



A Healthy Outlook!

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Helping Men GRIEVE

MONTGOMERY HOSPICE offers the following tips for assisting men who are grieving:

- ♦ **Emphasize problem solving.**
Begin with their strengths and what is working for them. Focus on what needs to be done.
- ♦ **Find rituals that matter.**
- ♦ **Engage in supportive social activities.** These can be fun outings without necessarily focusing on grief.
- ♦ **Encourage creation of a memorial.** This can be any activity undertaken to honor a loved one.
- ♦ **Acknowledge anger when present.** Suggest a healthy expression of it that is not destructive to them or others.

- ♦ **Honor the space a grieving man may need.** Do not force him to talk “for his own good,” or attempt to fit him into a preconceived idea of how grief should be expressed.

Some suggested readings:

Thomas R. Golden, *Swallowed by a Snake: The Gift of the Masculine Side of Grieving*

Gerald J. Schaefer, *The Widower's Toolbox: Repairing Your Life After Losing a Spouse*

Terry L. Martin and Kenneth J. Doka, *Men Don't Cry... Women Do: Transcending Stereotypes of Grieving*

For more information on Montgomery Hospice, go to www.montgomeryhospice.org or call them at 301-921-4400. Read more articles on grief at www.montgomeryhospice.org/grief. Printed with permission.

Improving Your Credit

January 14, 12:00-1:00 p.m.;
Redwood Room, 45 W. Gude Dr.

Presented by Jonathan Lee from the Foundation for Financial Education

- ♦ **Why is credit so important, anyway?**
- ♦ **Credit restoration**
- ♦ **Debt rebalancing**
- ♦ **Key steps to rebuilding your credit**
- ♦ **Repairing credit after bankruptcy**

Due to space limitations, an **RSVP is required** for this workshop. If you wish to register, please contact the MCPS Employee Assistance Program at 240-314-1040, or by e-mail at EAP@mcpsmd.org.

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MEDIATION: How it Works

HAVE YOU BEEN WONDERING about how mediation works and whether it might help you with a work-place conflict? There are six steps to a formal mediation:

1. **Introductory Remarks**
2. **Statement of the Problem by the Parties**
3. **Information-Gathering Time**
4. **Identification of the Problems**
5. **Generating Options**
6. **Reaching an Agreement**

Introductory Remarks

The mediator will wait until both parties are present and then make introductions. The mediator will then give an opening statement that outlines the role of the participants and demonstrates the mediator's neutrality. Next, the mediator will define protocol and set the time frame for the process. The opening statement during the introductory remarks will set out the ground rules for the mediation. These ground rules are what help the mediation move along smoothly. Participants should not interrupt each

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MEDIATION

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other; the mediator will give each participant the opportunity to fully share his or her side of the story.

Statement of the Problem by the Participants

After the opening statement, the mediator will give each side the opportunity to tell his or her story uninterrupted. Each participant has an opportunity to frame issues and to give the mediator more information on the emotional state of each party. The rationale behind the statement of the problem is not a search for the truth, it is just a way to help solve the problem.

Information Gathering

The mediator will ask the participants open-ended questions to get to the emotional undercurrents. The mediator may repeat key ideas to the parties and will summarize often. This helps the mediator build rapport between the parties.

Problem Identification

The mediator tries to find common goals between the parties. The mediator will figure out which issues are going to be able to be settled or those that will settle first.

Generating Options/ Reaching an Agreement

Once there is agreement on identification of the problem(s), the mediator will propose a brainstorming session to explore potential solutions. This can lead to a

final agreement that diffuses the conflict and provides a new basis for future relations. The goal of the session is to find some common ground by exploring lots of options and to bring about possible solutions for the participants to think about. Once the participants have generated a list of options for reaching agreed-upon goals, the mediator will assist them in choosing an option(s) they can agree on and facilitate either a verbal or written agreement.

If you are involved in a workplace conflict and think the mediation process might work for you, call the Dispute Resolution Program at the EAP at 240-314-1041. Mediation is free, confidential, and peaceful. **Consider giving it a try.**

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: Offering Support

Do's and Don'ts for Providing Support to Victims of Domestic Violence

IF YOU WORRY that someone you care about is in an abusive relationship, there are steps you can take to help. Consider the following do's and don'ts when approaching a friend, family member, coworker, neighbor, or other loved one.

