

Excellence = MC²
Your Employee Assistance Program
1-800-899-3926

HEALTHY

EXCHANGE

ANOTHER BENEFIT OF YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

VOL. 3, NO. 3

For Your Information

FAIR FIGHTING

Take a time-out if an argument flares past the point where you can control yourself. Simply state that you must leave because you do not want to escalate things further. Ask that you continue the discussion at another time when you can deal with issues in a less intense way. Specify the time.



TO INCREASE YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

Control your busy work. It's more important to concentrate on results, not on being busy. Focus on the job at hand. Don't let meaningless tasks like reorganizing your desk or files consume your precious time.

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT TIPS

To help lose weight or maintain a healthy weight, try two or three of the good habits below. Your long-term goal should be to do them all:

- Choose lower fat, lower calorie foods more often
- Eat more slowly
- Eat more fruits and vegetables for snacks
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator
- Drink water instead of soft drinks with sugar
- Use less high-fat cheese, cream, shortening, and butter when cooking
- Limit alcoholic beverages



ENERGY and MOOD

Healthy Ways To Improve Your Mood

Bad moods are an inevitable part of life. What can be particularly frustrating, however, is when we know we're in a bad mood, but seem unable to snap ourselves out of it. Are you aware of the many short-term and long-term, healthy techniques and strategies you can utilize to improve your mood?



If you find yourself feeling down, anxious, grumpy, low in energy, irritable and quick to snap at family, friends or coworkers, try a few of the suggestions below and find what works best for you:

1. Practice deep breathing. Break the grip of a bad mood with controlled, slow and deep breathing. Here's what to do: Sit comfortably at your desk or alone in a quiet room. Close your eyes and inhale slowly and deeply through your nose (for approx. 7 seconds), then exhale slowly through your mouth (for approx. 8 seconds). Focus your attention entirely on your breathing. If you prefer, say (or think the word) "relax" or "calm" or another soothing word as you exhale. Do this for ten repetitions any time you feel particularly anxious or stressed. This technique, known as the "relaxation response," will calm your brain, relax your body and lift your mood.

2. Exercise. When you exercise, your brain releases endorphins, adrenaline, serotonin and dopamine – natural brain chemicals that work together to relieve tension, lift your energy and boost your mood. Researchers report that even a short brisk walk can give you an energy and mood boost. What types of exercise are best? Cardiovascular exercise (such as brisk walking, running, cycling, swimming or other aerobic activity), weight training and yoga have all been shown in studies to reduce tension and anxiety and improve your emotional state.

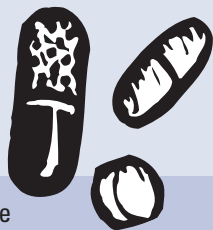


3. Adjust your diet. When you eat and what you eat affects your blood sugar levels, which in turn affect your energy and mood. Nutritionists recommend the following to help stabilize your blood sugar levels and mood:

- **Eat small meals and snacks every few hours to avoid peaks and valleys in your blood sugar levels.** Eating consistently throughout the day provides your brain with a constant source of fuel to help stabilize your energy and mood.
- **Limit consumption of simple sugars and refined carbohydrates to lessen major blood sugar swings.** Concentrated sources of sugar like soda, candy, fruit juice, jam

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14 Of The 20 Most Abused Drugs Are Prescription Drugs



Prescription medications can be effective when they are used properly, but some can be addictive and dangerous when misused. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 14 of the 20 most abused mood-altering substances in the U.S. are prescription drugs.

Many people become “unwitting” addicts. These are often individuals with no prior history of drug abuse, who begin using prescription drugs for a legitimate medical problem. Then, at some point, they start increasing the dosage on their own because the drug makes them feel better. Gradually, the abuse becomes full-blown addiction.

