan
Uzbekistan · Guatemala · Nigeria
Malaysia · Georgia

Languages Spoken:

Burmese · Arabic · Spanish · Farsi
Turkish · Kurdish · Uzbek



About the Author:

Elizabeth Rago is the founder of The Modern Domestic Woman (MDW), a media company and nonprofit dedicated to creating space for honest conversations about life's hardest moments.

Through MDW, she celebrates and supports organizations that help women from all backgrounds find strength, healing, and connection.

Elizabeth built MDW on the belief that empathy and kindness are not signs of weakness but acts of courage, especially in a culture that often forgets their power. Her work champions the idea that when women come together, share their stories, and lift one another up, real change begins.



Shared Language:

Kindness, the one that needs no translation.

Staying Informed in a Noisy World

At MDW, we're committed to staying informed and helping you do the same. Understanding what's happening locally, nationally, and globally helps us show up as stronger, more thoughtful advocates in our communities. While no news source is perfectly unbiased, we can read widely, fact-check, and think critically to get closer to the truth. Below are a few outlets that make an effort toward balanced, transparent reporting, because informed women create informed communities.



BBC News

A global perspective that helps contextualize U.S. issues in broader trends.



Tri-Cities Central

A comprehensive look at local news, stories, and events that keep the Tri-Cities connected.



Read the local news and subscribe here.



Reuters

International news agency with a strong reputation for accuracy and neutrality.



ProPublica

Investigative journalism focused on holding power accountable.

MENTAL HEALTH



DEPRESSION: INNOVATIVE NEW TREATMENTS GIVE HOPE

By Teresa Poprawski, MD, QEEGD, Neuropsychiatrist,
Chief Medical Officer at Relief Mental Health

We all experience sadness in our lives. It's part of being human. We also use the words "depressed" or "depression" in casual speech. But for people diagnosed with clinical depression, the word is not casual at all. While people without a depression diagnosis usually bounce back after a short period of time – a couple of days or a week – people with clinical depression experience disruptive, depressive symptoms for two weeks or more, without interruption.

Traditional Treatments for Depression

Traditional, first-line treatments for depression include a combination of therapy, medication (if needed), and lifestyle changes. Therapy might mean weekly sessions with a counselor, social worker, or psychologist, using techniques like cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), and others.

Medication might include antidepressants prescribed by a psychiatrist or psychiatric provider, such as a physician assistant or mental health nurse practitioner. And lifestyle changes often involve improving eating, sleeping, and exercise habits.



The Prevalence of Depression in the U.S.

The availability of effective treatments for depression is important for the millions of people in the U.S. with a diagnosis of major depressive disorder (MDD). The latest reliable data, published in the 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2022 NSDUH), shows the following prevalence rates of depression in the U.S.

Major Depressive Episode (MDE):

Adults (18+): 8.8% (5.0 million) total
10.4% (13.7 million) among females
7.0% (8.8 million) among males

MDE With Severe Impairment:

Adults (18+): 6.2% (15.8 million) total
7.3% (9.6 million) among females
5.0% (6.2 million) among males

The 2022 NSDUH also indicates that 64 percent of adults with MDE received treatment, with 67 percent of adults with severe impairment receiving some form of treatment for depression.

Unfortunately, traditional treatments for depression are not always effective. This is true for people with treatment-resistant depression (TRD): they may try everything to feel better – therapy, medication, lifestyle change – and still experience disruptive symptoms that impact their daily lives.

That's where two new, innovative treatments for depression have changed the game: transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) and SPRAVATO®.



What is TMS?

Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), a technique approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2008, is a non-invasive treatment designed to treat depression safely and effectively. TMS works by emitting gentle magnetic pulses to the area of the brain that regulates mood. These pulses activate specific areas of the brain to decrease symptoms of depression.

TMS does not require hospitalization and has no systemic side effects. Treatment sessions usually last about 20 minutes. Patients sit in a comfortable chair in an outpatient office setting. TMS does not require anesthesia. Patients remain awake during treatment, and since there's no anesthesia involved and no side effects like drowsiness, they can drive themselves home after treatment. TMS treatment is covered by most insurance.