Do:

- ♦ **Approach the person at a time and place that is safe and confidential.**
- ♦ **Start by expressing concern.** (e.g., "I am concerned someone may be hurting you, and I am worried about your safety.")
- ♦ **Take the time to listen.** Believe what your loved one says.
- ♦ **Communicate that you care about the person's safety.** He or she does not deserve to be hurt, and that the **abuse is not his or her fault.**
- ♦ **Tell him or her that he or she is not crazy.** A person who has been abused often feels upset, depressed, confused, and scared. Let the person know that these are normal feelings.
- ♦ **Tell the person good things about him or her—** he or she is smart, strong, and brave. The abuser may be tearing down the person's self-esteem.
- ♦ **Respect the victim's choices.**
- ♦ **Encourage the victim to build a wide support system.** Help find a support group or encourage the person to talk to friends and family.
- ♦ **Be patient.** Self-empowerment may take longer than you want. Go at the victim's pace, not yours.
- ♦ **Connect the victim to domestic violence resources.** Call the EAP for ideas.
- ♦ **Consider calling the domestic violence Help Line for support—**not on behalf of your friend, but to learn more about the kinds of help available, to ask questions specific to your situation, and to learn how you can be an effective and supportive ally.

Do Not:

- ♦ **Accuse, diagnose, or judge your loved one's choices.** Do not draw conclusions about what he or she may be experiencing or feeling; and do not judge or criticize the abuser.
- ♦ **Pressure the person to leave the abusive relationship.** There are many reasons why the victim may be *choosing* to stay. It is possible that the abuser has threatened to hurt him or her or the children if they try to leave. The abuser may control all of the finances and may have isolated the victim from friends and family, leaving the victim with very few resources. The abuser may have promised to change, and the victim may still love him or her. It is never as simple as encouraging a victim to "just leave"—but, by all means, communicate to him or her that help does exist and that people in the community care about him or her and the children and want them to be safe.
- ♦ **Feel the need to be an expert.** Do not try to provide counseling or advice, but do connect your loved one to trained people who can help. The Montgomery County Abused Person's program is a good place to start: 240-777-4195.

Caring for the Caregiver

Few people are prepared for the responsibilities and tasks involved in caring for loved ones who are ill, elderly, or disabled. The success of the relationship between you and your loved one depends on several factors. One of the most important factors is how well you take care of yourself, empowering yourself to be there for the person you are caring for. Here are some of the signs that a caregiver might need some help; and then we will explore some ways to care for yourself as you care for another.

Signs That a Caregiver Needs Help

Take a moment to look through these signs and identify those that are now problems for you or may be problems in the future.

- ◆ *You do not get out much anymore.*
- ◆ *You argue with the person you care for.*
- ◆ *You have conflicts with other family members.*
- ◆ *You abuse drugs, alcohol, or medications.*
- ◆ *Your appetite has changed.*
- ◆ *You isolate yourself from others.*
- ◆ *You behave in a compulsive manner or are overly focused on minor details.*
- ◆ *You feel listless; you lack energy.*
- ◆ *You feel more angry, anxious, or worried than usual.*
- ◆ *You have a difficult time controlling your emotions.*
- ◆ *You have a hard time concentrating.*
- ◆ *You have physical symptoms of anxiety, such as an upset stomach, headaches, or a racing heart.*
- ◆ *You often forget things.*
- ◆ *You are clumsy or accident-prone.*
- ◆ *You have self-destructive or suicidal thoughts.*
- ◆ *You sleep more or less than usual.*
- ◆ *You never seem to get enough rest*
- ◆ *You feel guilty about your situation.*



Caregiver Survival Tips

- ◆ **Find out about resources before you need them.** For example, do not delay researching nursing homes until the patient needs to be placed in one.
- ◆ **Ask your family and friends for help.** They may be able to provide you with time, knowledge, or money.
- ◆ **Seek all the support you can find.**

Be on the lookout for groups, individuals, and organizations that provide emotional, social, physical, and financial support.

- ◆ **Investigate adult day care facilities.** They offer therapeutic, rehabilitative, and support services such as nursing, social work services, meals, and transportation.
- ◆ **Consider having meals delivered.** Many organizations provide nutrition programs.
- ◆ **Consider hiring a home health aide.** Aides can provide personal care at home, such as help with eating, dressing, oral hygiene, bathing, administering medication, and light household tasks.
- ◆ **Find out about homemaker services.** These services can assist with shopping, laundry, housecleaning, preparing meals, and taking clients to medical appointments.
- ◆ **Look into the offerings of hospital and surgical supply services.** They rent or sell medical supplies and equipment like hospital beds, canes, walkers, bath chairs, oxygen, and other equipment.
- ◆ **Check out respite care services.** They provide relief to caregivers.
- ◆ **Look into social day care.** They provide recreational activities, social work services, hot meals, transportation, and some health services.
- ◆ **Find out about transportation services.** They provide transportation to and from medical appointments or other care services.
- ◆ **Find out about skilled nursing services.** They offer professional help with specific medical problems.
- ◆ **Be realistic about what you can accomplish.** Recognize what you can and cannot do.
- ◆ **Maintain your interests.** Keep balance in your life.
- ◆ **Maintain communication with your family and friends.** When tensions and misunderstandings develop (and they will), address them quickly.
- ◆ **Take care of yourself.** Eat well, exercise, rest, and take time off.

