



A Healthy Outlook!

301-460-2100 • FAX 301-460-2113 • www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/EAP • Vol. 3 No. 3

Depression in Children and Adolescents

Depression is more than just “feeling blue” or having a bad day. Also, it is not a personal character flaw, and children with clinical depression cannot simply just “snap out of it.” Depression impacts feelings, thoughts, and actions, and can appear as a physical illness. Many aspects of a child’s life, including school, family, and social life, can be greatly impacted by depression, making it difficult for a child to function. As many as 1 in 8 teens and 1 in 33 children have clinical depression. Fortunately, it is treatable.

Know the warning signs

Like all medical illnesses, depression has a distinct series of symptoms. Children and adolescents experience many of the same symptoms de-

pressed adults experience. However, symptoms of youth depression are often “masked.” Instead of expressing sadness, children and teenagers may express boredom and



irritability, or may choose to engage in risky behaviors. Many youngsters do not say, “Hey mom, hey dad, I think I am depressed.” Even the mask of success can be misleading. Overachievers rarely express their real feelings, especially anger. They are driven to succeed and try to be independent, but are very dependent on outside accomplishments to justify their existence. Unfortunately, these youths can crash emotionally when they experience rejection or failure.

Some symptoms include the following:

- Persistent sadness
- Withdrawal from family, friends, and activities that were once enjoyed
- Increased agitation or irritability

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How to Have More Self-esteem

What is Self-esteem?

Self-esteem literally means to esteem, or respect, yourself. Having high self-esteem means that you have a positive image of yourself. Let’s look at where such a positive self-image comes from.

In her classic book *Celebrate Yourself*, Dorothy Corkville Briggs makes a distinction between the real you and your self-image. She says that the *real* you is unique and unchanging. Most of your

self-image—what you think is true about yourself—is learned. It is not necessarily accurate at all!

Where are your beliefs about yourself drawn from? Where did you learn them? If you think about it, you’ll see that they came from what others said about you, what others told you, and/or what others did to you.

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Guidelines for Healthy Grilling Anytime of the Year

Grilling is not just for summer time! You can use the grill throughout all seasons. While grilling your favorite foods and trying new recipes is fun, it is important to use safe practices. Here are a few tips to help you do just that!

- Make sure to separate utensils and storage containers that are used for raw and cooked meats, poultry, and fish.
- Completely defrost meat before grilling so that it cooks evenly.
- Always thaw meat in the refrigerator instead of at room temperature, and grill immediately after defrosting.

- Choose a safe grilling area. Make sure the area is well ventilated.
- Keep mitts and utensils with long handles and a squirt bottle filled with water nearby.
- Clean the grilling surface thoroughly before cooking. Removing charred food debris helps reduce exposure to possible cancer-causing substances.
- Heat the grill before adding food. This helps kill bacteria. Gas grills should heat about 10 minutes; charcoal grills should have ash-white coals.
- Choose leaner cuts of meat, fish, and

poultry. Add barbeque and other favorite sauces/marinades to enhance flavor and maintain moisture.

- Consider adding vegetables and even fruits like pineapples, mangos, and peaches to the mix. They add flavor, texture, fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

Keep summer time in your hearts and keep on grilling. ♦

Source: *10 Tips for Safe Grilling*: Available at www.mayoclinic.com

Article contributed by Susan E. Ghelman, R.D., L.D., food service supervisor, MCPS Division of Food and Nutrition Services

Depression... from page 1

- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Complaints of headaches or stomachaches
- Fatigue and decreased energy levels
- Lack of motivation
- Play that involves aggression toward self or others
- Play with persistently sad themes
- Lack of focus or concentration
- Feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, or helplessness
- Reoccurring thoughts of death or suicide
- Engagement in risky behaviors
- Emotional outbursts

If your child exhibits these symptoms, document the duration, frequency, and severity and consult with a mental health specialist to create a comprehensive treatment plan for that child, which may include psychotherapy, ongoing evaluation, and in some cases, medication. Also, you can contact the EAP at 301-460-2100.

Some material taken from *Helping Your Depressed Teenager*, written by Gerald Oster, Ph.D. and Sarah Montgomery, LCSW-C.

About Alcoholism

Did you know that 95 percent of all alcoholics are employed, 45 percent of them hold management positions, and 50 percent have college degrees? The annual cost of alcohol-related problems on the job range from \$25 to \$100 billion per year. It is estimated that the average alcoholic costs his/her company 25 percent of his/her salary in lost productivity, absenteeism, poor performance, and medical costs. Alcoholics seem to value their jobs more than anything else, including their health or families, so job performance is usually the last area to be affected by their drinking.

Health and Human Services (HHS) New Information Line

HHS is a department within Montgomery County Government that assists with issues related to aging and disability; children, youth, and family; adult mental health and substance abuse; public health; crisis; income; and customer service. If you would

like to speak with a real person about any of HHS's 124 programs, you are in luck. The department now has an information and referral telephone line — 240-777-1245; 240-777-1295 TTY. Callers will be directed to the correct service. The line will be staffed by specialists who speak Spanish, Chinese, Taiwanese, Urdu, Hindi, and English. HHS specialists will answer questions about housing assistance, services for people with disabilities, children's services, income supports, and other HHS programs. Calls will be received from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. ♦

Quote:

He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that.

— John Stuart Mill

Self-esteem...continued from page 1

Your self-image is the result of all the messages you heard about yourself as a child. These messages added up to a set of beliefs about who you are. It may have nothing to do with who you *really* are.

