



# A Healthy Outlook!

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## National Depression Screening Day: OCTOBER 9, 2014

WHETHER FOR heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, or depression, health screenings provide a quick and easy way to spot the first signs of serious illness; and they can reach people who might not otherwise seek professional medical advice.

Clinical depression is a common medical illness affecting more than 19 million American adults each year. Like screenings for other illnesses, depression screenings are recommended as a routine part of health care.

National Depression Screening Day is held during Mental Illness Awareness Week each October. It is designed to call national attention to the illnesses of depression, anxiety, and other mood disorders, educate the public about symptoms and effective treatments, offer individuals the opportunity to be screened for depression and other mood disorders, and connect those in need of treatment to the mental health care system.

**As part of the screening, you will have the opportunity to—**

- ♦ **complete** a written screening questionnaire,
- ♦ **discuss** your results with an employee assistance counselor,
- ♦ **receive** a referral list of clinicians and treatment facilities in your area, and
- ♦ **pick up** some informational pamphlets and brochures.

### Why Screen for Clinical Depression?

- ♦ *Clinical depression is a serious medical illness.*
- ♦ *Clinical depression can lead to suicide.*
- ♦ *Sometimes people with depression mistakenly believe that the symptoms are a normal part of life.*
- ♦ *Clinical depression affects men and women of all ages, races, and socioeconomic groups.*
- ♦ *One in four women and one in ten men will experience depression at some point during his or her lifetime.*
- ♦ *Two-thirds of those suffering from depression do not seek the necessary treatment.*
- ♦ *Depression can co-occur and complicate other medical conditions.*
- ♦ *More than 80 percent of all cases of clinical depression can be treated effectively with medication, psychotherapy, or a combination of both.*
- ♦ *Often, screenings are the first step in getting help.*

### What to Expect During a Screening

Screenings are free and confidential. The process takes about 30 minutes. The screening is an opportunity to learn more about depression, anxiety, and other mood disorders; complete a

brief screening questionnaire; and have a one-on-one talk with a mental health professional. If appropriate, you may be referred for a complete evaluation.

To schedule a confidential depression or other mood-disorder screening, call the Employee Assistance Program at 240-314-1040. Screenings are offered free to all MCPS employees and their immediate family members as well as to MCPS retirees.

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*“Tell me your friends, and I’ll tell you who you are.”*

~ ASSYRIAN PROVERB

## SETTING BOUNDARIES in Three Simple Stages

Setting boundaries is the art of protecting your emotional self and well-being. It is your responsibility and duty to identify relationships, emotions, or others' behaviors that have the potential to hurt you.

Imagine yourself at the center of a garden surrounded by a fence. The fence represents your personal boundaries, and the garden represents your personal space. You are this garden's most valuable asset. Protecting yourself in your garden is a continuous process. It can be maintained in three steps:

1. **Love and respect yourself.** Value what you want to protect. Make yourself the first priority. Assess your wants and needs. Treat yourself with respect. Write positive affirmation notes about yourself—things that you love about yourself. Read your notes every day for at least a week.
2. **Assess and plan to protect your emotional self.** Identify and write down those triggers that provoke negative emotions, such as anger, sadness, anxiety, and stress. They can fester and, if left unaddressed, harm your physical health. After identifying negative triggers, you can decide how and in what order to tackle them. Imagine uprooting weeds and clearing your garden. For each trigger, plan ways to act on your assessment. For example, say no to potentially harmful friendships or requests.
3. **Reevaluate periodically.** As friends and situations change, so do triggers. So, you will find that you may need to repeat this process periodically. Remember, the core of your boundaries is always the valuable, precious you and your need to protect your self-being.

Article provided by Orly Katz, LCPC, from Everyday Counseling and Coaching Services, LLC. Printed with permission. For further information on her services, go to [www.orlykatz.com/](http://www.orlykatz.com/)



## LETTING GO of the Past

PEOPLE HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME letting go of the past because they are held back by unfinished business. They may regret choices they have made or feel guilty about past actions. As long as guilt and regret are not resolved, it is difficult to move forward.

Regret is an emotion that feels similar to depression or sadness. It also feels like guilt, but it is not the same thing. Sometimes a wave of regret seems to come out of nowhere. You might become aware of it when you lose something or someone, or when you meet someone from your past. It is a common feeling in our culture for several reasons.