Contact the MCPS EAP at 240-314-1040 for support or to find out more about local resources and consider attending our Caregiver Support Group.

Adapted from an article by Dolores Coburn, a licensed clinical social worker in Woodstock, NY, from the *Therapists Newsletter*. Used with permission.

MCPS Caregiver Support Group

THE MCPS EAP is offering a Caregiver Support Group designed to provide helpful resources and establish connections among the caregivers within our MCPS community. **The group meets biweekly on Wednesdays from 4:00–5:00 p.m. at CESC.** Every month, a guest speaker will present on topics related to seniors and caregiving. For more information, contact Robyn Rosenbauer at Robyn_I_Rosenbauer@mcpsmd.org or call the EAP at 240-314-1040.

TOP 5 Broken New Year's Resolutions

1. Get Fit

Make exercise fun. Your workout routine does not even have to involve a gym. Dancing, hiking, walking your dog, riding your bike, and skating are great ways to get fit. Include friends or neighbors for an extra boost of support and encouragement.

2. Quit Smoking

Speak to your primary care physician about your smoking habits. He or she can help determine the best course of action. For now, document when you are most likely to smoke. Is it when you are hungry? Feeling overwhelmed? At social gatherings? Getting to the root of this habit can assist with having effective long-term results.

3. Learn Something New

You probably have learned something new today without realizing it. With advances in technology and thousands of resources at our fingertips, we surely learn more today than ever before. Read the newspaper, watch educational television networks, and even skim social media sites; you will

be surprised by what you learn. Here is a fun fact that most people do not know: Goats have rectangular pupils! Now, check this resolution off your list!

4. Eat Healthier

Some people eat to live, others live to eat. Instead of making drastic changes to your diet this year, consider making small changes that go a long way. During meals, replace your standard dinner plate with a smaller plate. Eating several small meals a day can help give your metabolism a needed boost. Or, substitute one cup of coffee, tea, or juice with a glass of water.

5. Get Out of Debt/Save Money

Put an "i" in debt, and you get debit. Debit and credit cards are very convenient, but they do not give spenders the strict limit that cash does. When shopping, determine a budget and carry that amount in cash. Put the leftover bills and coins in your savings account or money jar.

Adapted from: http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2040218_2040220_2040221,00.html

COMFORT FOODS/DRINKS:

Foods that decrease stress! Add these simple ingredients to your favorite holiday recipes:

- ♦ Asparagus
- ♦ Avocado
- ♦ Berries
- ♦ Cashews
- ♦ Chocolate
- ♦ Garlic
- ♦ Grass-fed beef
- ♦ Oatmeal
- ♦ Oranges
- ♦ Oysters
- ♦ Walnuts
- ♦ Chamomile and green tea

Adapted from:
www.prevention.com/mind-body/emotional-health/13-healthy-foods-reduce-stress-and-depression

Ask the EAP:

Q. I believe I am in a relationship where there is domestic violence. I'm not sure what to do. How can the EAP help?

A. If you are currently experiencing abuse in an intimate relationship, support is available. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides free, confidential services for anyone experiencing domestic abuse. We will listen to what you are experiencing and help you think through your options. Depending on the severity, we will make recommendations regarding appropriate resources (see below). Most important, our role is to make sure you feel safe and get the support you need.

Domestic Violence Resources:

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 or
TTY 1-800-787-3224

Montgomery County Family Justice Center: 240-773-0444
600 Jefferson Plaza, Rockville, MD 20852

Abused Person's Program & Safe Start Kids Group:
240-777-4195

Montgomery County Sheriff's Office: 240-777-7016

Do you have a question for the EAP? Send your questions to Jeffrey_Becker@mcpsmd.org

A Healthy Outlook!

To help employees with troubling issues before they become overwhelming.



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

SPECIALISTS: Jeff Becker
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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.

Published by the Department of Materials Management
for the Employee Assistance Program

0664.15 • EDITORIAL, GRAPHICS & PUBLISHING SERVICES • 12.14

