

NEW OPPORTUNITIES
Employee Assistance
Program

an affiliate of



HEALTHY

EXCHANGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SUMMER 2022

For Your Information

RELIEVE JOB STRESS

1. Set reasonable standards for yourself and others. Don't expect perfection.
2. Plan your work. Tension builds when your work seems endless. Plan your work to use time and energy most efficiently.
3. Take a break. A change of pace, no matter how short, can give you a new outlook on an old problem.

HAPPINESS 101

Count your blessings. One way to feel happier is to recognize good things when they happen. If you have trouble counting your blessings, try keeping a gratitude journal. Write down three to five things you're grateful for once a week. Several studies show that people who record what they appreciate experience greater happiness and less anxiety.



ANGER MANAGEMENT TIP

Practice deep breathing. If you feel yourself getting angry, don't let it build up until you have a violent outburst.

Try breathing deeply from your diaphragm in long, slow breaths, giving your heart a chance to slow down. Repeat a word such as "relax" or "calm" as you breathe. Breathing deeply will ease your tension.



IMPROVING YOUR LIFE

Coping With Change

Traumatic life events and major changes are an inevitable part of life. From the death of a loved one, personal illness, financial set-back or divorce, to starting a new job or moving into a new home, change throughout life is constant. How is it that some



people can move beyond crisis and disappointment and actually make their lives better, while others never quite recover and continue to suffer?

The changes that seem to cause us the most problems are the changes that we feel we have no control over. Indeed, numerous external events will force changes upon us, changes which we do not want, changes which can make our life painful and difficult.

People who deal effectively with traumas and changes understand that they have no control over such external events. They realize that they cannot change the traumas or crises; that they can only change themselves.

Your greatest power in the face of adversity is your power to choose how you will react.

You may not be able to control the external event. But you can maintain your self-control by choosing your response.

Approaching change as a challenge

Your best approach to successfully deal with a major change is to approach the change as a challenge to be mastered. By doing so, you are recognizing change for what it really is, an opportunity to learn and improve and move forward with your life. You're choosing to be self-empowered and acknowledging that...

...you are responsible for your own health and happiness, no matter what happens to you.

Six major kinds of change

The first step in dealing effectively with change is to recognize change for what it is. Losing your job is change. Divorce is change. Finding out someone you love has a drinking problem is change.

RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILY

6 Things Happy Couples Do

Contrary to widely held beliefs, romance does not have to fizzle out in long-term relationships, according to a study in the journal, *Review of General Psychology*. The researchers studied 6,070 individuals in short- and long-term relationships and concluded that romantic love can last a lifetime and lead to happier, healthier relationships.



How to keep romantic feelings alive

How do happy couples keep their romantic feelings alive? Like most good things in life, it requires desire and effort. The following tips can help you and your partner work together to maintain or rekindle your romantic edge:

3. **Communicate.** Communication is the key to staying connected. It is important that you and your partner communicate your thoughts, plans, ideas and opinions on a consistent basis. Equally important is communicating your feelings – the joys, sorrows or frustrations we all experience.
4. **Fight fair.** Conflicts and disagreements are inevitable. Learn how to solve problems without attacking, blaming or put-downs. It's hard to maintain romantic feelings if you are constantly putting each other down. Happy couples know how to focus on the issue at hand, rather than throwing destructive, verbal punches.
5. **Spend time together.** With work, children and other responsibilities, it's easy for your relationship to get pushed aside. Taking the initiative to schedule time for just you and your partner is an important way to keep intimacy alive and well. Find shared activities you both enjoy.
6. **Do nice things for each other.** In successful relationships, both partners find small ways to make loving gestures on a regular basis.
7. **Look for and affirm the good.** Often what we focus on we get more of. If your main focus is what you do not like about your partner, that is what you will see and notice. Change your viewpoint and change your relationship. Look for the positive things you like, express appreciation and it will make a difference.
8. **Speak your partners "love language."** Sharing affection keeps relationships healthy. We all have different ways of expressing love. It may be spending quality time together, doing acts of service, sexual expression or touch. If your love language is different from your partner's, learn what his/her language is and speak it. This will leave you both feeling more loved and add to your closeness.

