

Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

May 2013

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How to Recognize and Cope with Anxiety and Depression



Anxiety and depression are two of the most common psychological disorders that are represented as serious risk factors for almost all chronic disease. While it is normal to be anxious or depressed every once in a while for short bouts, extended periods of anxiety and depression can lead to all types of negative effects on a person's life, both physically, physiologically, and emotionally.

So, what are anxiety and depression and what are their causes? Anxiety is characterized by a state of mind which includes an overwhelming feeling of negativity and morbid thought. Anxiety is essentially a feeling of hopelessness or threat and worry that can be because of a true risk to life and limb, or

more commonly, an imagined threat. Depression is characterized by a negative appraisal of life events. When someone is depressed, things that normally would be considered pleasurable are no longer enjoyed. In fact, a depressed person feels at a loss of energy and suffers from a general lack of vitality.

Much of the symptoms of anxiety and depression are actually caused by a negative mindset which is brought on by both internal and external stimuli. Deadlines and lifestyle stress such as an unhappy marriage and high demands at work can cause heightened anxiety through increasing the stress on a person to perform.

Internal stimuli that lead to anxiety are essentially a lack of coping resources to deal with external stressors effectively. This means that, for a given amount of stress, some people are more prone to anxiety and depression than others simply because of the psychological coping mechanisms which are available to them. This also means that by changing the way we perceive and appraise stressful life events, we can affect the effect they have on our mindset.

One way to cope with depression and anxiety is to learn to see the world in a different light. Essentially, any event in life, good-bad, stressful-relaxing, only have their effects on our minds based on how we appraise them. This means that if something stressful like getting a promotion at work happens to us, it can have both negative or positive effects on our mood, depending on how we appraise it. If we focus on the possible stresses that come with attaining a higher position at work, such as increased responsibility and workload, we can easily become anxious and stressed out. On the other hand, if we focus on the positive aspects of a higher wage and more significance or recognition at the job, then we can actually find ambition and happiness within our stressful events.

The key to dealing with anxiety and depression is learning how to effectively cope with the stressors, both internal and external that lead to them. This means that by learning proper time management, and through positive thinking as well as exercise to release stress, we can curb the physiological, psychological, and physical effects of anxiety and depression, if not thwart them completely. Only by believing you can gain control can you learn to truly be in control.

Article Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/1448321>

Chat Reminder

Identifying and Coping with Anxiety & Depression

Connect with Deer Oaks and a counselor for a live confidential chat.

When:

May 15, 2013

Where:

www.deeroaks.com

Session Times (CST):

- 12:15 PM to 12:45 PM
- 6:00 PM to 6:30 PM





Work the Crowd



Social gatherings, office parties, community events—they all give you an opportunity to enhance your professional image.

But if you're nervous about what to talk about in a crowd of strangers, Toastmasters International offers this advice to turn small talk into smart talk:

- *Plan your topics.* Think of 2 to 3 topics you can discuss with anyone.
- *Keep it lighthearted.* Avoid office gossip and controversial topics. Stay clear of topics related to sex, religion, and politics.
- *Meet someone new.* Take the initiative to introduce yourself to the CEO. Or talk to someone new while waiting in the food line.
- *Spark a conversation.* Ask open-ended questions about the person you're getting to know.
- *Listen attentively.* Ask follow-up questions about the person or group you're conversing with. Listen more than you talk.
- *Introduce others.* Be sure to introduce a newcomer to those you're talking with.
- *Consider cultural differences.* Take into account figures of speech, how you present humor, and personal space.
- *Limit alcohol consumption.* Know your drink limit or avoid alcohol altogether to keep your composure.

Source: Health-e headlines™

Spring Clean your Diet with Green Eating



Bright emerald green is symbolic of spring and food bursting with flavor and nutrients.

Spring “clean” your diet, suggests Kari Kooi, a registered dietician at The Methodist Hospital in Houston. She recommends these 5 green powerhouse foods:

- **Asparagus:** These green spears offer a bounty of nutrients. Asparagus is high in an antioxidant that can help reduce skin damage from the sun. Also, asparagus contains the most folate of any vegetable. Folate plays a vital role in heart health and the prevention of birth defects.
- **Avocado:** Add some thin slices of smooth avocado to your sandwich or salad without feeling guilty. The monounsaturated fat in avocado is what’s mostly responsible for avocado’s super-food status. This type of happy fat can help drive down levels of bad cholesterol.
- **Brussels sprouts:** These baby cabbages are loaded with antioxidants and filling fiber. A cruciferous vegetable, Brussels sprouts contain powerful cancer-fighting sulfur compounds that are responsible for their pungent aroma. These green vegetables take on a whole new flavor and crispy texture when roasted in the oven.
- **Kale:** This beautiful ruffled green is being called “the queen of greens.” Kale is brimming with eye-nourishing phytochemicals that have been shown to prevent macular degeneration (vision loss) and cataracts. Kale is a better source of calcium than spinach.
- **Kiwifruit:** Rich in vitamin C, potassium, and fiber, kiwis make a perfect portable snack. Just slice a kiwifruit in half and scoop out the emerald sweet and tart flesh with a spoon.

Source: Health-e headlines™

Sore after Exercise?

Try a glass of cherry juice to ease your pain. A study in the Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition looked at the impact of tart cherry juice on muscle soreness. The vitamin C and antioxidants in cherries may help ease inflammation and decrease the swelling that contributes to soreness.

Health-e headlines™

Our bodies are almost two-thirds water.

The brain, in fact, is 75% water. Water helps nearly every part of the human body function. Even moderate dehydration can cause headaches and dizziness. To calculate how much water you need every day, click on the Hydration Calculator at www.bottledwater.org.

