



A Healthy Outlook!

240-314-1040 • FAX 240-314-1049 • www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/EAP • Vol. 17 No. 4

MANAGING Holiday Stress



EVEN THOUGH the holiday season can be joyous and fun, it also can be very stressful for some people. Here are a few tips to help you manage your stress.

1. **Set limits.** It is okay to say “No.” Set boundaries politely, to keep you from feeling overwhelmed.
2. **Schedule time for yourself.** Keeping up with many obligations can be taxing on your mind and body; setting aside time for yourself can help you unwind.
3. **Get plenty of exercise.** Exercising as little as 30 minutes a day can trigger positive feelings, boost your mood, and decrease stress.
4. **Set a spending budget.** You can reduce some of the financial stress by planning ahead, reviewing your finances, and setting realistic budgets.
5. **Pick your battles.** Let go of little things. You cannot change or control your relatives in such a short time. Focus only on the things you can control.

Ways to Say “GOOD JOB” to Your Staff

MOST PEOPLE would agree that it is important to give positive feedback in response to a job well done. Simple recognition of effort can be a great reward that provides ongoing motivation for future tasks. But sometimes it seems redundant to keep saying “great job” over and over. So, here are some alternatives to spice up your praise:

- ◆ **THANK YOU!**
- ◆ **THANKS: for getting this done; for pulling everyone/everything together on such short notice; for your help today; for stepping up and getting this done for us**
- ◆ **GOOD WORK, as always.**
- ◆ **You are a lifesaver.**
- ◆ **I appreciate you getting this to me so quickly so I have time to review it.**
- ◆ **I really appreciate your good work this week.**
- ◆ **I don’t know what I would do without you.**
- ◆ **PERFECT!**
- ◆ **This is exactly what I was looking for!**
- ◆ **WONDERFUL, this is more than I expected.**

- ◆ **This is so great I don’t need to make any revisions to it at all.**
- ◆ **I appreciate your critical thinking around this project.**
- ◆ **WELL DONE—and ahead of deadline too!**
- ◆ **You are such a team player.**
- ◆ **You are so creative—I always love getting your perspective on things.**
- ◆ **You consistently bring your all, and I truly appreciate that.**
- ◆ **I am so proud/glad/lucky to have you as part of my team.**

Do you have a phrase you like to use? Have you heard something from a supervisor that was particularly encouraging? You can let us know by sending an e-mail to eap@mcpsmd.org.

In This Issue

- 1 Managing Holiday Stress
- 1 Ways to Say “Good Job” to Your Staff
- 2 Ways to Stop Worrying
- 2 Ways to Manage Stress
- 2 Ask the EAP
- 3 What is PTSD?
- 3 5 Facts About Depression (Part 1)
- 4 Dyslexia in Adults
- 4 How to Help Someone Who Is Grieving
- 4 Upcoming Events

“Nurturing yourself is not selfish – it’s essential to your survival and your well-being.”

~ RENEE PETERSON
TRUDEAU

“The only person who can pull me down is myself, and I’m not going to let myself pull me down anymore.”

~ C. JOYBELL C.

Ways to STOP WORRYING

WHEN WORRYING interferes with your ability to get things done, try one of these techniques:

- ♦ **Imagery—If you are worried about something in the future—a big presentation or meeting a deadline—imagine yourself doing it and enjoying it.** Imagine your coworkers congratulating you warmly after the presentation. See yourself submitting your project on time and knowing that you have done a good job. For even more impact, couple the imagery with deep breathing to practice getting your body to be calm.
- ♦ **Reality testing—If you are worried about something in the present—something your spouse said, for instance—ask yourself if you truly have anything to worry about.** If the facts you know do not support what’s troubling you, do something physical to shake the worry and try to forget it.

If excessive worrying reaches the point where you find it hard to do the things you like to do, consider contacting the EAP (240-314-1040). Help is available.



Ways to MANAGE STRESS

THE EFFECTS OF STRESS tend to build up over time. Taking practical steps to manage your stress can reduce or prevent these effects. The following are some tips that may help you to cope with stress:

- ♦ **Recognize the signs of your body’s response to stress**, such as difficulty sleeping, increased alcohol and other substance use, being easily angered, feeling depressed, and having low energy.
- ♦ **Talk to your doctor or health care provider.** Get proper health care for existing or new health problems.
- ♦ **Get regular exercise.** Just 30 minutes of walking per day can help boost your mood and reduce stress.
- ♦ **Try a relaxing activity.** Explore stress-coping programs, such as meditation, yoga, tai chi, or other gentle exercises. Schedule regular times for these and other healthy and relaxing activities. Learn more about these techniques on the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health website: www.nccih.nih.gov/health/stress.
- ♦ **Set goals and priorities.** Decide what must get done and what can wait. Learn to say no to tasks if you feel overloaded. Note what you accomplished at the end of the day, not what you were unable to do.
- ♦ **Stay connected with people who can provide emotional and other support.** To reduce stress, ask for help from friends, family, and community or religious organizations.

Source: National Institute of Mental Health, Office of Science Policy, Planning, and Communication. For more information visit www.nimh.nih.gov.

Ask the EAP

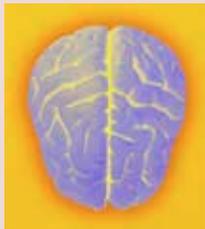
Q. I am having problems with someone I work with, and it makes me feel like I don’t want to go to work. Can the EAP offer any assistance for this sort of difficulty?

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 an opportunity 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, or give us a call at 240-314-1040.

