

Employee Enhancement Newsletter

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Helpful Resources From Your Employee Assistance Program

July 18, 2012
Chat Topic:

Frustration Tolerance

Every month, you will have the opportunity to chat on-line with a trained counselor. These live chats are held from 12:15-12:45 PM & 6:00-6:30 PM CST.

Come Join Us!

July 2012 At A Glance

Eye Injury Prevention Month
July 1—31st

Visit www.hhs.gov for more information

Hemochromatosis Screening
and Awareness Month
July 1—31st

Visit www.americanhs.org
for more information



Identifying the Signs of Youth Depression

Mental health intervention and treatment is vital for children

Depression and mental illness in children and adolescents is a rising concern. About five percent of youth under age 18 suffer from depression at any given time, but their numbers are rising. Rates of depression and anxiety among American youth have increased steadily over the last fifty to seventy years, and children are the fastest growing group of depression sufferers.

Five to eight times as many high school and college students today meet the criteria for diagnosis of major depression and/or an anxiety disorder as was true half a century or more ago, says psychology professor Peter Gray of Boston College.

These problems occur in younger children as well. Major depressive disorder occurs in children as young as three years old, and the younger a person is affected by depression, the more likely he or she will suffer from it throughout life. Children who are under stress or have experienced a loss are at higher risk for depression, and depressive disorders as well as other mental illnesses that tend to run in families.

Signs Before Birth

The creation of a hundred billion brain cells and the formation of an incalculable number of connections between them is such a complex task that 86 percent of the 17,000 human genes studied are recruited in the effort. Through this extensive analysis, researchers have found that the signs of mental and developmental disorders are in the brain before birth.

"The more we learn about the variety in our DNA, our genetic make up, the more we realize how critical the biologic component of the nature/nurture balance really is," says Russell J. Ricci, MD.

Researchers at Yale University identified the genes suspected of causing autism, schizophrenia and other psychiatric illnesses in fetal brains. The researchers examined more than 1,300 tissue

samples taken from 57 people at different stages of brain development, from a 40-day-old fetus to an 82-year-old adult.

Tracking thousands of genes involved in development, the extensive genetic analysis looked at 1.9 billion data points to see how these genes were expressed and activated, in a sort of map of brain genetics. A significant amount were shaped before birth, and the genes linked to autism and schizophrenia were found to be activated while in the womb.

"We found a distinct pattern of gene expression and variations prenatally in areas of the brain involving higher cognitive function," said Nenad Sestan, associate professor of neurobiology, researcher for the Kavli Institute for Neuroscience and senior author of the study. "The complexity of the system shows why the human brain may be so susceptible to psychiatric disorders."

Hundreds of genetic differences between male and female fetuses were also discovered in the Yale study. Sestan and his team expected to find clear differences in Y chromosomes that are found only in males. However, they also found distinct differences between prenatal males and females in genes that are shared by both sexes, both in how the genes are expressed and in the level of genetic activity.

Tools for Identifying Youth Depression

Childhood depression must be given focus because according to the American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP), the behavior of depressed children and teenagers may differ from that of adults. Without knowing these differences, the symptoms of depression or other mental disorders may pass unseen by parents, teachers or other caregivers.

Because many children with mental health problems are never diagnosed or treated, Mayo Clinic and the REACH Institute have released a simple-to-understand toolkit aimed at identifying those kids and getting them the right treatment.

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Deer Oaks EAP Services, your Employee Assistance Program, is always available to you and your dependents. If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks at:

1 (866) 327-2400

eap@deeroaks.com

www.deeroaks.com

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Continued: Youth Depression



About half of mental health disorders manifest themselves by the time a child has turned 14, and 75 percent manifest by age 24, says Gary Blau, Chief of the Child, Adolescent and Family Branch of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration that unveiled the toolkit. Yet up to 75 percent of youth with mental health disorders such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), bipolar disorder, anxiety, and eating disorders are usually not identified, and do not receive the care they need.

"A drastic change in behavior, especially in the 18-25 age group, can be the warning sign of major mental illness," says Barbara Long, M.D., Ph.D and author of *Keep Your Eye on the Prize!*-- a Young

Person's Guidebook to Adulthood. She lists some worrisome behavior that indicates a need for mental health help:

1. A previously good student no longer cares about his studies.
2. Saying or doing odd things, such as picking at or burning himself or thinking that others are out to harm him.
3. Indifferent to self-care; becomes disheveled, does not eat or sleep normally.
4. Withdraws completely from usual social supports, such as family, friends, others.

