



A Healthy Outlook!

301-279-3197 • FAX 301-279-3756 • www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/EAP Vol. 1, No. 4

Domestic Violence: Love Shouldn't Hurt

Did you know that domestic violence—

- strikes a family in the United States every 15 seconds (according to the U.S. Department of Justice)?
- can happen in any family, regardless of age, race, religion, or income level?
- is a crime?
- will get worse without help?
- is learned behavior and can be changed?

The cycle of violence usually begins with the tension-building stage—when partners become increasingly irritable, frustrated, and unable to cope with everyday stress. It's that time when everyone feels like they are walking on eggshells. Eventually, the tension erupts during an incident where all control is lost and violence occurs. The incident generally is followed by shock, after which either partner may rationalize the event and minimize its effects with apologies. The belief is that this will never happen again, and things will change.

Abusive behavior is learned. Over time, it becomes more frequent and more severe. In order to change, the abusive partner must take steps to learn how to manage his or her anger more appropriately.

The problem should not be ignored. Help can be found in local



shelters and counseling centers that specialize in domestic abuse. These centers have classes and counseling for families, women who have left their partners, and children who have lived in abusive homes.

For more information on, or help with, domestic violence contact your Employee Assistance Program at 301-279-3197, the Montgomery County Abused Persons Program at 240-777-4673, or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE. You can also obtain valuable information from the Internet at <http://www.ncadv.org>*

What You Should Know About Ecstasy

Ecstasy (or MDMA) is an addictive, illicit drug manufactured in clandestine laboratories. Users experience a hallucinogenic and speed-like experience lasting three to eight hours. It is used predominantly by teens and young adults, and is popular at drug parties, raves (all-night concerts) and rock concerts. The after-effects may include a suppressed appetite, excessive thirst, and an unusual urge to sleep.

Learn about illicit drugs at the Drug Enforcement Agency Web site, www.usdoj.gov/dea/concern/concern.htm *

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Shelter-in-Place: Staying Calm While Staying Safe

Plans to respond to an increased threat level may include instructions for “shelter-in-place” to immediately secure students and staff indoors during an emergency. Clearly, a situation requiring the activation of shelter-in-place would be an extraordinary one—school staff would need to be caretakers for their students at the same time that they are concerned about their own families. Planning and gathering information help to reduce anxiety. The following tips may be helpful as school staffs prepare for a shelter-in-place emergency in their schools.

Planning for an emergency

- Inform yourself about potential risks and how best to prepare yourself and your family.
- Two Web sites may be especially useful:
 - www.ready.gov
 - www.redcross.org/services/disaster
- Plan for the possibility that you may need shelter-in-place in your work setting. If an emergency were to occur, consider arrangements you may need to make for your own family so that you can focus on your work responsibilities such as—
 - * a communication plan
 - * child care or elder care arrangements
 - * medical needs
 - * caring for pets

Other responsibilities that must be addressed:

- Identify support people within your building whom you can count on to calm and comfort you when you are stressed.
- If the situation permits, consider working in pairs during a shelter-in-place situation so that no staff member is alone
- Talk to your school counselor, psychologist, or pupil personnel worker for tips on helping students cope during an emergency.
- Activate the stress-reduction techniques and social supports that work for you.

Developed in partnership by MCPS Employee Assistance Program and Department of Student Services

During an emergency

- Use positive self-talk and focus on self-competence, resourcefulness, and strengths.
- Protect yourself from being overwhelmed by utilizing relaxation techniques and reframing the event differently. Change statements such as “This is horrible. I can’t handle it.” to “This is challenging. I know we will get through it.”
- Remind yourself that the event will be temporary and over before too long. Shelter-in-place is meant to provide support for up to 12 hours.
- Stay flexible and be ready for the unexpected.
- Remember that the needs of your students are paramount; they will draw strength and reassurance from your behavior.*

Quote:

“Wisdom begins with questioning. Sanity begins with, ‘No’.”

Ask the EAP

Q. How much does it cost to use the Employee Assistance Program?

A. Employee Assistance Program services are provided to MCPS staff, and their family members, at no cost. If you are referred by the EAP to an external resource, costs may come into play depending on the type of health insurance you have and the nature of the referral (e.g., self-help groups usually involve no fees). *

Contact the EAP at 301-279-3197 for suggestions or to talk about concerns. Send your questions via FirstClass or the PONY to Jeffery Becker.

Coping After a Traumatic Event

Some people use their own support systems to cope effectively with the emotional and physical demands brought about by a natural disaster or other traumatic experience. It is not unusual, however, to find that serious problems persist and continue to interfere with daily living. For example, some people may feel overwhelming nervousness or lingering sadness that adversely affect their job performance and interpersonal relationships.

Individuals with prolonged reactions that disrupt their daily functioning might consider consulting with a trained, experienced mental health professional. Psychologists, clinical social workers, and other appropriate mental health providers help educate people about normal responses to extreme stress.