Your EAP is here to help

Remember, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to help you or your dependents with your personal, family or work-related concerns, including marriage and relationship issues. If you need help, why not call a professional EAP counselor today? We're here to help. you.

Coping with Change

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Researchers have identified six major kinds of change that seem to cause the most turbulence in our lives:

1. **Loss** - Loss of anything that is important: a loved one, friendship, job, income, loss of a hope or dream.
2. **Separation** - Being apart (physically or emotionally) from anyone or anything that is important to us: your job, home, loved ones, people or friends you are used to being with.
3. **Relocation** - Moving, whether it be from one house to another, one city to another, across the country, or moving your office down the hall.
4. **A Change in a Relationship** - A significant change in any relationship that is important to you: spouse, child, parents, close friends, associates at work, or boss.
5. **A Change in Direction** - A change in goals or focus: a new career path, getting married, retirement, going back to school, undergoing major surgery.
6. **A Change in Health** - A change brought on by illness or a health problem, or a change toward good health.



What makes change so difficult for some is that each of the major changes above always brings more change with it. One change is hard enough, but too many changes at once can be overwhelming. Divorce, for example, can change a lot more than just the relationship itself. It can change your finances, where you live, who you spend your time with, how often you get to see your children, and even what you do with the next several years of your life.

Guidelines for dealing with change

1. **Recognize and understand the change** - Learn everything you can about the change. The more you know it, the better you'll be able to deal with it. Ask questions such as: What's the worst thing that can happen? What do I stand to lose because of this change? How is this change affecting me now? Who or what is in control of the effects of this change now? Is there a way to minimize the negative effects of the change? What result do I want to avoid? What result do I want to create?
2. **Identify your opportunities** - Begin by asking yourself, in light of your change: What are my possibilities and opportunities for growing? For learning? For becoming

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wiser? Stronger? Healthier? More loving? More productive? What benefits or gains are hidden in this call to change?

3. **Choose your action** - To deal effectively with change, there is nothing more important than what you actually do about it. Review your possibilities and then ask yourself: What is the most important thing for me to do next? What action can I take today? What action can I take tomorrow? Write down, on paper, the action steps you are going to take. Writing them down on paper is a well-proven method for making goals real and focuses you toward making them happen.

4. **Review your progress and make adjustments** - On a regular basis, review everything you are doing in dealing with the change. Ask yourself: Am I doing the right thing about this right now? Which strategies are working and which ones are not? Is there something else I should be doing?



The road through crisis and trauma

If you're currently experiencing the initial impact of a major loss or disappointment, you may wonder if you can ever feel good about your life again. It is normal, for a time, to feel hopeless, overwhelmed, confused, angry or beaten by your circumstances; these emotions are a normal part of the healing process.

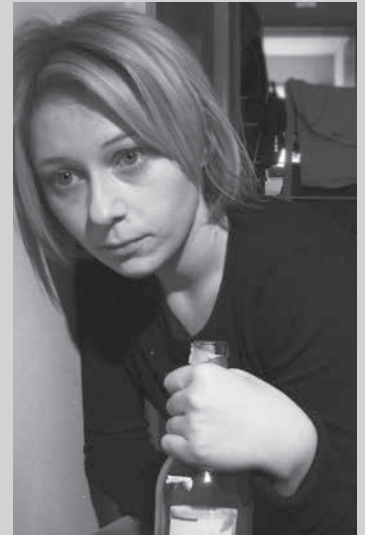
However, after a period of time, these emotions will no longer serve you well. In fact, left unresolved they can rob you of your motivation and enthusiasm for life,

PARENTING

Preventing Binge Drinking in Teens and College Students

With teens and college students returning to school soon, parents must be aware of the dangers of binge drinking. Binge drinking is generally defined as having five or more drinks of alcohol (male), or 4 or more drinks (female), in about two hours.