TMS has a high success rate for patients with treatment-resistant depression. In severe cases where standard therapy, medication, and lifestyle changes are ineffective, TMS can help patients manage their depressive symptoms and live a full and productive life. At Relief, we utilize cutting-edge BrainsWay Deep TMS™ technology—FDA-approved for depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxious depression, and smoking cessation.

What is SPRAVATO?

SPRAVATO® is a medication containing the chemical® esketamine, which was approved by the FDA in 2019 for the treatment of depression in adults. SPRAVATO® can help patients who've tried standard antidepressants without success. In most cases, patients seeking symptom relief for years – with standard treatments – finally find relief with SPRAVATO®.

Treatment with SPRAVATO® most often occurs in an outpatient office setting. Patients self-administer SPRAVATO® via a nasal spray under the supervision of licensed medical staff. Because the side effects of SPRAVATO® may include dizziness, drowsiness, and sedation, clinicians observe patients for a minimum of two hours after treatment, and patients need to arrange for a friend or family member to drive them to and from treatment sessions.

Most patients start with two sessions a week for a month, transition to one session a week for an additional month, and then attend sessions every other week. Research that led to FDA approval of SPRAVATO® (esketamine) shows its effectiveness in reducing the symptoms of depression in patients with treatment-resistant depression.

Follow-up research published in 2021 confirms the initial results and confirms what many patients know already: when other treatments fail, treatment with SPRAVATO® can work.



Healing, Growing, and Reclaiming Your Life With Depression Treatment

In the 21st century, mental health professionals are hard at work creating new and effective treatments for mental health diagnoses such as depression and treatment-resistant depression.

The days when people with depression experienced stigma around both the diagnosis and treatment are fading quickly. We're at the beginning of a new era when conversations around mental health are becoming normalized, treatment for mental health diagnoses is not stigmatized, and our culture is slowly coming around to this realization:



Asking for help is a sign of strength,
rather than a sign of weakness.

TMS and SPRAVATO® are important components of this new movement in mental health and mental health treatment. They're safe, effective, and offer symptom relief when other treatment approaches do not. That's a major development for people with depression who haven't had success with therapy and medication. They can rediscover the hope and optimism that are essential for long-term healing and growth in a comfortable, outpatient setting with personalized treatment designed to restore balance, happiness, and overall well-being.



Relief Mental Health is a leading outpatient provider of TMS, psychedelics (SPRAVATO® and ketamine infusions), psychiatric medication management, and therapy. Dedicated to delivering expedited care, Relief has 10 facilities in three states. In Illinois, clinics are located in Chicago (Lakeview and West Loop), Oak Brook, Orland Park, Northbrook, Rockford, and St. Charles. Visit reliefmh.com for more information.

About the Author:

Dr. Teresa Poprawski serves as Chief Medical Officer at Relief Mental Health. She is a board-certified neuropsychiatrist, a quantitative electroencephalography (qEEG) diplomat, and an accomplished, executive-level medical administrator.

Dr. Poprawski is passionate, caring, and dedicated to the study of brain sciences. She draws on her knowledge and experience to find the best solution for each of her patients. Dr. Poprawski's compassionate and positive attitude is admired by her patients and peers alike.

Dr. Poprawski specializes in the treatment of depression, OCD, and other mental health conditions. Using transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) in conjunction with state-of-the-art diagnostics, psychedelic antidepressant therapy (SPRAVATO® esketamine nasal spray), and other collaborative interventions, Dr. Poprawski has a track record of outstanding results.

She develops and applies a proprietary method of medication selection and recognizes that TMS technology is highly effective in the treatment of psychiatric conditions, especially in cases where traditional methods have failed or proved an inadequate level of relief.

Learn more about Dr. Poprawski and Relief Mental Health at reliefmh.com



Small Ways to Step Out of Overwhelm

Micro-habits are small, simple actions that help shift your mental, emotional, or physical state. They aren't about changing your whole life overnight, they're about choosing supportive, doable actions in the moment. Try these and see what works:

Body-Based Calming:



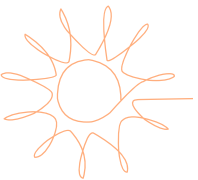
- Press your feet into the ground and notice the support beneath you
- Place one hand on your chest, one on your belly, and breathe slowly
- Run your hands under cool or warm water
- Gently sway side to side, like a tree

Sensory Reconnection:



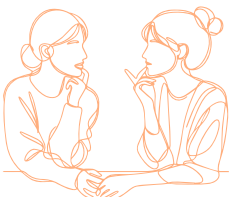
- Smell a scent that feels comforting (lavender, citrus, cinnamon)
- Listen to a single favorite song with full attention
- Hold something soft, cold, or textured in your hands and just notice it
- Try 5-4-3-2-1 grounding: list 5 things you see, 4 you can touch, etc.

