

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

HEALTHY

EXCHANGE

ANOTHER BENEFIT OF YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

VOL. 3, NO. 2

For Your Information

INCREASING YOUR STRESS FITNESS

To increase your stress resistance, emphasize your personal development. Develop as many of your talents as possible. Otherwise, you will be frustrated, which in turn causes internal stress.

10,000 STEPS PER DAY

Studies show that those who take at least 10,000 steps a day (the equivalent of walking about 5 miles) are more fit, have less body fat, and live longer. Try these to increase your walking and physical activity:

- Park your car a block or two away and walk.
- Get off one or two bus stops early and walk the rest of the way.
- Use the stairs instead of the escalator or elevator.
- Walk with a friend or group.



BETTER SLEEP TIPS

- Try to relax before bedtime. Take a walk, read a book, or take a warm bath.
- Unwind early in the evening. Try to deal with worries and distractions several hours before bedtime. Do work-related activities early in the evening.
- Develop a sleep ritual. Doing the same things each night just before bed signals your body to settle down for the night.

RELATIONSHIPS

Are You In An Abusive Relationship?

All relationships have their ups and downs, but there are certain types of behavior in any relationship that are unacceptable and abusive. If you think that your partner is abusive, or you suspect that someone you know is in an abusive relationship, review the information below. Recognizing the signs of an abusive relationship is the first step to breaking free.



What is relationship abuse?

Relationship abuse is a pattern of abusive and coercive behaviors used to maintain power and control over a former or current intimate partner. An abusive relationship means more than being hit by the person who claims to love or care about you. Abuse can be emotional, psychological, financial, sexual or physical and can include threats, isolation and intimidation. Abuse tends to escalate over time. When someone uses abuse and/or violence against a partner, it is always part of a larger pattern to try to control him/her.

Self-test: Is your relationship abusive?

Do you wonder if your relationship may be abusive? Ask yourself the questions below. The more "yes" answers, the more likely it is that you're in an abusive relationship.

Does your partner:

- humiliate, insult, criticize, demean or yell at you?
- ignore or put down your thoughts, feelings or accomplishments?
- treat you so badly that you're embarrassed for your friends and family to see?
- blame you for all the problems in your relationship, or for his/her own abusive behavior?
- see you as property or a sex object, rather than as a person?
- act excessively jealous and possessive?
- control where you go or what you do?
- keep you from seeing your friends or family?
- check up on you all of the time to see where you are, what you're doing and who you are with?

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Americans Name Money As Number One Factor Causing Stress

A survey commissioned by the American Psychological Association found that 73% of Americans single out money as the number one factor that affects their stress level. If you're feeling stressed about money, how can you solve your money problems and get financial stress under control?



Tips to ease financial stress

- 1. Seek professional help.** If financial pressures are getting you down seek professional help. Call your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for information and referrals. Your EAP counselor can help you assess what issue(s) may be contributing to your money problems and refer you to the proper resources to help you overcome the problem(s). These resources may include a financial planner, debt consolidation agency, mental health/substance abuse assistance, or other community services.
- 2. Don't let credit card debt break your back.** Consumers who run up high credit card balances and then regularly pay only the minimum amount due each month are paying very high prices for goods and services. The key to relieving financial stress is to get out of debt. Too much debt eats away at your take-home income and undermines your financial future.
- 3. Eliminate credit card debt.** Borrowing money for an asset that accumulates value (e.g. family home) can be a good thing. All other debt should be eliminated. Examine the interest rates you are paying on your debts and pay off those with the highest interest rates first.
- 4. Curb your spending.** For most people, overspending and having too much debt is the cause of money problems – it is not because they are not making enough money. Learn basic money management skills. Commit to living within your means.
- 5. Keep money in reserve for the unexpected.** Unexpected financial expenses hit all of us from time to time. Make sure you have a reserve to cope with these out-of-the-blue expenses. Having money in reserve will give you peace of mind.

Signs that you need financial assistance

- You are borrowing to meet regular expenses, such as food and utility bills.
- You are barely able to make the minimum required payment on bills, but continue to charge.
- You are using one form of credit, such as a line of credit or a debt consolidation loan, to make payment on other debts.
- You are using 20% or more of your take home income to pay credit card bills and personal loans (excluding mortgage payments).
- Your revolving credit cards are charged to the limit.
- You are behind on credit payments and receiving calls from creditors or collection agencies.
- You are bouncing checks.
- You have no cash reserve.