These professionals work with individuals affected by trauma to help them find constructive ways of dealing with the emotional impact. With children, continual, aggressive emotional outbursts; serious problems at school; preoccupation with the traumatic event; continued and extreme withdrawal; and other signs of intense anxiety or emotional difficulties all point to the need for professional assistance.

A qualified mental health professional can help children and their parents understand and deal with thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that result from trauma.

If you don't know where to start to find mental health resources, feel free to contact the Employee Assistance Program at 301-279-3197. * Source: *Value Options*

Thinking Through Rosy Glasses

According to research by psychologist Barbara Fredrickson, both positive and negative thinking styles can be self-fulfilling prophecies.

Negative thinkers see the world through a narrow peephole. They trigger their own symptoms of stress, scan their environments for threats rather than opportunities, and react to events by thinking about how to protect themselves.

Positive thinkers see life through a wider lens. They tend to build on a wider range of opportunities; their successes create an upward spiral of successes as well as improved health and deeper social bonds. This in turn creates more opportunities.

Are you a positive thinker or a negative thinker? Consider your own style of thinking and the impact it has on the way you interact with others.*

A Matter of Perception

We respond to situations based on our perceptions. If our perceptions are false, our response is usually inappropriate. Such mistakes are referred to as "errors in thinking." Some typical errors include the following:

- 1. All-or-nothing thinking**—the tendency to view things as black or white with no middle ground.
 - 2. Over-generalization**—the tendency to view a single event as a never-ending pattern.
 - 3. Mental filter**—focusing on a negative detail and excluding all else.
 - 4. Disqualifying the positive**—rejecting the positive aspects of a situation in order to hold on to a negative view.
 - 5. Personalization**—blaming yourself or taking responsibility for things out of your control.
- Catching yourself in a thinking error is the first step toward correcting it.*

Heart-Healthy Recipe:

Frozen Banana Orange Push Up

- 2 bananas
 - 1 6-ounce can frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
 - 1/2 cup nonfat dry milk
 - 1/2 cup water
 - 1 cup plain nonfat yogurt
- Peel bananas and slice them into a blender. Add remaining ingredients.

Cover and process until foamy. Pour evenly into six small paper cups. Freeze. To eat: squeeze bottom of cup!

Nutrient Analysis: Calories 123; Protein 5 g; Carbohydrates 26 g; Total fat 0 g; Saturated fat 0 g.*

From *The American Heart Association*

Tips for a Healthy Refrigerator

- Take stock of what's inside. Look at what you have in your refrigerator about once a month and notice the types of food inside. Do you have fruits? Vegetables? Low-fat food? High-fiber food?
- Hide high-fat desserts. Instead, display fruits and vegetables on the top shelf.
- Organize by more and less. Organizing helps you identify the foods you should eat more of and less of.
- Substitute lower-fat foods for higher-fat ones. Choose low-fat milk, dressings, and cheese/cottage cheese.
- Make healthy eating fun for the family. Get everyone involved.
- Make healthy food appealing. Add color to plates and use creative shapes for fruits and vegetables.

Contributed by Susan E. Ghelman, R.D., L.D., Food Service Supervisor
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News on Eating Disorders

According to the National Eating Disorders Association, in the United States, conservative estimates indicate that, after puberty, 5–10 million girls and women and 1 million boys and men are struggling with eating disorders, including anorexia, bulimia, binge eating disorder, or borderline conditions. For more information on eating disorders, check out the following Web sites:

<http://www.drkoop.com/template.asp?page=newsdetail&ap=93&id=508297>
An article on eating disorder risk factors

<http://www.healthcentral.com/centers/OneCenter.cfm?center=EatingDisorders>
A variety of articles on eating disorders, nutrition, and exercise.

<http://www.mayohealth.org/home?id=MH00004>
A personal story about eating disorders from the Mayo Clinic

www.something-fishy.org
Web site devoted to eating disorders

<http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org>
Home page of the National Eating Disorders Association *



Upcoming Events

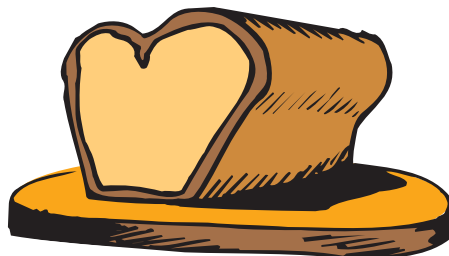
SPRING 2003

April

National Alcohol Screening Day (NASD) will be held April 10, 2003, during Alcohol Awareness Month. The program addresses a range of drinking behaviors—from risky drinking to alcohol dependence. Contact the EAP to arrange for an assessment, call the NASD office toll free at 800-253-7658, or check them out at nasd@mentalhealthscreening.org.

May

May is Mental Health Month. For more information, contact the National Mental Health Association at 703-684-7722, or visit their Web site at <http://www.nmha.org/may/index.cfm>. The same group also sponsors Childhood Depression Awareness Day on May 6.



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 Debra_Tipton@fc.mcps.k12.md.us. Please note that e-mail is not necessarily confidential.

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