How to avoid prescription drug misuse or abuse

1. Educate yourself about any prescribed or over-the-counter drug you may take, in particular the drugs that can be addictive. The most frequent offenders are pain and nerve medications, tranquilizers, diet pills and cold medicines. Before taking any medication ask what is in the medication and what effects can be expected.
2. Keep your doctor informed about all medications you are taking, including over-the-counter medications.
3. Be sure to use medication only as prescribed. If you have questions or concerns, contact your doctor. Do not share prescribed medication with others.
4. Get a second opinion before going on a medication for any length of time. Long-term use for more than 27 consecutive days can be addictive (This does not apply to medications that simply provide what the body is deficient in, such as insulin or thyroid, or antidepressant medications).
5. Low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and feelings of isolation and detachment are the most common problems associated with drug dependency. Seek professional help or other resources to help you solve these problems, instead of covering up the symptoms with medication. Make yourself a priority and take care of your physical, emotional and spiritual needs.



We're here to help

If you or a dependent needs help to overcome a problem with prescription drug abuse or addiction, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can assist you with CONFIDENTIAL counseling, referrals and information. EAP counselors are specially trained to help people get the right help for a problem with prescription medications or other drugs, and can help you determine the extent of your problem and what treatment is needed. If you need help, why not call an EAP counselor today? All EAP services are free and strictly confidential.

IMPROVE YOUR MOOD...

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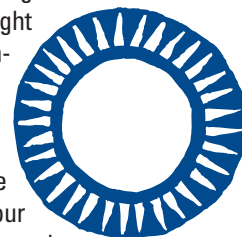
and syrup can create radical spikes (and drops) in your blood sugar levels, which can leave you feeling irritable and tired. Additionally, refined white starch foods like white bread, crackers, bagels, muffins, breakfast cereals and white rice can have the same effect on your blood sugar and mood. Limit your consumption of these foods. Instead, include more complex carbohydrates in your diet, such as vegetables, fruit, beans, peas, lentils, whole grains, brown rice and oatmeal.

- **Include protein with meals and snacks.** The addition of protein to a meal or snack will help slow the absorption of carbohydrate in the blood and lessen blood sugar and mood swings. Good protein sources include chicken, turkey, seafood and fish, veal, pork tenderloin, tofu, eggs and low-fat yogurt.
- **Cut down on caffeine.** Although it can provide an initial boost in energy and concentration, too much caffeine is linked to depression, fatigue and mood swings.

4. Let it out. If you're in a bad mood, there could be an obvious problem or emotional reason for it. Try to determine why you're in a bad mood and talk to a family member, friend or counselor about it. Simply talking about your problem will help you start to feel better. Allow yourself to feel your emotions. Remember, bottling up your feelings will only darken your mood, so let your feelings out.

5. Make adequate sleep a priority. Scientists have documented the link between sleep deprivation and a poor mood. According to a survey conducted by the National Sleep Foundation, those who got fewer than six hours of sleep on weekdays were more likely to describe themselves as stressed, sad, angry and pessimistic. Conversely, those getting adequate sleep reported more positive feelings. For a better mood, make the quality and quantity of your sleep a priority. Research suggests that most healthy adults need seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Keep a consistent sleep and wake schedule on workdays and weekends. Choose relaxing activities before bedtime, such as reading or taking a warm shower or bath, instead of turning on the TV or computer. Make sure your sleeping environment promotes relaxation and sleep. Your bedroom should be quiet, dark and at the proper temperature (in the mid-60s).

6. Bask in the sun. Sunlight is another element that is associated with mood and health. About 20% of Americans report feeling more depressed during the winter, when the amount of sunlight during the day is less and foul weather keeps people indoors more often. Why does this happen? When you're out in the sun your serotonin levels go up. Serotonin is a hormone in our body that helps elevate our mood. In the winter, we don't get as much sunlight, so we don't produce as much serotonin. As a result,

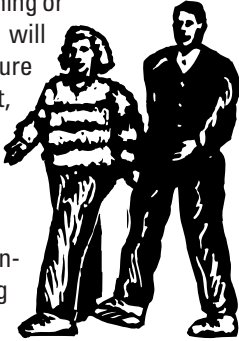


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IMPROVE YOUR MOOD...