After surveying more than 6,000 parents and children about mental health services in the United States during the past decade, researchers created "Action Signs" to help easily identify symptoms for youth who may be experiencing mental disorders. The AACAP suggests that parents or other adults seeing the following signs of depression in a child or teen should consult a mental health professional:

- Frequent sadness, tearfulness, crying
- Decreased interest in activities or inability to enjoy previously favorite activities
- Hopelessness
- Persistent boredom; low energy
- Social isolation, poor communication
- Low self-esteem and guilt
- Extreme sensitivity to rejection or failure
- Increased irritability, anger, or hostility
- Difficulty with relationships
- Frequent complaints of physical illnesses such as headaches and stomach aches
- Frequent absences from school or poor performance in school
- Poor concentration
- A major change in eating and/or sleeping patterns
- Talk of or efforts to run away from home
- Thoughts or expressions of suicide or self destructive behavior

It's important that children and adolescents who suffer from depression receive treatment because they are at much higher risk of using alcohol or drugs and of committing suicide. More than 70 percent of teens at risk of suicide do not receive any sort of mental health care at all. Early intervention and treatment of young people with depression and mental disorder is vital for helping them turn into happy, healthy adults.

Source: 1-800-Therapist; <http://www.1-800-therapist.com/feature-article/mental-health-intervention-and-treatment-vital-children>



Matters of the Heart

Foods that Lower Triglycerides

Almost one in five adults has high triglycerides. Help lower your unhealthy cholesterol numbers the natural way by eating the right foods and making the right choices. These healthy swaps will get you started.

Got high triglycerides (a bad form of cholesterol)? The culprit is likely consistently overeating or eating too much sugar, saturated fat, or refined carbohydrate, such as white bread. You can naturally lower your triglycerides by making the following simple food swaps. They'll help you get your triglycerides under control and help you maintain a healthy weight.

Instead of: Bagel with cream cheese
Choose: Whole wheat English muffin with 1 tablespoon of peanut butter

Instead of: Cheese omelet
Choose: Egg-white omelet with spinach, onions, peppers (or any vegetables you like), with or without one slice of whole wheat toast

Instead of: Sugar-frosted, honey-dipped, or chocolate cereal
Choose: 100-percent whole grain cereals, such as shredded wheat, Total, Kashi, or oatmeal; fat-free milk; and 1 tablespoon of chopped almonds

Instead of: Soda or fruit drinks
Choose: Flavored seltzers, diet sodas, fat-free milk or low-fat soymilk, tea

Instead of: Roast beef on rye with mayo
Choose: Turkey breast on whole grain bread with lettuce, tomato, and mustard

Instead of: Cookies
Choose: One handful of unsalted nuts (about 10-12 nuts) with a cup of tea, fat-free milk, or water

Instead of: Potato chips
Choose: 10 Soy Crisps crackers or carrots with 2-3 tablespoons hummus

Instead of: Ice cream
Choose: 1/2 cup fat-free frozen yogurt with 1 teaspoon chopped walnuts

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Mindfulness for the Diabetic Mind

Type 2 Diabetes patients may reduce depression and stress through mindfulness training

Meditation and other mindfulness exercises can be good for your state of mind. Because mental health is tied to physical health, mindfulness training also could be good for people with diabetes. Mindfulness-based stress reduction may lower stress and reduce depression in people with type 2 diabetes.

Reduce Stress If You Have Diabetes

In their recent research, Mechthild Hartmann, M.Sc., of the University of Heidelberg in Germany, and colleagues wanted to see if mindfulness training would reduce psychosocial distress and kidney damage in people with type 2 diabetes. Psychosocial distress includes conditions like stress and depression.

Stress can cause a diabetes patient's blood sugar to change in a couple ways. First, people who are stressed often do not take care of themselves. They may exercise less or drink more alcohol. Second, the hormones released when you are stressed can directly alter your blood sugar levels.

While most people with diabetes do not have depression, diabetes patients have a higher risk of depression than those without diabetes. If you are depressed and have diabetes, you may become less dedicated to your self-care. Depression might give you less energy, making you less likely to exercise. All of this can have a huge impact on your blood sugar control.

From their study, Hartmann and colleagues found that mindfulness training - which often involves exercises like meditation, deep breathing, and awareness of sounds - may be beneficial for diabetes patients. The researchers split 110 type 2 diabetes patients with microalbuminuria (evidence of kidney damage) into two treatment groups. The first group received a mindfulness-based intervention while the second group received normal treatment.