Do you have a question for the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)? Send your questions to Jeff Becker at Jeffrey_Becker@mcpsmd.org or via the Pony.

What is PTSD?

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD) is a condition that



develops in some people who have experienced a shocking, scary, or dangerous event. It is natural to feel afraid during and after

a traumatic situation. Fear triggers many split-second changes in the body to help defend against danger or to avoid it. This “fight-or-flight” response is a typical reaction meant to protect a person from harm. Nearly everyone will experience a range of reactions after trauma, yet most people recover from initial symptoms naturally. Those who continue to experience problems may be diagnosed with PTSD. People who have PTSD may feel stressed or frightened even when they are not in danger.

Signs and Symptoms

Not every traumatized person develops ongoing (chronic) or even short-term (acute) PTSD. Not everyone with PTSD has been through a dangerous event. Some experiences, like the sudden, unexpected death of a loved one, also can cause PTSD. Usually, symptoms begin early, within three months of the traumatic incident; sometimes they begin years afterward. Symptoms must last more than a month and be severe enough to interfere with relationships or work to be considered PTSD. The course of the condition varies. Some people recover within six months, while others have symptoms that last much longer. The condition becomes chronic in some people.

Treatments and Therapies

The main treatments for people with PTSD are medications, psychotherapy (“talk” therapy), or both. Everyone is different, and PTSD affects people differently; a treatment that works for one person may not work for another person. It is important for anyone with PTSD to be treated by a mental health provider who is experienced with PTSD. Some people need to try different treatments to find the one that works for their symptoms.

If someone with PTSD is going through an ongoing trauma, such as being in an abusive relationship, both of the problems need to be addressed. Other ongoing problems can include panic disorder, depression, substance abuse, and feeling suicidal.

If you think you may have PTSD and you do not know what to do, the MCPS EAP can be a good place to start. We can help you with brief counseling and assist with finding additional resources, if indicated. You can reach the EAP at 240-314-1040.

Information from the National Institute of Mental Health. For more information, go to their website at www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/index.shtml.

5 FACTS about Depression (PART 1)



- 1. Depression distorts your thinking.** When you are depressed, your mind can play tricks on you. If you have thoughts of suicide, please call someone immediately. Do not let a temporary glitch in your thinking cause you to harm yourself or another person. Contact the Montgomery County Crisis Center at 241-777-4000.
- 2. Depression makes it hard to give.** It is very hard to think of other people when you are wrapped in a prickly blanket of sadness, and all you can think about is your own pain. Be proactive and do something for someone else. It can help you “get out” of your own head.
- 3. Depression is experienced as anxiety 65 percent of the time.** Make sure you get an accurate diagnosis, so you can get the most effective treatment available. There is a saying in psychotherapy, “No pills without skills.” If you are taking medication it can be helpful to go to counseling.
- 4. Persistent irritability can be a symptom of depression.** If the world, your life, or your loved ones constantly bother you, the cause might be something that is going on inside of you. That anger can lead to lashing out or withdrawing from those who love you.
- 5. Chronic pain can be another symptom of depression.** Being in continual discomfort can cause you to become depressed. When you are depressed and in pain, it can be hard to know which came first.

Stay tuned for the spring Healthy Outlook for more depression facts.

Source: Dr. Barton Goldsmith, Ph.D., LMFT. For more information visit BartonGoldsmith.com, DrBartonGoldsmith.com, www.twitter.com/BartonGoldsmith.

“Allow yourself to enjoy each happy moment in your life.”

~ STEVE MARABOLI

DYSLEXIA in Adults

According to The International Dyslexia Organization, the following are common signs of dyslexia in adults:

- ◆ May hide reading problems
- ◆ May spell poorly; relies on others to correct spelling
- ◆ Avoids writing; may not be able to write
- ◆ Often very competent in oral language
- ◆ Relies on memory; may have an excellent memory
- ◆ Often has good people skills
- ◆ Often is spatially talented; professions include, but are not limited to, engineers, architects, designers, artists, mathematicians, physicists, physicians (especially surgeons and orthopedists), and dentists
- ◆ May be very good at reading people (intuitive)
- ◆ May have difficulty with planning, organization and management of time, materials, and tasks

For more information on dyslexia, go to <https://dyslexiaida.org/>.

How to Help Someone Who Is GRIEVING



- ◆ *Do not try to get them to feel* or be anything but what they are.
- ◆ *Do not avoid them.* They need your support.

- ◆ *Do not reward them for acting cheerful or “like your old self.”* This teaches them to suppress their feelings around you.
- ◆ *Let them tell about the loss* again and again, if they need to.
- ◆ *Recognize that unexpected,* perhaps inappropriate, behavior is part of the grieving process. It means the bereaved person is moving forward.

To find out more about how to support someone who is grieving, or to obtain resources, call the EAP at 240-314-1040.

UPCOMING Events:

● Caregiver Support Group

To support our caregivers, MCPS EAP offers a Caregiver Support Group designed to provide helpful resources and establish connections among the caregivers within our community. The meetings are held monthly on Wednesdays, from 4:15–5:30 p.m. at 45 West Gude Drive, Rockville. Guest speakers present on important topics related to caring for a loved one. All are welcome to attend. Please register.

● All Stressed Out and Don't Know What to Do

Join us for a one-hour workshop to learn practical stress busters to help you become a master over the stress in your life. January 30, 2018, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. at 45 West Gude in the Aspen Room. Seating is limited. Please register.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about the events or to register, please contact the EAP by phone at 240-314-1040.



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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.

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