Continued from page 2

more people feel blue. Try to get out more during daylight hours to help break a bad mood. An early morning or lunchtime walk will increase your exposure to natural sunlight, release the brain's natural mood-lifting chemicals like endorphins, and includes the additional benefit of being outside and breathing fresh air.



7. Eliminate the worry habit.

If you're stuck in "worry mode," changes take place in your physiology (changes in blood chemistry, blood sugar level, blood pressure, muscle tension) that undermine your energy and mood. If you're prone to worry, ask yourself these questions: Will any amount of worrying change the future? Will worrying pay your bills, prevent an accident, make your job more secure, or show that you care more because you worry? The truth is you can spend the rest of your life worrying and you will not have changed a thing. Worrying is passive. It gets you nowhere. The first step to eliminating worry is to recognize it as a bad habit (a learned, negative way of thinking) that can be changed. To eliminate worry, try the following: The next time you catch yourself worrying, change your "worry" to "wonder." Your internal dialogue could go something like this: "I wonder how I can overcome this obstacle? Maybe I could try this. If it doesn't work, I'll try something else." By changing worry to wonder, you turn unproductive, stress-promoting thinking into thought and action that can create positive change in your life. If persistent worry is a problem for you, seek out additional resources or counseling to help you overcome this destructive habit.

8. Take a break. Give yourself a break from negative thinking or a bad mood by doing something different. Suggestions that might work for you: Take a warm bath, read a good book, listen to relaxing



WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

Tips For Single Parents

No one faces daily demands greater than a single parent. Excessive demand is a continuing reality and constant problem for single parents. Burnout, or worse, incapacitating breakdown, are very real dangers for single parents who deplete their energy reserves day after day.

Part of the solution is giving up the notion of "having to go it alone." These tips may be useful:

1. Set realistic goals for yourself. If you can keep the family, a full-time job, and a household running without frequent disasters, you're doing very well.

2. Make sure you have a support system in place, and use it. Develop a network of relatives, friends, neighbors or groups like Parents Without Partners. Any responsibility, expense or chore that you can share with someone else will give you time to marshal your forces and be better as a parent, at work and in other areas of your life.

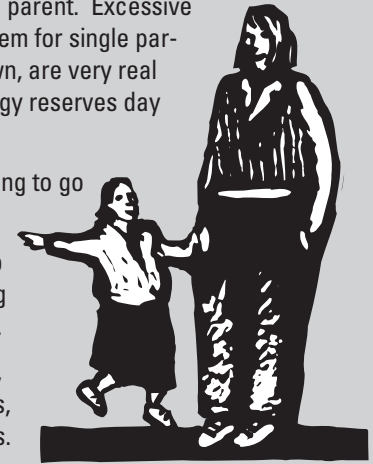
3. Train children to take more individual responsibility. Ask yourself, "What am I routinely doing for my children that they can learn to do for themselves?" Then teach them. Remind children that all family members have to work together as a team.

4. Open new avenues for your children to have relationships with caring and stable adults. Children need many sources of adult support and guidance. Clubs, scouting, and Big Brothers, all are sources of capable adults.

5. Share child care responsibilities with friends, neighbors or other single parents. Many single parents take turns watching each other's children for extended periods so each can have some time off. Friends and neighbors can all chip in for a mutual babysitter to create an open, uninterrupted block of time for rest or activity.

6. Make the children's bedtime early enough to save some time for yourself. Children must go to bed at your established time, but can read or look at books to promote sleepiness.

7. Find local, affordable babysitters who live nearby. Your local YMCA or city recreation department often offers babysitting classes and certification. Call them for names and phone numbers of reliable sitters who live in your neighborhood to cut down on



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music, get a massage, engage in a hobby, work in your garden, watch your favorite comedy or visit a library or museum. A change of pace, no matter how short, can help give you a more objective or positive perspective on what may be souring your mood.

Your EAP is here to help

Everyone experiences a bad mood from time to time.