The results showed that patients in the mindfulness training group had lower levels of depression and improved health after one year, compared to those in the normal treatment group. The researchers found no significant difference in kidney damage between the two treatment groups. The authors concluded that a mindfulness-based stress reduction treatment helped diabetes patients achieve a long-term reduction in psychosocial distress.

As the study was made to look at long-term outcomes over a five-year period, the researchers plan to look further into the effects of mindfulness training on kidney damage.

These initial results from this randomized controlled trial are published in the journal *Diabetes Care*.

Source: 1-800-Therapist; <http://www.1-800-therapist.com/news-article/type-2-diabetes-patients-may-reduce-depression-and-stress-through-mindfulness-training>

EAP Spotlight

Eligibility

The EAP covers not only you, but also your dependents and household members including those who may be away from home.

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Five Quick & Easy Ways to Save Money All Year



As we approach the middle of the year, it's time to forget about the mistakes you made and start fresh by focusing on what you can do now to improve your financial situation. For most people, a better quality of life translates to more money. It may be unlikely you'll see a

raise anytime soon - especially in this economy. Fortunately, there are a number of tried-and-true tips for making the most of the money you have:

1. Create a Budget. A budget can seem overwhelming, but if you make a monthly budget and stick to it, you can identify areas where you overspend and save big by controlling spending or simply by using your money more wisely. Write down your monthly income (after taxes) and itemize your monthly bills and other expenses. And don't forget about the "little" things like daily coffee or your fast food lunch - they add up. Look at redirecting your funds to eliminate credit card debt so you can save on interest, and find ways to save on gas and other necessities. Adjusting your spending habits by bagging your lunch instead of eating out can take a little work, but the payoff is well worth it.

2. "Spring Clean" Your Finances. You can approach this in two ways: You can dedicate an hour over the weekend to review all your current bills, or, you can thoroughly review bills as you receive them, keeping an eye out for hidden fees and services you don't need or want. If you find questionable charges, investigate them.

Next, contact your cell phone, Internet, and cable TV providers to see if there are any current discounts available, and remove services or features you don't use or that aren't worth the cost. Remember, your providers aren't going to tell you how to reduce your bills - it's up to you to find out about promotions and streamline your services.

3. Maximize the Value of Coupons. If you've never used coupons before, learn about the potential savings associated with extreme couponing. Pick up a Sunday paper and browse through all the ads to find coupons on items you regularly buy. But don't stop there. Keep an eye out for store sales on items you buy the most, and incorporate your coupons to increase the savings.

Next, find out which day of the week is double coupon day at your favorite grocer, and plan your trip accordingly. Food is typically the second greatest expense in any household budget behind mortgage or rent, so the long-term savings here can be significant.

Also, if you use credit cards responsibly and pay off your entire balance every month, there are some credit cards that offer a cash-back incentive when shopping at supermarkets. As long as you don't incur interest charges, the savings can be significant.

4. Reduce Entertainment Expenses. Entertainment is a necessary expense. However, it's also necessary to avoid overspending in this area, especially because it's easy to get carried away. Take a look at one of the many daily deal websites, such as Groupon or LivingSocial, and see if you can find discounts on places that you visit or would like to. You can often save 50 percent on dining and local activities simply by planning ahead and printing a voucher. Otherwise, look for free activities in your area. Free music is fairly easy to come by and your local park won't charge you (or won't charge you much) to enjoy a picnic lunch or dinner in natural surroundings. When it comes to having a good time, a little creativity goes a long way towards saving a lot of money.

5. Commit to Fresh Foods. Sure, buying processed foods is more convenient, but buying fresh will save you money and improve your health. You may need to schedule more time in the kitchen, but if you make meals in bulk and freeze for later use, you can enjoy the health benefits and savings of eating fresh without "slaving over the stove" everyday. Search your area for local farmers markets and make it a point to visit them weekly. You'll find the highest quality of fruits and veggies at low prices.

Final Thoughts

Once you've identified and implemented ways to save daily, direct those savings towards paying off debt so you can reduce interest charges and improve your credit. And if you haven't yet started saving for retirement, now is the time.

When it comes to your finances, a few dollars a day can make all the difference in reducing debt, saving for the future, and improving your overall quality of life. Everyone has the power to change, and saving 50 cents at the grocery store could be your first step to a life of financial freedom.

by Jessica Horton on April 27, 2012

About Money Management International

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