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Your Employee Assistance Program
1-800-899-3926

HEALTHY

EXCHANGE

ANOTHER BENEFIT OF YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

VOL. 1, NO. 2

For Your Information

◆ RELATIONSHIPS 101

For a relationship to be successful, both partners must be willing to share and accept each other's feelings. The ability to share feelings is essential to creating intimacy and openness in a relationship. Both "negative" and "positive" feelings need to be shared. For many, these are "emotional" skills that need to be learned.



◆ BETTER SLEEP TIPS

- Skip stimulants like caffeine and nicotine from late afternoon on.
- Don't use alcohol to induce sleep. Alcohol typically produces light, unsettled sleep.
- Check any medications you are taking to see that they aren't nervous system stimulants.

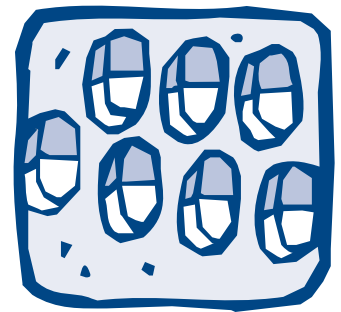
◆ STRESS REDUCER

To give your mind a break and lessen stress, don't rely on your memory to remember appointments, schedules or other details. Instead, write down appointment times, when to pick up laundry, when library books are due, etc.



Warning Signs Of Prescription Drug Abuse

- ✓ Have you ever used prescription drugs as a way to "get going" or to "calm down?"
- ✓ Have you ever felt the need to cut down on your use of prescription drugs?
- ✓ Have you ever felt annoyed by remarks of your family or friends made about your use of prescription drugs?
- ✓ Have you ever felt guilty or remorseful about your use of prescription drugs?



Prescription drug abuse occurs when a person uses a prescription drug outside of the normally accepted standard for its use (i.e. not used for its intended purpose). According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, over 6.3 million people in the U.S. use prescription drugs non-medically on a current or past-month basis. This level of use is second only to marijuana in the number of users. Pain relievers — which include Morphine, Oxycontin and Demerol — are the most highly abused prescription drugs (an estimated 4.7 million users, according to the survey).

Prescription medications can be helpful — even life saving — when used for treating injury or illness. But they are to be used only when prescribed to you by a doctor or other healthcare professional. When misused or

abused, they can have very serious adverse health effects and can easily and unknowingly turn into a physical dependence.

DO YOU KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG DEPENDENCY?

The warning signs of prescription drug addiction may include:

1. **Usage Increase** — Over time, it is common for a person taking prescription medication to build up a tolerance to the prescribed dose. Increasing the dosage often indicates that the original amount prescribed is no longer providing relief and a sign of a drug dependency.

2. **Ongoing Use** — Continuing to use a
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Parenting Through Separation And Divorce

Separation and divorce are hard enough on adults, much less adolescents or children. Parents going through relationship difficulties or the dissolution of marriage are sometimes so caught up in their own emotional turmoil they forget that their children can easily become victims. It is very common for people to forget they are parents and focus solely on the anger, disappointment or feelings of betrayal associated with their spouse or significant other. To children, the loss of their parents' relationship is tantamount to the end of the world. The parents that nurtured and protected them are now the same people who fight, yell, and say bad things to each other.

As difficult as these situations can be, here are a few do's and don'ts which you should keep in mind if you are going through a separation or divorce and have children of almost any age:



DO'S:

1. Do make sure the children know they are loved and will be taken care of. Reassure them that you will be there for them no matter what happens.
2. Do prepare your children for the changes that will be taking place in their family. Sit down and talk to them on a level they can understand about what they can expect in the near future.
3. Do allow your child to express their feelings. They may be feeling fear, anger, anxiety or uncertainty. It is normal for them to be feeling these things and it is im-



portant for you to normalize their feelings and let them know that having these feelings is all right.

4. Do let your child know that the divorce or separation was not their fault. It is very common for children to believe that somehow they are responsible for the difficulties you are having with your spouse. Quite often they harbor the fantasy that they can somehow get you back together again if they just behave better or follow the rules or don't do anything wrong. It is important for you to discuss these issues with them and allay their fears.

DON'TS:

1. Don't fight in front of your children. If you disagree, do it in private, between adults and keep the kids out of it. Remember to always show unity to your children. You may not always be married, but you will always BOTH be their parents. You need to put aside your personal differences and continue to parent your children.
2. Don't cover up or lie about what is happening to the family. Children always know, on some level, when something is going on or different in their family. You can't keep it from them, so don't even try. Focus on keeping your communication "age appropriate."
3. Don't use the children to carry angry messages to the other parent. Children need to know that both their parents love and care about them. Using children as messengers demeans them and causes them to have to take sides. Don't put your children in the position where they have to



choose. It is difficult enough on them already.

4. Don't tell children marital secrets or personal details. Keep them out of your business. Keeping healthy boundaries between parents and children is even more important at this time.
5. Don't involve the children in legal or financial issues. Whenever possible, don't make them choose between you, legally or otherwise. Equal custody, with parents who are consistent with the rules, contributes greatly to positive, healthy outcomes for children of divorce.
6. Don't try to elicit emotional support from your kids. Your children need your support. Get emotional support from your parents, siblings and adult friends, not your children.
7. Don't force your kids to grow up and be "the man of the house" or "my little woman." Children need and deserve their time to be children.

YOUR EAP IS HERE TO HELP

Sometimes our problems are too hard to solve on our own. If you are concerned about a particularly difficult marital, relationship, or family issue, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help you. Remember, your EAP can assist you with personal, family or work-related concerns. And, EAP counseling is convenient, confidential and offered at no cost to the employee. We're here to help.