Mindful Mindset Shifts:



- Whisper a phrase like "I can do one thing at a time."
- Imagine your nervous system as a tired friend—what would you offer her?
- Change the lighting: open the curtains, dim the overheads
- Do one task with full attention—no multitasking

Emotional Resets:



- Name what you're feeling—even if it's messy
- Text a friend "today's a lot, just saying hi"
- Step outside, even for 2 minutes
- Say "I don't need to figure it all out right now"

RESOURCE

This guide was created for women launching their own businesses with a focus on protecting mental health while chasing big dreams.

Inside, you'll find practical tools, reflection prompts, and gentle reminders that boundaries, rest, and support are part of success, not distractions from it.

Think of it as a grounded companion to help you build confidently, care for yourself deeply, and define success on your own terms.

**the modern
domestic
woman**



MDW guides help you unpack topics and provide practical tools to help you in your everyday.

Reviewed and approved by a licensed mental health practitioner.

A MENTAL HEALTH GUIDE FOR
WOMEN STARTING THEIR
OWN BUSINESS

MDW FREE DOWNLOAD





MDW Cares

MDW Cares is a mutual aid network for women navigating life's many transitions, from motherhood to career shifts to divorce and beyond. We connect you with trusted local resources and community support so you don't have to walk the journey alone.

The following pages highlight support groups and therapists with immediate openings to help you find care when you need it most.

MDW CARES: OFFICIALLY A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

For more than a decade, The Modern Domestic Woman (MDW) has been more than a brand – it's been a lifeline. What began as a simple lifestyle blog has grown into a trusted network of women supporting women through life's hardest seasons.

Now that mission has taken its next big step forward: MDW is officially a nonprofit organization, known as MDW Cares.

From Stories to Support

Founded by St. Charles resident Elizabeth Rago, The Modern Domestic Woman began as a storytelling platform that celebrated the beauty, mess, and resilience of women's everyday lives. Over time, those stories revealed a deeper truth. Many women weren't just looking for inspiration; they were searching for real help.

Through local workshops, community partnerships, and everyday connections, MDW has evolved into something more than media. With the launch of MDW Cares, that evolution becomes official.

MDW Cares exists to provide mental health education, advocacy, and access to trusted resources, meeting women where they are and connecting them to tools that support the whole person.



A MISSION ROOTED IN REAL LIFE

Elizabeth's inspiration for MDW Cares grew from her own lived experience navigating a season of crisis between 2010 and 2013.

"I knew if I was struggling behind closed doors, other women must be, too," Elizabeth shares.

"I wanted to create a space that offered what I needed most back then, connection, dignity, and real-life support."

That desire became the heart of MDW Cares: to make sure no woman has to face life's hardest moments alone.

Our Focus: Connection, Community, and Care

MDW Cares works to address the emotional, social, and practical needs of women through three core pillars:

- Mental Health – Normalizing the conversation and providing accessible tools for managing stress, burnout, and overwhelm.
- Lifestyle & Well-Being – Helping women cultivate safe, nurturing spaces at home and within themselves.
- Advocacy – Connecting women to trusted local and regional resources, from housing and legal support to financial literacy and recovery services.

Through events, free guides, workshops, and partnerships, MDW Cares continues to turn empathy into action.

A Growing Movement

In the coming weeks, MDW Cares will announce its Board of Directors, a group of passionate community leaders and advocates who will guide the organization's next phase of growth.

This new chapter will allow MDW Cares to expand its reach, strengthen partnerships, and continue building an ecosystem of support for women across the Fox River Valley and beyond.