Contact your EAP

Remember, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is always available to help you or your dependents with personal, family or work-related concerns, including financial difficulties. If you need help, why not call an EAP counselor today? We're here to help.

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- accuse you without good reason of being unfaithful or flirting?
- limit your access to money, the phone, or the car?
- have a bad and unpredictable temper?
- destroy your belongings or things you value?
- hurt you, or threaten to hurt or kill you?
- threaten to take your children away or harm them?
- threaten to commit suicide if you leave?
- force you to have sex?

Do you:

- feel afraid of your partner much of the time?
- avoid certain topics out of fear of angering your partner?
- feel that you can't do anything right for your partner?
- believe that you deserve to be hurt or mistreated?
- wonder if you're the one who is going crazy?
- feel increasingly trapped or powerless?
- feel emotionally numb or helpless?

What to do if you're being abused

If you are in an abusive relationship, you may feel confused, afraid, angry and/or trapped. What should you do? Taking the wrong step could escalate tensions or may destroy the relationship permanently. The following information can help. Obviously, the level of your response will depend on the degree of seriousness with which the abuse is inflicting emotional or physical injury.

1. Acknowledge the reality of abuse.

The first step toward changing things is recognizing that your situation is abusive. Even if your partner says he/she cares about you and you care about your partner, it's not okay to be put down, pushed around, scared or intimidated into things that make you feel uncomfortable, unhappy or unsafe, just because you are in a relationship. And it is never okay for your partner to use physical violence. Once you acknowledge the reality of the abusive situation, then you can get the help you need.

2. Meet with a professional therapist or counselor.

For your health and safety, and the security of any children who may be involved, it is vitally important that you utilize the help of a professional therapist or counselor who can help you assess your situation and advise you with solid principles and practical information. You may need to go several times to address the variety of issues that may be involved in your relationship.



3. Confide in a trusted friend or family member.

Talk to someone who can be an objective listener to help you separate your emotions from reason in sorting through the issues involved in an abusive relationship. Share your concerns with a person who knows both of you, but who can maintain an impartial perspective. Sharing your feelings with

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ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP...

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a trusted friend or family member can also help you feel less isolated and relieve stress.

4. Find out about local support programs.

Ask your counselor, use the yellow pages, or research online to learn about local services that you may need if you break off your relationship with the abuser, including: shelters/safe homes, 24-hour emergency hotlines, support groups for victims of abuse, and advocacy programs offering help in obtaining medical care, legal protection, housing, furniture, clothing, training and educational services, employment, social services, and emergency transportation.



Your EAP is here to help

If you need help dealing with a stressful relationship, or breaking free of relationship abuse or violence, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for FREE and CONFIDENTIAL counseling, information and/or referrals. A professional EAP counselor can help you assess your situation and develop an appropriate plan of action. If domestic violence is involved, your EAP counselor can help you develop a personalized safety plan and refer you to people and resources that can empower you with support, advice and information to help you break the cycle of abuse.

RESOURCES

National Domestic Violence Hotline: If you are being abused, call this free hotline for assistance: 1-800-799-7233 /1-800-799-SAFE

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline: 1-866-331-9474

How to help a friend or family member who is being abused

Don't be afraid to let him/her know that you are concerned for their safety. Help your friend or family member recognize the abuse. Tell him or her you see what is going on and that you want to help. Help them recognize that what is happening is not "normal" and that they deserve a healthy, non-violent relationship.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

Teen Dating Violence

According to several national studies, teen dating violence is disturbingly common.

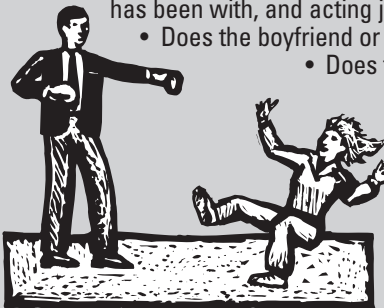
- Approximately 33% of teenagers will experience some degree of dating violence.
- An estimated one in five female high school students experience physical or sexual abuse by a dating partner.
- Nearly 80% of teenage girls who are abused remain in the relationship.
- 30% of all teenage girls who are killed are killed by a boyfriend or former boyfriend.