WARNING SIGNS

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prescribed medication after a medical condition has improved is another indicator of drug dependency. In order to continue using a person may:

- Use multiple doctors or pharmacies to cover up the amount and frequency of prescription medication use
- Make excuses to obtain more medication
- Complain frequently about “still feeling pain”
- Make continuous reports of medication being lost or stolen
- Report of spilling or losing the prescription bottle
- Ask others for their left over medications
- Complain about doctors who refuse to either write or rewrite a prescription

3. Going to Great Lengths to Obtain Prescriptions — A drug dependent person will spend large amounts of time driving long distances and visiting multiple doctors to obtain drugs.

Preoccupation with the quest for medication demonstrates that the drug has become a top priority. He/she may:



- Have frequent emergency room visits at different hospitals
- Change or forge a prescription
- Steal medication
- Buy medication from drug dealers or off of the internet

4. Change in Personality — Changes in a person’s normal behavior can be a sign of dependency. Shifts in energy, mood, and concentration may occur as everyday responsibilities become secondary to the need for the relief the prescription medication provides. A dependent person may exhibit an attitude of indifference, a lack of emotion, or demonstrate disinterest in things that previously brought them pleasure.

5. Change in Daily Habits or Appearance — Personal hygiene may diminish as a result of drug addiction. Sleeping and eating habits may change, including significant weight loss. A constant cough, runny nose or red, glazed eyes may be evident.

6. Social Withdrawal — A person ex-

Teen Abuse Of Prescription Drugs

Prescription medication misuse by teens is a growing problem in the U.S. According to The Partnership for a Drug-Free America:

- 1 in 6 teens has abused a prescription pain medication
- 1 in 10 report abusing prescription stimulants and tranquilizers
- 1 in 11 has abused cough medication

Many teens think taking prescription medications are safe because they have legitimate uses, but taking them without a prescription to get high or “self-medicate” can be as dangerous — and addictive — as using illicit drugs.



WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America recommends the following for parents:

1. Educate yourself about the prescription drugs and over-the-counter medicines that kids are abusing.
2. Communicate with your kids:
 - Discuss the subject with your teenagers. See what your kids know about peers using medications without a doctors’ prescription.
 - Warn your teenagers that taking prescription medications without a doctors’ supervision can be just as dangerous and as potentially lethal as taking illicit drugs.
 - Set clear expectations with your teenagers, letting them know that under no circumstances should they take any medications without your knowledge.
3. Safeguard medications at home and other places:
 - Take an inventory of prescription and over-the-counter medications in your home. Pay attention to quantities.
 - Keep medications out of reach – and out of easily accessible places like the medicine cabinet.

(Source: Partnership for a Drug-Free America, www.drugfreeamerica.org)

periencing a dependency problem may withdraw from family, friends, co-workers or other social interaction.

7. Blackouts and Forgetfulness — Regularly forgetting events that have taken place or appearing to suffer from frequent blackouts is another clear indication of a drug dependence.

8. Defensiveness — Most often a person abusing prescription medication will attempt to hide their use, become defensive when confronted, rationalize their use, and often deny that it is a problem. They might

respond to simple requests or questions by lashing out.

DO YOU HAVE A PROBLEM?

Upon realizing that they are “hooked” on a prescription drug, many people are reluctant to tell their doctor or are afraid their medication will be discontinued, so they do not seek the help they need. Admitting that you have a problem with drugs takes courage. Whether you have reached the “addiction” stage or not, recognizing and admitting that your abuse of prescription drugs is nega-

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WARNING SIGNS

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tively impacting your life is the first step toward overcoming it. The next step is seeking professional help.

YOUR EAP IS 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? We're here to help. All EAP services are free and strictly confidential.

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Have you checked out your EAP Website? You'll find articles and quizzes on a variety of topics designed to help you be healthier! In addition, you'll find tips on how to make the most of your Employee Assistance benefits. Visit the website today.

www.theemployeeassistanceprogram.com

Tips To Stop Procrastination

Everyone procrastinates at one time or another. There are two major causes of procrastination. The first major cause is avoidance. We procrastinate to avoid overwhelming tasks, difficult tasks, unpleasant tasks or to avoid change. The second cause is fear and anxiety. We procrastinate because of our fear of failure, fear of success, fear of criticism, fear of making mistakes or fear of rejection.



With this information in mind, if you are guilty of frequent procrastination, try the following tips to end this bad habit:

■ **Identify the reasons why you procrastinate**

Examine how avoidance or fear and anxiety are at the root of your procrastination. Identify the reason(s) you put off a particular task and then come up with solutions.

■ **Do the easiest part first**

Start with what is easiest, so that you experience immediate success, which will give you the fuel and motivation to continue.

■ **Break large tasks up into smaller, manageable pieces**

Take unpleasant or difficult tasks and break them down into small steps and tackle them one step at a time. Create a timeline for yourself to accomplish these smaller tasks.

■ **Write it down**

Schedule time to work on your task and write it down. Keep your appointments.

■ **Reward yourself**

Set a "completion point" for accomplishing each small task. Completion points give you an end in sight to look forward to. Set up a series of rewards to give yourself upon accomplishing each "completion point."

■ **Just get started**

When it's something you don't like to do but have to do, don't waste valuable time agonizing over it. Schedule time on your calendar and get the task done so you can get it out of your mind. Then, reward yourself. A "do it now" attitude deserves a pat on the back.

Employee Assistance Program

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- **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

Newsletter comments welcome at: Managed Care Concepts

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