- ♦ **We have too many choices.** Because we have so many options, there are many more opportunities to regret the paths we did not take.
- ♦ **Endless possibilities.** Many of us believe that life has no limits. The American culture has an insatiable appetite for new experiences, adventure, and newness. We find it hard to accept the reality that certain things will not work out or change.
- ♦ **No rules.** In addition to all these options, our lives have become confusing because there are few guidelines for what choices we should make.
- ♦ **We value self-sufficiency.** Our American culture has always valued independence. Somehow, we all believe that it is better if we achieve our goals without the help of anyone. The problem is that when we do not accept support from others, we become isolated. Living a completely self-sufficient life violates the basic human need for affiliation.
- ♦ **Instant gratification.** Many people escape the pressures of daily life through drugs and alcohol. There are messages everywhere suggesting that we use alcohol and drugs to relax, escape, have fun, and be sexy. When this becomes a lifestyle, it often results in consequences that one can only regret:

**Q. I am having a conflict with a coworker. How can the EAP help me?**

**Ask the EAP:**

**A. “Conflict with a coworker”** is one of the more common reasons people cite for using the EAP. The EAP can help by giving you a chance to explain the situation to an objective third party. Sometimes the mere telling of your story allows for new thinking about a situation. After hearing what is going on and what you have already tried, the EAP can help you consider some different options. These might include looking at changes you can make (e.g., behavioral or attitudinal changes) or a referral for additional assistance. A particularly helpful resource for this is our Dispute Resolution Program. Find out more about the program at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/staff/respect/mediation.aspx](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/staff/respect/mediation.aspx) or give us a call at 240-314-1040.

*Do you have a question for the EAP? Send your questions to [Jeffrey\\_Becker@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Jeffrey_Becker@mcpsmd.org)*

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## Letting Go of the Past

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drunk driving, accidents, death and injury, relationship problems, poor attendance at work, or being fired.

- ♦ **Constant comparisons.** When we compare our lives with others, it is easy to feel regret. Most of us expect to have it all together. We learn to act as if we are in control and compare ourselves with our friends, coworkers, neighbors, and characters on television. When we do not look as good as they do, we feel like failures. We have a list of “shoulds” inside our heads—things we expect to be able to do.

## Guilt

Usually, guilt is the result of aggressive acts, wishes, and thoughts. It results from violating a rule—either our own or someone else’s.

## What to Do About Unfinished Business

In order to move past the things in the past that are keeping you stuck—your unfinished business—you will need to acknowledge them and tell the truth about them. It may not be necessary to take any action; sometimes just writing or talking about it is enough to lessen its impact. You can write about it in a private journal or talk about it with a trusted friend or counselor.

### Places to look for your unfinished business:

- ♦ *Risks I should have taken*
- ♦ *People I treated badly*
- ♦ *People who treated me badly*
- ♦ *Something I did to someone*
- ♦ *Not doing something I should have done*
- ♦ *Messes I need to clean up (literally and metaphorically)*

- ♦ *Things I should throw away*
- ♦ *Things I want to buy for my home*
- ♦ *Things I want to buy for myself*
- ♦ *Things I need but have not allowed myself to have*
- ♦ *Projects I have started but have not finished*
- ♦ *Projects I want to start*
- ♦ *Things I want to change*
- ♦ *Things I want to stop doing*
- ♦ *Things I want to be*
- ♦ *Things I want to have*
- ♦ *Experiences I want to have*
- ♦ *Things I want to say*
- ♦ *Feelings I have not expressed*
- ♦ *Secrets I do not want to keep any longer*

Adapted from an article by Juanita Perez, Ph.D., a licensed psychologist in Arizona Springs, from the Therapists Newsletter. Used with permission.