Unfortunately, parents frequently fail to recognize the signs that their teen is in trouble. If you're concerned about your teen, review the warning signs below. If you suspect your teen may be in trouble and want to learn about what you can do to help your child and keep her/him safe, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for confidential counseling, information or referrals.

Warning signs of teen relationship abuse

- Does he/she have unexplained bruises, scratches or injuries?
- Does the teen seem afraid of his/her boyfriend or girlfriend?
- Does the boyfriend or girlfriend seem to try to control the teen's behavior, making all of the decisions, checking on his or her behavior, demanding to know who the teen has been with, and acting jealous and possessive?
 - Does the boyfriend or girlfriend lash out, criticize or insult the teen?
 - Does the teen apologize for the boyfriend's or girlfriend's behavior? Has the teen casually mentioned the boyfriend's or girlfriend's temper or violent behavior, but then laugh it off as a joke?
- Have you seen the boyfriend or girlfriend be abusive toward other people or things?
- Does the teen seem to be giving up activities or hobbies that were once important?
- Has he/she lost interest in school or other activities?
- Has the teen's appearance or behavior suddenly changed?
- Has the teen stopped spending time with friends and family?
- Has the teen's mood or personality changed? Is he/she becoming anxious or depressed, acting out or being secretive? Is the teen avoiding eye contact, having crying spells or getting hysterical?
- Has the teen recently started using alcohol or drugs?



Source: National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center

Acknowledge that he or she is in a very difficult and scary situation. Let your friend or family member know that the abuse is not their fault. Reassure him or her that they are not alone and that there is help and support out there.

Be supportive. Listen to your friend or family member. Remember that it may be difficult for him or her to talk about the abuse. Let him or her know that you are available to help whenever they may need it. What they need most is someone who will believe and listen to them.

Be non-judgmental. Respect your friend or family member's decisions. There are many reasons why victims stay in abusive relationships. He or she may leave and return to the relationship many times. Do not criticize his or her decisions or try to guilt them. He or she will need your support even more during those times.

Encourage him or her to participate in activities outside of the relationship with friends and family.

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If he or she ends the relationship, continue to be supportive of them. Even though the relationship was abusive, your friend or family member may still feel sad and lonely once it is over. He or she will need time to mourn the loss of the relationship and will especially need your support at that time.

Help him or her to develop a safety plan.

Encourage him or her to talk to people who can provide help and guidance. Find a local domestic violence agency that provides counseling or support groups. Offer to go with him or her to talk to family and friends. If he or she has to go to the police, court or a lawyer, offer to go along for moral support.

Remember that you cannot "rescue" him or her. Although it is difficult to see someone you care about get hurt, ultimately the person getting hurt has to be the one to decide that they want to do something about it. It's important for you to support him or her and help them find a way to safety and peace.

Source: National Domestic Violence Hotline
www.ndvh.org

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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

Grief: Helping the Recovery Process

Studies show that those who openly grieve heal much faster than those who repress or avoid their feelings. Running away from grief postpones sorrow; clinging to grief prolongs pain. Neither leads to healing. The grieving process is nature's way of helping us heal.

If you've had a recent loss, keep the following in mind:

Talk about your sorrow.

Seek comfort from those who will listen and accept your feelings.

Forgive yourself.

Work through any guilt or "should haves" by acknowledging them and expressing your feelings.

Take care of yourself.

Exercise, maintain a balanced diet, get plenty of rest and make time for relaxing activities that clear your mind.

Start something new in your life.

When you're ready, find interesting things to do, like taking a class, volunteering, joining a book club, traveling or adopting a pet.

Get help.

If you are in great distress or feel very depressed, talk to your family doctor, who may want to refer you to a counselor.



Helping Those Who Are Grieving

If you know someone who is grieving, these suggestions may help:

Reach out and listen.

Ask about the deceased and allow the person to talk freely.

Offer to help.

Offer to do simple tasks at home or work.

Include the grieving person in your social life.

Grieving people don't necessarily want to be alone, but they may need encouragement to rejoin social situations.



Pay attention to these signs:

Signs of weight loss or gain, substance abuse, depression, prolonged sleep disorders, physical problems and talk about suicide require immediate attention. Suggest the grieving person talk to his or her doctor or a counselor.

Your EAP is here to help

Remember, your EAP is always available to help you or your immediate family members with any type of personal, family or work-related concern, including issues related to loss and grief. All EAP services are FREE and strictly CONFIDENTIAL. If you need help, why not call an EAP counselor today?

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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