"You'd never know it by looking at these photos, but I was in the middle of one of the hardest seasons of my life. Postpartum anxiety, sleepless nights, and the pressure to hold it all together. MDW was born here, in the quiet moments of "I can't do this" that slowly turned into "I can help someone else through this." – Elizabeth

What's Next for MDW Cares

As we grow into this next chapter, MDW Cares is actively applying for grants and seeking funding to bring our mission to life. Our goals for the year ahead include:

- Launching a private online community to foster authentic connection and shared resources.
- Hiring a part-time content writer to expand educational content and tell more women's stories.
- Funding community education workshops on mental health, parenting, divorce, and resilience.
- Hiring a Community Outreach & Events Coordinator to strengthen partnerships and host local gatherings.
- Adding a social media coordinator to share community voices and promote resources.
- Building a new, accessible website that brings all MDW programs together under one roof.

We know the need is great - and so is the opportunity. If you're moved by our mission, we invite you to donate, sponsor, or collaborate with us to help MDW Cares grow sustainably and continue offering real-world support to women who need it most.



Batavia, IL

Creating Space Therapy



Website



34 N Island Ave., Suite F
Batavia, IL

(630) 601-3460
Request a [Consultation](#)

Meet the MDW

Mental Health Advisory Board

The MDW Mental Health Advisory Board is made up of licensed mental health professionals who help guide our mission with expertise, ensuring our resources are reviewed, relevant, and compassionate.

When women reach out for support, we take the time to connect them with a professional who is the best fit for their needs, so they feel supported from the very first step.

Each member serves as a volunteer, offering her time, skills, and stories out of a shared belief in the power of community care, creating space for honesty, healing, and connection.



Carrie Summers
LCSW



Lovey Kaur
LCSW



Amanda Losch
LCSW



Priscilla Dean
MS, LCPC



Dennise Demitro
LCSW



Lindsey Liddicoatt
LCPC, CADC

Reach out for support by emailing themoderndomesticwoman@gmail.com or filling out our Intake Form below.



From One Woman's Story to a Shared Mission

At its heart, MDW Cares is about turning lived experience into lasting impact.

"What started as survival has become service," says Elizabeth. "MDW Cares is the tangible extension of what The Modern Domestic Woman has always stood for, showing up for each other with compassion, courage, and care."

From workshops and magazine stories to one-on-one support and community partnerships, MDW Cares is growing into a movement of women helping women, right here, right now.

Get Involved

Follow along as MDW Cares continues to grow and connect women across our community.

Visit mdwcares.com

Follow us on social
@themoderndomesticwoman



Donate





Therapists with Immediate Openings



Jasmine Rebuck, LCSW – St. Charles, IL

With over 15 years in the mental health field, Jasmine brings a balance of warmth, expertise, and real-world understanding to her work. She's passionate about helping people move through life's challenges, from grief and caregiving to anxiety and change, with steadiness, strength, and grace.

Ellie Mental Health

2570 Foxfield Road, Ste. 200, Saint Charles, IL

elliell19702@elliementalhealth.com

847-403-3535

elliementalhealth.com/locations/st-charles-foxfield-rd-il



Maty Patino Trejo, MFT – Downers Grove, IL

Known for her blend of honesty, empathy, and warmth, Maty guides individuals and couples toward deeper connection and self-discovery. A proud advocate for cultural inclusion in therapy, she's especially passionate about supporting minorities and Spanish-speaking clients on their journey toward healing and growth.

Solid Foundations Therapy

4932 Main Street, Downers Grove, IL

Info@SolidFoundationstherapy.com

630-633-8532

solidfoundationstherapy.com



Heidi Napolitano, APRN, PMHNP-BC – St. Charles, IL

Heidi is a dual board-certified Family Nurse Practitioner and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner with extensive experience across critical care, emergency medicine, postpartum, and both inpatient and outpatient mental health settings. With a deep commitment to whole-person care, she brings a compassionate, evidence-based approach to supporting patients through every stage of healing and recovery.

Collaborative Counseling and Psychiatry

2210 Dean Street, Unit D, Saint Charles, IL

contact@collaborative4you.com

847-440-2281

collaborative4you.com



UPCOMING EVENTS

Join in on a variety of events hosted by MDW and our partners. Learn more and sign up here.

