



A Healthy Outlook!

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Having Tough Conversations with TEENAGERS

WHY DO WE SO OFTEN FIND OURSELVES struggling whenever we need to have tough conversations with our teenagers? From attending a family event (“I’m not going!”) to Grandpa’s illness (“I don’t care!”), to more serious infractions (“I’m not lying. You don’t trust me.”), the challenge is to control our own emotions, and avoid becoming defensive. Here is how you can master the art of the tough conversation:

1. Do not take it personally. Your teenager yells, “I hate you.” Your 12-year old huffs, “You don’t understand!” What is the most important thing to remember? Do not take it personally. This is not about you. It is about them—their overwhelming feelings; their difficulty controlling themselves; their developing brains and immature ability to understand and express their emotions. Taking it personally

hurts you, which means you are more likely to lash out or respond in a way that you may regret later.

- 2. Manage your own feelings and behavior.** This is easier to do if you do not take your teenager’s words or actions personally.
 - a. Take a deep breath.
 - b. Remember that your child is a teenager and overreaction and getting upset is part of being an adolescent.
 - c. Recognize when your self-talk is making you angry (“She lied to me!”) and change your self-talk to include more neutral thoughts (“My daughter was so afraid of my reaction that she lied to me. I guess I need to look at how I respond when she tells me bad news.”)
 - d. Do not raise your voice.
- 3. Have a sense of humor.** This is not the same as sarcasm. A humorous touch can almost always diffuse tension.

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- 4. Do not try to prove that your child is wrong.** Do the following instead:
 - a. Use “I” statements to describe your feelings. (“It worries me when you are late and do not let me know where you are.”)
 - b. Stick to the facts. (“This report card shows a drop in grades from your previous one.”)
 - c. Give information. (“Our neighbor says that she saw you holding a cigarette in the backyard.”)

- 5. Remember that your relationship with your teen is most important.** It is the reason your child is open to your influence. Whatever else happens, protect that close bond and work to strengthen it!

Adapted from an article by Dr. Laura Markham, 2013.

Upcoming Events:

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP January 13, February 10, and March 10

Anyone who has or has had cancer or is caring for someone with cancer is welcome to attend. All meetings are from 4–5 p.m., the second Monday of the month, at the Carver Educational Services Center, 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 43. *For more information, please contact Debra L. Tipton, employee assistance specialist on Outlook or call her at 240-314-1040.*

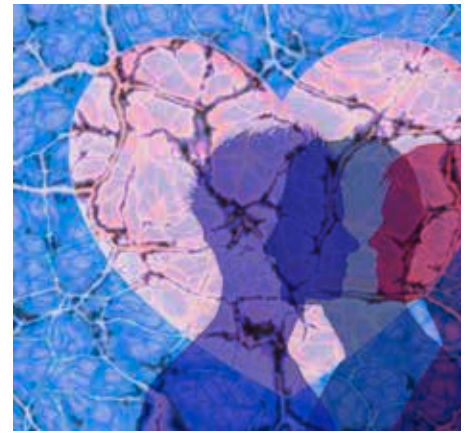
POST-CHEATING Survival

INFIDELITY HAPPENS — OFTEN. Twenty-five percent of people admit to an extramarital affair, according to the *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*. Many experts put that figure even higher. Many of us choose to confront the cheating rather than automatically split up. Whether you or your partner has strayed, you can fight

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for your love. If you believe the relationship is worth saving, what are the options? The following tips may help you work through the crisis and come out a stronger, happier couple.

- ◆ **Do Ask, Do Tell**—Get ready to ask and ask (or answer and answer) lots of probing questions. The partner who was cheated on may ask for many details—the who, what, when, where, why, how, and how often. If you are doing the asking, stick to questions you will be comfortable learning the answer to. (Ask yourself,



“Can I live with my partner if I know this information? Will I find out something useful or not?”) If you are doing the answering, respond to every question directly and honestly, even if you are asked for explicit information about your behavior. Consider that the cheated-on person may not be able to move on until he or she has heard all the facts that are deemed important. Being honest demonstrates that the cheater has stopped lying.

Ask yourself, “Can I live with my partner if I know this information? Will I find out something useful or not?”