According to the most recent statistics from the Center of Disease Control, 26% of 9th through 12th graders reported binge drinking at least once during the past 30 days. The prevalence of binge drinking was nearly the same for females as males. On college campuses, the most recent Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study estimates that approximately 44% of college students are binge drinkers.



What are the risks of binge drinking?

The dangers of binge drinking are far more serious than hangovers. These risks include: alcohol poisoning, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, unintentional injuries (e.g. motor vehicle accidents, falls, burns, drowning and hypothermia) and violence (homicide, suicide, domestic violence and sexual assault). In 2000, the Journal of American College Health reported that college students who frequently binge drink were 21 times more likely than non-binge drinkers to:

- Be hurt or injured
- Drive a car after drinking
- Engage in unprotected sex
- Engage in unplanned sexual activity

What Parents Can Do

Parenting experts recommend discussing alcohol and drinking with your child from a young age. A large body of research shows that, contrary to popular opinion, even during the teen years, parents have an enormous influence on their children's behaviors, values and decisions about drinking. One recent study reported that mother-teen conversations about alcohol and the consequences of drinking were helpful in preventing binge drinking in college freshman. To help prevent binge drinking, parenting experts recommend that parents communicate about alcohol and the consequences of drinking and establish clear and firm family expectations about alcohol or other substance use. Search the internet or visit your local library or book store for resources with strategies for communicating to your child about alcohol, ways to spot warning signs of potential drinking problems and the necessary actions to help teens resist alcohol.

Your EAP is here to help

Remember, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to help you or your dependents with most-any personal, family or work-related concern, including issues related to alcohol, drugs or addiction. If you need help, why not call a professional EAP counselor today? We're here to help you.

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your personal and professional relationships, trigger long-term depression and leave you highly vulnerable to physical illness.

If you feel “stuck,” if you find yourself saying, “I don’t know what to do next,” follow the guidelines suggested above. Start by asking questions. The simple act of asking questions can not only lead to constructive answers, but also build your own conscious awareness that you are actually doing something about your life. That’s something that will feel good to you and build your confidence and self-esteem.

The road through crisis and trauma is never easy. There will be setbacks and discouragement. But by approaching change as a challenge, believing in yourself and learning skills for dealing with change, you can learn to take control of change in your life. You can learn to enhance your life in spite of adversity and change.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES Employee Assistance Program

an affiliate of
**Stairways Behavioral
Health**

Please call for free,
confidential assistance

**(814) 456-0584
1-800-321-7988**

The information in this newsletter is for the purpose of information only and is not meant to replace consultation with your EAP professional, mental health professional or physician. Your EAP is a benefit provided for you by your company. We encourage you to call. No issue is too big or small.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES Employee Assistance Program

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As normal healthy adults, we all experience set-backs and difficulties from time to time. Most often, we are able to recover from them and resolve our problems ourselves. Sometimes professional assistance can help when problems have grown too complicated to manage alone and begin to affect our happiness, relationships, health and job performance. During these times, an employee assistance program can be very helpful.

As one of your employee benefits, you and your family can take advantage of free, professional and confidential help through Stairways’ Employee Assistance Program (EAP). New Opportunities EAP is staffed with trained counselors dedicated to help with any type of personal problem including:

- **Job-related problems**
- **Workplace conflicts**
- **Marital/Family issues**
- **Parenting issues**
- **Emotional problems such as stress, grief, anxiety and depression**
- **Crisis situations**
- **Alcohol and other drug abuse**
- **Eldercare issues**
- **Communication and interpersonal problems**

You and your immediate family members are eligible to use this EAP service free of charge. Just call New Opportunities at **(814) 456-0584 or toll-free at 1-800-321-7988** to make an appointment. Appointments can be arranged to fit your schedule including evenings and weekends.

Remember, anything discussed with the counselor is strictly confidential. Information will not be released to your employer, family or anyone else unless you want it shared and sign a written consent form.

New Opportunities EAP provides an initial assessment of your situation and short term counseling as needed. Our counselors can also give you referrals to appropriate community resources. Contact New Opportunities EAP today to schedule an appointment.

WE ARE THERE FOR YOU WHEN YOU NEED US!