

Employee Assistance Program
Stuecker & Associates Inc. (SAI)

(502) 452-9227

800-799-9EAP

www.stueckerandassoc.com

HEALTHY

EXCHANGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SUMMER 2015

For Your Information

RELATIONSHIPS 101

For a relationship to be successful, both partners must be willing to share and accept each other's feelings. The ability to share feelings is essential to creating intimacy and openness in a relationship. Both "negative" and "positive" feelings need to be shared. For many, these are "emotional" skills that need to be learned.



© Can Stock Photo Inc. /
Feverpitched

QUICK TIP FOR RELIEVING JOB STRESS

To help ease stress at work, take some "time out" every day. Get away from your work activities. Relax in a peaceful setting or take a short walk. Even a 15-minute time-out has the ability to dissipate stress, energize you and make the rest of your workday more productive and enjoyable.

ALCOHOL AND SLEEP

Use alcohol only in moderation and not before bedtime. Do not use alcohol to induce sleep. A nightcap can lull you to sleep, but alcohol typically produces light, unsettled sleep. Additionally, using alcohol to fall asleep could lead to dependency.



© Can Stock Photo Inc. / pzRomashka

WELLNESS

Healthy Ways To Improve Your Mood

Bad moods are an inevitable part of life. What can be particularly frustrating, however, is when we know we're in a bad mood, but seem unable to snap ourselves out of it. Are you aware of the many short-term and long-term, healthy techniques and strategies you can utilize to improve your mood?

If you find yourself feeling down, anxious, grumpy, low in energy, irritable and quick to snap at family, friends or coworkers, try a few of the suggestions below and find what works best for you:



© Can Stock Photo Inc. /
stockyimages

1. Practice deep breathing. Break the grip of a bad mood with controlled, slow and deep breathing. Here's what to do: Sit comfortably at your desk or alone in a quiet room. Close your eyes and inhale slowly and deeply through your nose (for approx. 7 seconds), then exhale slowly through your mouth (for approx. 8 seconds). Focus your attention entirely on your breathing. If you prefer, say (or think the word) "relax" or "calm" or another soothing word as you exhale. Do this for ten repetitions any time you feel particularly anxious or stressed. This technique, known as the "relaxation response," will calm your brain, relax your body and lift your mood.

2. Exercise. When you exercise, your brain releases endorphins, adrenaline, serotonin and dopamine – natural brain chemicals that work together to relieve tension, lift your energy and boost your mood. Researchers report that even a short brisk walk can give you an energy and mood boost. What types of exercise are best? Cardiovascular exercise (such as brisk walking, running, cycling, swimming or other aerobic activity), weight training and yoga have all been shown in studies to reduce tension and anxiety and improve your emotional state.

3. Adjust your diet. When you eat and what you eat affects your blood sugar levels, which in turn affect your energy and mood. Nutritionists recommend the following to help stabilize your blood sugar levels and mood:

- Eat small meals and snacks every few hours to avoid peaks and valleys in your blood sugar levels. Eating consistently throughout the day provides your brain with a constant source of fuel to help stabilize your energy and mood.
- Limit consumption of simple sugars and refined carbohydrates to lessen major blood sugar swings. Concentrated sources of sugar like soda, candy, fruit juice, jam and syrup can create radical spikes (and drops) in your blood sugar levels,

Improve your mood...

Continued from page 1

which can leave you feeling irritable and tired. Additionally, refined white starch foods like white bread, crackers, bagels, muffins, breakfast cereals and white rice can have the same effect on your blood sugar and mood. Limit your consumption of these foods. Instead include more complex carbohydrates in your diet, such as vegetables, fruit, beans, peas, lentils, whole grains, brown rice and oatmeal.

- Include protein with meals and snacks. The addition of protein to a meal or snack will help slow the absorption of carbohydrate in the blood and lessen blood sugar and mood swings. Good protein sources include chicken, turkey, seafood and fish, veal, pork tenderloin, tofu, eggs and low-fat yogurt.

- Cut down on caffeine. Although it can provide an initial boost in energy and concentration, too much caffeine is linked to depression, fatigue and mood swings.

4. Let it out. If you're in a bad mood, there could be an obvious problem or emotional reason for it. Try to determine why you're in a bad mood and talk to a family member, friend or counselor about it. Simply talking about your problem will help you start to feel better. Allow yourself to feel your emotions. Remember, bottling up your feelings will only darken your mood, so let your feelings out.

5. Make adequate sleep a priority.

Scientists have documented the link between sleep deprivation and a poor mood. According to a survey conducted by the National Sleep Foundation, those who got fewer than six hours of sleep on weekdays were more likely to describe themselves as stressed, sad, angry and pessimistic. Conversely, those getting adequate sleep reported more positive feelings. For a better mood, make the quality and quantity of your sleep a priority. Research suggests that most healthy adults need seven to nine hours of sleep each night.

BETTER MONEY MANAGEMENT

Tips To Ease Financial Stress

According to the latest *Stress in America* survey commissioned by the American Psychological Association, 64 percent of Americans single out money as the number-one factor that affects their stress level. If you're feeling stressed about money, how can you solve your money problems and get financial stress under control?



© Can Stock Photo Inc. / georgerudy

How to get financial stress under control

- 1. Seek professional help.** If financial pressures are getting you down seek professional help. Call your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for information and referrals. Your EAP counselor can help you assess what issue(s) may be contributing to your money problems and refer you to the proper resources to help you overcome the problem(s). These resources may include a financial planner, debt consolidation agency, mental health/substance abuse assistance, or other community services.
- 2. Don't let credit card debt break your back.** Consumers who run up high credit card balances and then regularly pay only the minimum amount due each month are paying very high prices for goods and services. The key to relieving financial stress is to get out of debt. Too much debt eats away at your take-home income and undermines your financial future.
- 3. Eliminate credit card debt.** Borrowing money for an asset that accumulates value (e.g. family home) can be a good thing. All other debt should be eliminated. Examine the interest rates you are paying on your debts and pay off those with the highest interest rates first.
- 4. Curb your spending.** For most people, overspending and having too much debt is the cause of money problems – it is not because they are not making enough money. Learn basic money management skills. Commit to living within your means.
- 5. Keep money in reserve for the unexpected.** Unexpected financial expenses hit all of us from time to time. Make sure you have a reserve to cope with these out-of-the-blue expenses. Having money in reserve will give you peace of mind.

SAI Employee Assistance Program

Contact (502) 452-9227

(800) 799-9EAP

- ◆ **24 Hour Helpline:** 502-452-9227 or 1-800-799-9EAP. Your EAP is always available to help you or your dependents with any personal, family or work-related concern.
 - ✓ Marriage and family difficulties
 - ✓ Depression
 - ✓ Drug and alcohol abuse
 - ✓ Emotional stress
 - ✓ Work Issues
 - ✓ And more...
- ◆ **Face to face counseling** with a Licensed Professional Counselor at an office convenient to you.
- ◆ **Legal Counseling:** Free confidential telephone consultations with an experienced attorney.
- ◆ **Work/Life Benefits:** Customized Searches for Educational Guidebooks, Adoption Resources, College Planning, Legal and Financial, Child Care, Elder Care, Health and Fitness Clubs, and Veterinarians and Pet Care Services.