## TEN HELPFUL FACTS About Alcohol and Other Drug Misuse and Addiction

- 1. Addiction is surprisingly common.** One out of eight Americans live with some form of addiction. This includes 30 million people with alcohol and other drug addictions.
- 2. Starting young matters.** Harmful effects of heavy misuse damages development and may indicate an inherited propensity for continued problems. Around 1,700 college students die each year from binge drinking.
- 3. One out of four Americans drink and use drugs beyond safe measures, but are not yet dependent or chronic misusers.** These heavy users cause most social and property damage, but are seldom professionally informed of their at-risk status.
- 4. Addiction is a brain disease with physical manifestations.** Physical cravings for alcohol and other drugs accompany a mental obsession. Symptoms include—
  - ♦ *unable to reduce or stop misusing after first drink or drug;*
  - ♦ *obsessive worry about supply;*
  - ♦ *harmful health outcomes;*
  - ♦ *inappropriate, often illegal, behavior; and*
  - ♦ *isolation and mood swings.*

- 5. High tolerance.** (i.e., a higher dose required to achieve the same effect) in early use indicates a high potential for addiction.

- 6. Unsafe drinking is five drinks for men or four drinks for women and people over 65.** One drink is 1.5 oz. of spirits or 12 oz. of beer. It takes about one hour for the body to process one drink.

- 7. Seven out of ten people who drink or use drugs too much are employed and have health insurance.** Unfortunately, most people end up losing their jobs and health insurance before they seek medical attention.

- 8. Hope for recovery is strongest for people in the “heavy use” phase, before dependence.** More than 60 percent of those people who receive professional intervention lower their consumption and avoid future health damage.



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## 10 Helpful Facts About Alcohol and Other Drug Misuse and Addiction *continued from page 3*

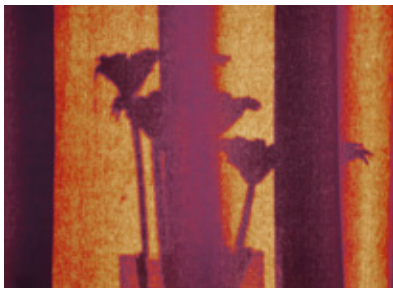
### 9. *Recovery is a process to address medical issues, adjust attitudes, and build supports and defenses.*

There are many paths to recovery, including support groups, professional therapy, faith practices, and individual adjustment.

### 10. *The best start on a recovery path is a frank, honest discussion with a family doctor.* A short and simple “audit” can suggest education, assessment,

or intensive treatment (to do the “audit” go to: [www.aquilarecovery.com/brain-science/screen/](http://www.aquilarecovery.com/brain-science/screen/)).

Information provided by Aquila Recovery, an outpatient treatment program in Washington D.C. The Aquila Recovery Clinic offers free assessments when recommended by a physician. For more information about their program, go to [www.aquilarecovery.com/](http://www.aquilarecovery.com/) or call them at 202-244-1600. Printed with permission.



## Postpartum Depression

M A N Y W O M E N have the baby blues after childbirth. If you have the baby blues, you may have mood swings, feel sad, anxious or overwhelmed, have crying spells, lose your appetite, or have trouble sleeping. The baby blues most often go away within a few days to a week. The symptoms are not severe and need no treatment.

However, the symptoms of postpartum depression last longer and are more severe. You may feel hopeless and worthless and lose interest in the baby. You may have thoughts of hurting yourself or the baby. Very rarely, new mothers develop something even more serious—they may have hallucinations or try to hurt themselves or the baby. Those mothers need to get treatment right away, often in the hospital.

Postpartum depression can begin anytime within the first year after childbirth. The cause is unknown. Hormonal and physical changes after birth and the stress of caring for a new baby may play a role. Women who have had depression are at higher risk of postpartum depression.

If you think you have postpartum depression, tell your health care provider. Medicines, including antidepressants and talk therapy, can help you get well. If you need assistance finding a behavioral health provider, contact the EAP at 240-314-1040.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women's Health.

*“Make a friend when you don't need one.”*

~ JAMAICAN PROVERB

## *A Healthy Outlook!*

*To help employees with troubling issues before they become overwhelming.*



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

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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](mailto:Jeffrey_Becker@mcpsmd.org)

Please note that e-mail is not necessarily confidential.

## CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

- ♦ **Wednesdays, September 17, 2014, (biweekly) through December 17, 2014**
- ♦ **4:00–5:00 p.m.**
- ♦ **CESC, Room 147A**  
**850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD 20850**

TO SUPPORT OUR CAREGIVERS, the Montgomery County Public Schools Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is continuing with a caregiver support group designed to provide helpful resources and establish connections within our MCPS community. At the September 3 meeting, a representative from The Alzheimer's Association provided information about programs and services as well as strategies for enhancing communication with a loved one with dementia.

**Upcoming Events:**

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