RSVP

YOGA + BRUNCH

For Moms of Neurodivergent Kids

OCT. 12, 2025 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Zen Loft Collective, Batavia, IL

RSVP

Email amanda@resonanthelalingco.com

DISCOVER. DEFINE. DESIGN.

OCT. 18 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Baker Community Center, St. Charles, IL



RSVP

Hands-on workshop to discover your values and make a custom bracelet.

MOMS SUPPORT GROUP

OCT. 22 7:15 PM – 8:30 PM

Batavia Library, Batavia, IL

Text 630-946-9102
for more info

REBUILDING YOUR LIFE AFTER DIVORCE

NOV. 6 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

The Victorian Fox Bed & Breakfast, St. Charles, IL

An empowering evening designed to help you reclaim your future, rebuild with clarity, and move forward with confidence.



RSVP



PARENTING



“Why does parenting feel so hard for me?”

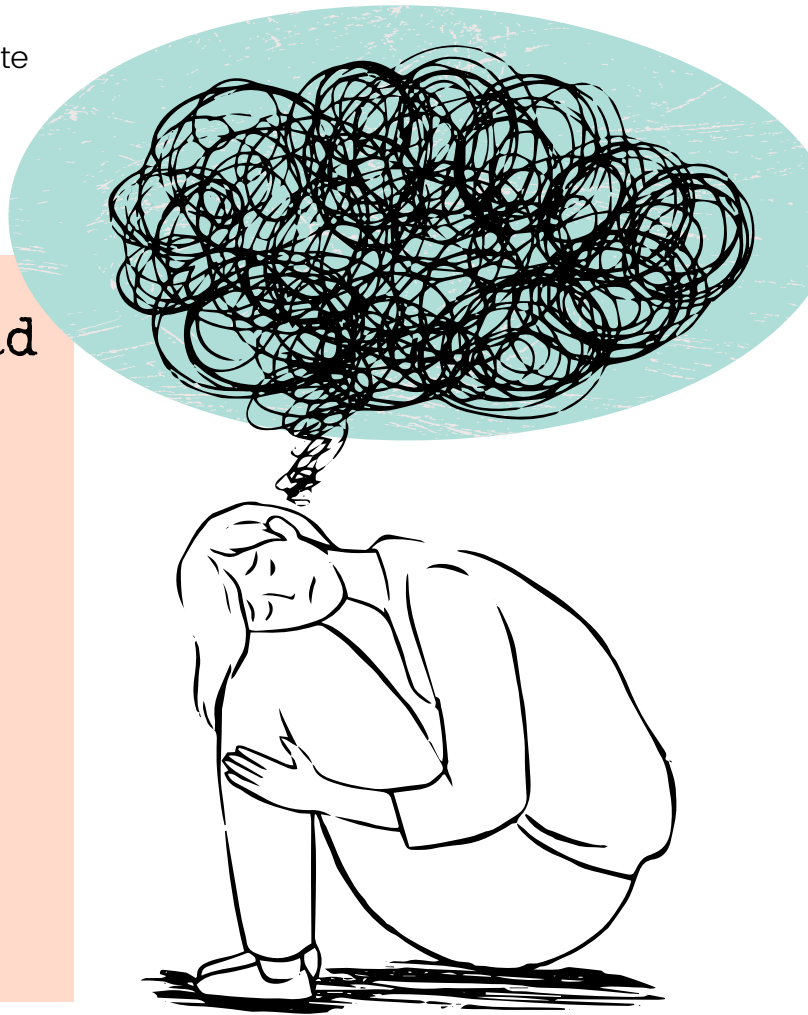
The hidden toll for parents of neurodivergent kids

Parents of neurodivergent kids, especially if they're also neurodivergent, often live in a state of chronic nervous system overload.

Without support this can lead to burnout.

The Unsustainable Load

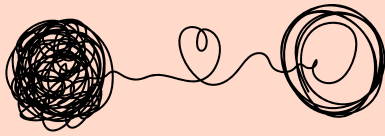
- Inescapable sensory overwhelm
- Environmental unpredictability
- Constant co-regulation
- Emotional labor + advocacy
- Systemic lack of support
- Relational Strain
- Executive function challenges
- Unmet support needs
- Physical aggression
- Navigating conflicting needs
- School challenges
- Lack of adequate rest/recovery time
- Neurotype specific challenges/needs
- Lack of understanding/isolation



To manage the unsustainable load we often default back to our old survival adaptations. When you've learned that safety depends on staying hyperaware, pushing through, or putting others' needs first, it's no surprise that your body struggles to shift out of survival mode.