However, if you're feeling "down" for more than a few weeks, or having difficulty functioning in daily life, you may be suffering from a serious medical condition called depression. If you suspect that you, or one of your dependents, may be suffering from depression, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for FREE and CONFIDENTIAL assistance. EAP counselors are specially trained to help people get the right kind of help for depression. If you need help, why not call an EAP counselor today? We're here to help you.

TIPS FOR SINGLE PARENTS...

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travel time. If you can afford a helper, consider having a high school student come occasionally to play with younger kids while you help with homework or just have some time to catch up on errands or housework.

8. Take good care of yourself. Pay special attention to diet, exercise, stress management and getting a good night's sleep. Learn healthy coping skills to relieve stress and tension. Learn meditation or yoga, take a walk, read a book, call a friend, or take a nap. It is critical for your children's well-being for you to take good care of yourself.

Contact your EAP

If you need help with issues related to single parenting, call your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for CONFIDENTIAL counseling, referrals or information. Remember, your EAP can help you with your personal, family or work-related concerns. If you need help, why not call an EAP counselor today? We're here to help you.

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Did you know?

Your EAP Website offers:

- Employee/Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Administrator Satisfaction Surveys
- Articles & Newsletters
- Quizzes & Self Assessment Instruments
- Tips on Stress Reduction
- Management and Human Resource Tips

Forgot your password? Ask your Human Resource specialist for the password or call the EAP at 1-800-899-3926.

www.theemployeeassistanceprogram.com

Taking Care Of Aging Parents

4 Important Legal Documents

Delaying preparation to deal with the illness, disability, incapacitation or death of a parent is understandable. It is something most of us would rather not consider. However, you can save yourself a tremendous amount of time, energy and perhaps money by being sure your parent has the following:

▶ **An updated and valid will** which ensures that your parent's belongings, money or property will be allocated according to his/her wishes. A current will reduces the likelihood of family conflict and an extended and complicated probate process. If a valid will does not exist, the court may determine how property and possessions will be dispersed.

▶ **A durable power of attorney** which allows a designated person to make legally binding decisions for your parent (such as signing checks or making housing choices) should he/she become incapacitated. Having a Durable Power of Attorney in place means the family can avoid the harrowing process of going to court to have a guardian named to oversee your parent's care and finances.

▶ **A living will** specifies your parent's wishes, in writing, as to the medical procedures to be performed if they become terminally ill. With a Living Will, your parent decides, in advance, specific medical procedures to be administered and the circumstances for disconnecting any life-support treatment. It can also specify who among family, friends or doctors will have the power to decide when to make a decision to disconnect life support systems.

▶ **A durable power of attorney for healthcare** is a legal document which allows your parent to designate a person to make certain decisions for them regarding their medical care, should they become unable to do so. The typical distinction between a Living Will and a Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare is that a Living Will usually deals only with medical decisions related to "end of life" situations. A Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare can be drafted to enable your parent to appoint a "healthcare agent" for a number of different medical situations which may arise not necessarily related to "end of life" situations.



Recommended Reading: *How To Care For Aging Parents* by Virginia Morris, Workman Publishing Company, New York. A very comprehensive resource on the medical, emotional, legal and financial issues involved in caring for an elderly parent.

Your EAP is here to help

If you need help with issues related to caring for an aging relative, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). We're here to provide you with counseling, referrals or information to help you meet the challenges of elder care or other personal concerns.

Employee Assistance Program

1-800-899-3926

- Personal / Work Stress
- Marital / Family Concerns
- Alcohol / Drug Concerns
- Frustration / Anger / Sadness

**CALL FOR FREE
CONFIDENTIAL
HELP**

All of us experience personal, family or work related problems now and then. Sometimes, even ordinary problems can become overwhelming. It is at these times, your **EAP** can provide free confidential assistance. Employees or family members can call to receive telephone consultation and/or to schedule an appointment with an **EAP** specialist.

Read Healthy Exchange online: theemployeeassistanceprogram.com
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