- ◆ **Sever Ties with the Other Lover**—End the affair for good. The first and most crucial step is to remove the other man or woman from your lives. Do not just take his or her word that the other person has been cut off, or expect him or her to trust that you have ended things. It is prudent to handle the breakup together. Sit down with your partner and write an e-mail or letter to the other person that states very clearly that all contact must end, that he or she can no longer be a part of your life. This way, the person who was cheated on regains some power and the cheater shows that his or her priorities are back on track.
- ◆ **Become Transparent**—Odds are that the mistress or “mantress” will respond or get in touch in some

THYROID Health

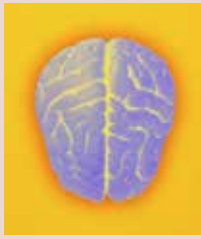
IN THE FALL 2013 ISSUE OF HEALTHY OUTLOOK, we reviewed information about the thyroid and various medical problems that can develop related to the thyroid. The following is a list of ways to maintain thyroid health:

1. **Eat a balanced diet.** For people with no known thyroid problems, a balanced diet should be enough to provide the iodine, selenium, iron, and vitamin A required for healthy hormone production.
2. **Eat plenty of selenium-rich foods.** Selenium balances the hormones in your thyroid. Eat the following foods to increase your selenium intake: mushrooms, garlic, onions, eggs, beef liver, shellfish, wheat germ, sunflower seeds, and sesame seeds.
3. **Zinc can improve thyroid function.** This mineral is especially important for middle-aged to elderly people since thyroid concerns and zinc deficiencies become more frequent with age. Good food sources of zinc include beans, nuts, crab, lobster, and whole grain.
4. **Limit your intake of refined sugar and starch.** These substances often are referred to as “empty calories” and they can interfere with a balanced diet. Also, they can lead to weight gain, which also can lower circulation and reduce thyroid function.
5. **Limit your intake of polyunsaturated oils.** One study found that the influx of these oils in commercial and fast food affected hormones including progesterone.
6. **Include essential fatty acids.** Essential Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids aid the thyroid in maintaining metabolism. Good sources of essential fatty acids are fish, shellfish, flaxseed, leafy vegetables, walnuts, pumpkin and sunflower seeds, chia seeds, and canola oil.
7. **Limit your intake of bromine.** Bromine is a chemical found in things like bakery goods, plastics, pesticides, medications, and fire retardants. For more details on this, read the following article on the Huffington Post: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-mercola/thyroid-health_b_472953.html

The above list was assembled from various sources online. Please keep in mind that each person's body is different, and if you plan on making any major dietary adjustment for health purposes, consider consulting your physician first.

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What Is NARCOLEPSY?



Narcolepsy is a neurological sleep/wake disorder affecting 1 in 2,000 people, or 200,000 Americans and 3 million people worldwide.

Unfortunately, many individuals with narcolepsy remain undiagnosed and untreated. People with narcolepsy and cataplexy have lost the brain cells that produce the neurotransmitter hypocretin, or orexin, which controls the sleep/wake cycle. Symptoms can include the following:

- ◆ **Overwhelming excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS)**—Narcolepsy is the second leading cause of excessive daytime sleepiness.
- ◆ **Cataplexy**—a striking, sudden episode of muscle weakness triggered by laughter, surprise, or other strong emotion; 60 percent of people with narcolepsy also have cataplexy.
- ◆ **Abnormal REM sleep and fragmented nighttime sleep.**

- ◆ **Hypnagogic hallucinations**—dream-like auditory or visual hallucinations while dozing or falling asleep.
- ◆ **Sleep paralysis**—inability to move when waking up or falling asleep.

Some Narcolepsy Facts:

- ◆ **Narcolepsy often begins during adolescence or young adulthood.**
- ◆ **Children as young as three have been diagnosed with the disorder.**
- ◆ **It is not uncommon for six to eight years to pass before a proper diagnosis is made.**
- ◆ **Narcolepsy can affect academic and professional performance and make interpersonal relationships more challenging.**
- ◆ **Current research indicates that narcolepsy may be an autoimmune disorder.**

Diagnosis and Treatment

Two specialized medical procedures are necessary to diagnose narcolepsy: the nocturnal polysomnogram, followed

the next day by the multiple sleep latency test (MSLT). Usually, symptoms manifest in early adulthood, adolescence, or earlier. Sometimes, onset follows a viral infection that places great strain on the immune system. Research suggests that narcolepsy may be an autoimmune disorder. Brain cells that produce a neurotransmitter called hypocretin (or orexin) are attacked and destroyed by the person's immune system. Deprived of hypocretin, the brain no longer can properly regulate the sleep/wake cycle. Individuals with narcolepsy enter REM sleep within minutes of falling asleep, depriving them of deeper, restful sleep.

There is no cure for narcolepsy, but symptoms can be treated with medications and lifestyle changes. In addition to medications prescribed by the patient's doctor, behavioral strategies often are required also. For example, scheduled 20–30 minute naps throughout the day help with EDS, as does good sleep hygiene.