Some common survival strategies that show up:

- Hyper-independence: “I have to do it all myself.”
- Hypervigilance: “I need to be prepared for a meltdown at any time.”
- Emotional/Need Suppression: “There's no time for my feelings or needs.”
- Over exertion: “I need to keep pushing, digging deeper.”

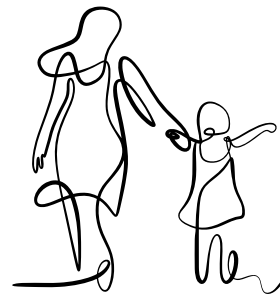


When survival becomes the norm, it's hard to recognize it's happening:

"This is just what being a mom is."
"I just need to try harder/do more."

But the truth is:

It's not just you that's struggling.
This is not a personal failure.
This is really hard.



The path forward begins with recognizing that you were never meant to carry this much alone. The exhaustion you feel isn't weakness, it's your body's way of signaling that it needs care, safety, and support. Healing starts when we name what's unsustainable, release the myth that we have to do it all, and begin to build systems of rest, community, and shared understanding.

Listen actively, share your own experiences, and set aside time for check-ins with yourself, your partner, or trusted friends to stay connected and grounded. You deserve spaces and relationships where both you and your child can thrive without living in survival mode.

About the Author:



Amanda Losch is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who focuses on the realities of parenting while navigating neurodivergence, chronic illness, trauma recovery, or cycle-breaking.

As a member of the MDW Mental Health Advisory Board, she's committed to making support accessible through free book clubs, virtual support groups, and in-person meetups.

Amanda's work centers on building community, reducing isolation, and helping parents feel understood while equipping them with tools to care for themselves and their families.

SWEATER



Wrap your little pumpkin in cozy autumn magic with this hand-knit Pumpkin Cardigan.

Mossy green details and five wooden buttons make it look straight out of a storybook stroll through the pumpkin patch.

Soft, warm, and lovingly crafted, it's the sweetest layer for crisp fall adventures.

Pumpkin Cardigan

LITTLE BARN BABY



the modern
**domestic
woman**



My
Recess
THERAPY

MY RECESS THERAPY, RISING LIGHTS PROJECT
& COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN CARE
INVITE YOU TO JOIN OUR ANNUAL
**SENSORY & ALLERGY FRIENDLY
INCLUSIVE EVENT**



TRUNK-OR-TREAT



Free Family Friendly Event!

25

Saturday Oct. 25th

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Elburn Metra Train Station

Anderson Road, Elburn, IL.

Left on to Anderson Rd from Rt. 38



Trunk or Treating Sensory & Allergy Friendly Handouts*Activities*Crafts
*Teal Pumpkin Hunt*Best Halloween Costume Contest
*Vote for your favorite trunk*Raffles*Prizes & More!



The Recovery Method: A New Standard for Postpartum Health and Wellness

The Recovery Method empowers postpartum mothers with online resources to take control of their health, using evidence-based practices, compassionate care, and inclusivity to redefine postpartum for future generations.

Founded by healthcare professional and mother Dr. Naha Pandya who recognized a critical gap in support for new moms, The Recovery Method is on a mission to change the way postpartum health is approached. After years of research and hands-on experience, The Recovery Method was created to ensure that every mother receives the comprehensive care she deserves.

With a focus on compassion, inclusivity, and expert guidance, you can build a supportive community that not only helps you recover but thrive.

What you can expect from The Recovery Method community:

- a database of healthcare providers by discipline and location
- postpartum educational resources and videos
- provider-verified products and supplies
- tips for navigating your postpartum journey

Discover more at therecoverymethodinfo.com



FINE
HOME

LIGHT



Onyx & Frosted Glass Sconce

LES TROIS PYRAMIDES



FLOREALS



"I love designer Cat Sheehan from Bloom & Bread. She truly captures the essence of the harvest season with pumpkins brimming with dried blooms, each stem preserved and repurposed from seasons past.

Cat's signature style blends whimsy and warmth, turning simple autumn décor into an artful celebration of nature's cycles."