Health-e headlines™

An EAP Reminder

Life Can Be Hectic. The EAP Can Help You Find Your Balance.

Deer Oaks, your EAP, is always available to you and your household members.

If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline.

Counselors are available 24/7 to provide you with immediate care.





Calleen's Corner...

*Monthly Advice from Calleen Friedel, LMFT, SAP, CEAP
Deer Oaks Clinical Manager*

Dealing with Anxiety at Work, Especially with Your Boss

What is anxiety? It's a feeling of worry about something with an uncertain outcome. While we don't know exactly what causes anxiety disorders, we do know they tend to run in families. A ground-breaking study out of New Zealand found that 1 in 7 women – and 1 in 10 men – in high pressure jobs reported clinical levels of anxiety even though they had never experienced a mental health difficulty. In fact, researchers concluded that half of the anxiety reported by the 900 people they followed over 30 years could be attributed to workplace stress. Anxiety disorders left untreated, as two-thirds of them are, can make work a lot harder and a lot less productive.

It makes sense that we all experience anxiety at work at one point or another. After all, bosses have control over our job assignments, performance reviews and whether we continue to work at the company. We usually cannot change our bosses but we can change our mind set and behaviors to reduce our anxiety around them or the workplace in general. Here are some anxiety-reducing tips:

- **Be proactive in communication:** Ask your boss where you should focus your energy; ask specific questions and clarify your understanding of what she is asking.
- **Rehearse:** Make your presentation out loud or role play a conversation with your boss with a trusted person. You can't predict all conversations but practicing will help you rely on your confidence to help you in spontaneous conversations.
- **Don't engage in boss bashing:** Your boss will likely find out you are bashing her and even if she doesn't, you'll be perceived as negative by others.
- **Get to know your boss:** Ease comes with familiarity and building a relationship; spend some informal time with your boss, such as going out to lunch.
- **Approach your boss as you would a mentor:** If you re-frame how you think of your boss and ask them to educate you and advise you in your career or projects rather than putting them on a pedestal, it will remove the power and reduce your fears.
- **Lay to rest the ghosts of bosses past:** Negative past experiences with bosses can cloud how you see your current boss.
- **Do great work:** Do your job well and you can rest on knowing that there is no reason in reality to criticize or terminate you and your good work.

Don't be afraid to reach out to a professional if you are experiencing some common signs of anxiety which can include feelings of apprehension, feelings of powerlessness, sense of impending doom, increased heart rate, rapid breathing, sweating, trembling, and/or feeling weak/tired. For more support and suggestions, call Deer Oaks, your EAP.

Resources:

"Anxious at Work: Is it Me or This Damn Job?" High pressure jobs = anxiety at work. Published on February 17, 2010 by Joni E. Johnston, Psy.D. in The Human Equation

"I get nervous around my boss": Tips to stop panicking and start shining. Beth Braccio Hering, Special to CareerBuilder

Five Things You Need to Know About Family and Household Finances



1. “How do I have a pre-marriage family finance discussion?”

Before you get married, you and your fiancé need to communicate about your current financial situation. Tell your fiancé about any debt or credit problems that you may bring to the relationship. During the discussion, you should also develop mutual goals. To do this, write out your individual short-term, mid-term, and long-term financial goals. Then, share the goals with your partner and discuss their similarities and differences. After discussing goals, discuss your feelings about money, including how you’d like to retire and how much you’d want to contribute to college funds for any future children.

2. “Which financial decisions should newlyweds make?”

When you get married, there are a variety of things you’ll have to consider changing with your finances. After having a financial discussion about your current situation as well as goals and financial values with your soon-to-be spouse, you’ll need to decide whether to combine your financial accounts or keep them separate. You should also review all of your credit accounts, to decide whether these should be changed to joint accounts.

3. “We’re having a baby! What’s the first thing we should do?”

Your family is changing and so should your spending plan. When creating your new family budget, remember to factor in often-overlooked items such as increased healthcare, clothing, and insurance costs, as well as the cost of diapers and other baby products. Find out the prevailing rate for childcare, and work out how you can factor the cost into your budget. Keep in mind that some of your expenses, such as entertainment and dining out, may decrease.

4. “What options do I have for paying for my kid’s college?”

The cost to educate children has grown rapidly in the past 20 years. Whether you have 18 years to prepare or your son or daughter is packing right now, you’ll have to decide how to foot the bill. If you plan on paying for all or part of your child’s college education, you’ll need to develop a savings plan as early as possible.

Take time to learn about the various options for financing your child’s education. Here are a few suggestions:

- Student loans
- Private scholarships
- Section 529 plans
- College controlled aid
- Military aid

5. “How should I handle my personal finances after a divorce?”

Following your divorce, there are a few things you should do to move forward financially. Start out by getting a firm grasp on your financial situation by requesting your free annual credit reports and review them for accuracy. Make sure that your accounts listed on the report are indeed your financial responsibility. Also, determine a procedure to pay bills, make deposits and withdrawals, get cash and pay taxes. Using automated bill pay with your bank is the easiest way to make sure your bills are paid on time. This is probably a good time to make sure that you are doing all of your banking with the best bank for you. Review the convenience of the bank, as well as the fees and the benefits.

About Money Management International

Money Management International (MMI) is a nonprofit, full-service credit-counseling agency, providing confidential financial guidance, financial education, counseling and debt management assistance to consumers since 1958. MMI helps consumers trim their expenses, develop a spending plan and repay debts. Counseling is available by appointment in branch offices and 24/7 by telephone and Internet. Services are available in English or Spanish. To learn more, call 800.432.7310 or visit www.MoneyManagement.org.