Information for this article taken from the brochure *From Shadow Into Light—Wake Up Narcolepsy*, provided by the nonprofit organization Wake Up Narcolepsy. For more information on narcolepsy and on the organization, go to www.wakeupnarcolepsy.org

Post-Cheating Survival

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way. That is why it is crucial that both you and your partner agree to be completely transparent. That means some intense, privacy-busting stuff. Consider both of you allowing each other access to your text messages, phone records, e-mails, social media accounts, and banking passwords (even STD results) for as long as the partner who was cheated on deems necessary. This may seem overly intrusive but, in order to regain trust, all of your efforts must be toward reestablishing that trust, and part of that is showing you have nothing to hide.

- ◆ **Take a Break, Together**—A post-affair honeymoon may sound bizarre (maybe the last thing you want to do right now), but it may jump-start healing. Spend some undivided couples time together, leaving behind talk of the affair as well as your family, friends, and jobs. Focus on each other and your relationship. As soon as you are both ready, you can reconnect physically. Until then, just being together may be helpful.
- ◆ **Spark the Passion**—After the vacation, continue to focus on your relationship. Spend time as a couple every day to work on rebuilding trust and meeting your own and

each other's emotional and physical needs. Do activities you both enjoy and keep up honesty and transparency. If, after all of this, you do not feel like your relationship is getting better, consider couples counseling to help you work through your feelings and figure out what your next best move should be.

Contact the EAP if you would like to speak with a counselor about your feelings after the affair. We offer short-term counseling and referrals to providers in the community for individuals as well as couples.

Adapted from "The Post-Cheating Survival Guide," by Faye Brennan in *Women's Health*, October 2013

ONLINE DATING: The Dos and Don'ts!

IF YOU ARE ONE OF THE FISH swimming in the dating pool, you have likely tried, or thought about trying, to use online dating websites to meet a potential match. A decade ago, online dating was practically unheard of. Now, almost everyone is doing it. If you are single and trying to meet someone new through an online dating website, we have a few tips for you to think about.

Do:

1. **Be you!** It is easy to get anxious about meeting someone new, so try a quick relaxation exercise (like deep breathing) prior to a date.
2. **If you choose to drink alcohol**, give yourself a limit so you can maintain your best judgment.
3. **Meet in a public space** and keep it simple—coffee shop, restaurant, bookstore.
4. **Trust your intuition**—usually, it is right.
5. **Practice common sense.**
6. **Keep an open mind.** Do you have a preferred “type”? Get out of that comfort zone and meet someone different.
7. **Talk on the phone before meeting** to get a feel for the person.
8. **Even if the first date is a bust**, try to find something you like about each person you meet.
9. **Relax!**
10. **Have fun!**

Article provided by Another Look at Healing, LLC, Counseling Center for Individual and Couples Therapy, 849 Quince Orchard Blvd., Suite D, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878. For more information about their services, go to <http://www.healingllc.com/>

Do Not:

1. **Reveal too much private information before knowing someone.** How much is too much? If you would not want to post the information on social media sites, think before you share. If it is someone you would like to get to know more, things will unfold naturally.
2. **Post revealing photographs online.**
3. **Become too involved back and forth before meeting.** Yes, you want to know who you are going to meet; however, you also want to manage your expectations, because a false sense of intimacy can be created prior to personal interaction.

Link to a recent Pew study on online dating sites and apps: <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Online-Dating/Main-Report/Part-2.aspx>



A Healthy Outlook!

To help employees with troubling issues before they become overwhelming.



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Important Notice: Information in *A Healthy Outlook!* is for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional. For further questions or help with specific problems or personal concerns, contact your employee assistance professional.

You may contact us or send your questions and comments to Jeffrey_Becker@mcpsmd.org

Please note that e-mail is not necessarily confidential.

Q. I have a problem with drugs and I work in a school. My performance is generally good and my last evaluation was better than average. I am afraid that if I go to the EAP for help, my principal will find out, and my career will be over. Can this happen?

A. No. Information about your discussions with the EAP cannot be disclosed without your permission. The EAP follows Maryland state laws pertaining to the rules of confidentiality for licensed mental health providers. The only information we can disclose without consent is anything that involves a threat to life and suspicion of child or elder abuse. Different rules apply to MCPS staff with a commercial driver's license (CDL), due to the safety-sensitive nature of their positions and COMAR (State of Maryland) regulations. However, even in the case of a CDL holder, we do not reveal specific information to anyone without signed permission to do so. A drug problem is much more likely to threaten your career than going to the EAP ever will, so we encourage you to call us as soon as possible.

Do you have a question for the EAP? Send your questions via Outlook to [Jeffrey Becker](mailto:Jeffrey_Becker@mcpsmd.org) at Jeffrey_Becker@mcpsmd.org.

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