- Elizabeth

Fall Flower Pumpkins

BY BLOOM & BREAD



SCENTS

"I met Grace, the owner of Unwind Gracefully, at a recent pop-up event, and her scents immediately drew me in.

I especially fell in love with her skull car diffusers (so fun and moody!) and the acorn candles, which perfectly capture that cozy autumn vibe."

- Elizabeth



Cozy Acorns + Spooky Skulls

UNWIND GRACEFULLY



Herbs that Work Overtime

Rosemary

Rosemary has long been considered a guardian herb, used in ancient times to ward off negativity and strengthen memory.

Think of it as a gentle shield for your mind and home.



meaning:

Protection + Mental Clarity

homemade alchemy:

Tuck a few sprigs into a roasting pan with root vegetables, swirl into butternut squash soup, or tie into a little bundle and toss into simmer pots for that earthy, piney scent.

reflect:

What thought or worry are you ready to let go of? Imagine releasing it as the rosemary infuses your food.

meaning:

Abundance + Joy

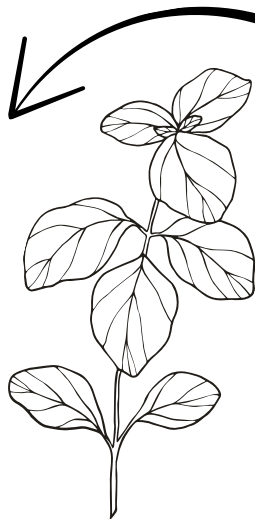
homemade alchemy:

Blend it into a walnut-basil pesto for fall pasta, sprinkle over a roasted tomato galette, or add to a harvest salad with apples and goat cheese.

reflect:

What small pleasures can you savor this season? The crunch of leaves, a favorite fall treat, a cozy sweater?

Let basil remind you to make space for delight.



Basil

Known as the "herb of kings," basil has been associated with prosperity and happiness for centuries, bringing a sense of sweetness and ease to both food and mood.

Thyme

Medieval knights carried thyme into battle for bravery, and today it's still a beautiful reminder to speak your truth and stand steady in difficult moments.



meaning:

Courage + Resilience

homemade alchemy:

Toss fresh thyme sprigs into autumn soups, stews, and roasted chicken, or pair with pears and honey for a beautiful fall crostini. Its earthy flavor grounds and steadies you.

reflect:

Where do you need a little more bravery this season? Starting a new project, setting a boundary, saying no? As the thyme simmers, imagine that courage filling your body like warmth.

DRINKS



This Apple Fizz is autumn in a glass, where Empress gin, spiced apple syrup, and a splash of soda come together in fizzy, jewel-toned magic.

Topped with cinnamon, star anise, and a delicate apple slice, it's a crisp-and-cozy clink to sweater season.

Empress Apple Fizz

BY TARYN GUT



about **the modern domestic woman**

Supporting women from all walks of life.

At The Modern Domestic Woman (MDW), we are committed to addressing the holistic needs of women and recognizing the challenges they face in various aspects of life. Our vision is to create a nurturing environment where every woman feels supported and encouraged to thrive, regardless of their circumstances. Through our workshops and resource-sharing initiatives, MDW equips women with the tools and knowledge they need to overcome challenges and pursue their goals with confidence. We believe in providing practical resources tailored to women's needs, ensuring that they have access to essential support services.

MDW focuses on 3 pillars of living:

MENTAL HEALTH - MDW Cares is our support community of women rooted in making mental health a priority instead of an afterthought. Because nobody can pour from an empty cup.

LIFESTYLE - MDW loves creating safe spaces; at home and in the body you call home. We encourage a healthy lifestyle that meets you where you're at. Not where someone else wants you to be. We also love pretty things at MDW and celebrate style and the artistry of creatives.

ADVOCACY - At MDW, we go out into our communities and support women in crisis. We actively partner with organizations that support the rights, recovery, and well-being of women.

Beyond referrals, MDW has free support groups and community education workshops, and an informative and fun blog with free downloadable resources.

For more information, visit mdwcares.com or follow MDW on your favorite social platform @themoderndomesticwoman

Have a question or need a referral? Email us at themoderndomesticwoman@gmail.com





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