For example, you may believe things such as the following:

- I'm not very smart.
- I'm naturally passive.
- Girls aren't any good at math.
- I'm too old to start over.
- All of the women in the Breski family become doctors.
- I'm painfully shy.
- The Hurleys never lie.

In addition to learning to believe certain things during our early years, there are certain situations that make most people feel inferior or lack self-esteem.

Here are some examples:

- being criticized
- not being loved
- being rejected
- experiencing failure

What Low Self-esteem Feels Like

In situations like those above, it is not uncommon to feel emotions such as—

- Sadness
- Inferiority
- Anger
- Jealousy
- Rejection

Cognitive Therapy

Cognitive therapy is one of the most successful methods for helping people feel better about themselves. Cognitive therapists help depressed and anxious people feel better by identifying how faulty ways of thinking are making them feel bad. They believe that faulty thoughts cause us to feel bad, which makes us feel bad about ourselves.

Cognitive therapists call these faulty ways of thinking “twisted thinking.” Cognitive therapy is a process by which the client analyzes his or her thoughts and beliefs, and learns to substitute more healthy ways of thinking and believing. These therapists help their clients feel better in four steps as follows:

1. Identify the upsetting events that cause bad feelings.
2. Record his/her thoughts about the event.
3. Identify the distortions in your thinking process.
4. Substitute rational responses.

After successfully completing these four steps, the client usually feels better about him or herself.

Thinking more positive thoughts is one way to feel good about yourself. Taking a look at your life environment and seeing whether it supports your feeling good about yourself is another way of increasing your self-esteem. You may find that some nourishing elements need to be replenished.

Do you have people in your life who do any of the following?

- Treat you with love and respect
- Encourage you to do and be any thing you want
- Help you find out what you want to do, and how to do it
- Encourage you to explore all of your talents and interests
- Are thrilled when you succeed
- Listen to you when you need to complain
- Help you bounce back from failure without making you feel bad

Take a moment to think about each of the items on this list. Note where your environment is providing adequately for you, and where it is lacking. This can give you clues to how to build your own self-esteem.

Strategies for Building Self-esteem

1. Pay attention to how you are feeling from moment to moment. Tune in to what your five senses are experiencing. Take it down to the most basic level of “I feel warm right now,” “I feel light-headed,” “I feel a tightness in my stomach.”
2. Revisit your interests and goals. Make a list of things you would like to do and learn. Today, take one step toward learning more.
3. Spend less time with critical people and more time with those who appreciate you.
4. Spend some time with yourself at the end of each day. Review what happened and how you were feeling. Write about it in a private journal.
5. If you are feeling bad about yourself, consider finding a therapist to help you get your life on a positive track.

Suggested Reading

Nathaniel Branden, *The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem*, New York, Bantam, 1994.

Dorothy Corkville Briggs, *Celebrate Your Self: Making Life Work for You*. Garden City, NY, Doubleday, 1977.

David D. Burns, *Ten Days to Self-Esteem*. New York, William Morrow, 1993.

Barbara Sher with Annie Bottlieb, *Wishcraft*. New York, Ballantine Books, 1979. ♦

Adapted from an article by Rudy Burger, Ph.D. Used with permission.



Upcoming Events

Spring 2005

March 28–April 3

National Sleep Awareness Week, National Sleep Foundation, 1522 K Street, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, DC 20005, 202-347-3471
nsf@sleepfoundation.org www.sleepfoundation.org

March 1–31

National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation, 1600 Duke Street, Suite 500, Alexandria, VA 22314, 800-227-2732, 877-35-COLON, 703-836-4413, Enica.Lewis@preventcancer.org www.preventcancer.org/colorectal

April 1–30

National Donate Life Month, Division of Transplantation, OSP, HRSA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Parklawn Building, Room 16C-17, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857, 301-443-7577, ask@hrsa.gov www.organdonor.gov/donatelife.htm

April 1–30

National Child Abuse Prevention Month, National Children's Bureau, 330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20447, 800-394-3366, 703-385-7565, nccanch@caliber.com
http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/topics/prevention/index.cfm

Future EAP Workshops: To sign up or for information about any of the workshops listed below, call us at 301-460-2100.

April 13 (4:00 p.m.)

Communication Skills, North Lake Center, 15101 Bauer Dr., Rockville

April 19 (12–1:00 p.m.)

Eldercare, at CESC, room 223

May 18 (4:00 p.m.)

Underage Drinking, North Lake Center, 15101 Bauer Drive, Rockville

Do you have a question for the EAP?

Send your questions via FirstClass, Outlook, or the Pony to Jeff Becker.

Published by the Department of Communications
for the Employee Assistance Program

1822.05 • ELECTRONIC GRAPHICS & PUBLISHING SERVICES • 2.05

Ask the EAP

Q. Can I use the EAP to help with personal problems that are not directly related to work?

A. Yes. You can use the EAP for any problem that is bothering you enough that you feel the need for professional assistance. While many people contact the EAP for help with job-related problems, people also commonly use the EAP for problems related to relationships, family issues, depression, anxiety, alcohol, drugs, etc. Since many serious problems result in sleep disturbance, concentration and memory deficits, frustration, and anger, one can argue that serious problems will certainly make you less productive at work compared with when you're feeling your best. ♦

A Healthy Outlook!

To help employees with troubling issues before they become overwhelming.



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

SPECIALISTS: Debbie Tipton
 Robyn Rosenbauer
 Jeff Becker

EAP at North Lake Center
15101 Bauer Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20853
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www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/EAP

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.