

Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

August 2013

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Four Ways to Improve Your Self-Esteem

Self-esteem describes how we feel about ourselves. Our self-esteem or sense of self worth is normally based on our perception of our abilities and how we believe other people accept and value us as individuals. Self-esteem affects our confidence and how we behave and function in life. It is our internal belief system that stems from our life experience and relationships and how we have interpreted them. We automatically find ourselves accepting those beliefs and they feel like 'reality' to us. We can improve our sense of self-esteem by changing those beliefs, and in doing so will increase our confidence, and our enjoyment in living.

Here are some proven ways to increase your self-esteem:

1. Accept Who You Are, Warts and All

Learn to accept and be comfortable with who you are. Become content in your own skin. We are so often far more critical of ourselves than we are of others. Our self imposed standards can be self sabotaging. You are not perfect, and no matter how hard you try, you will never become perfect. You are unique. You have a unique combination of personality, life background and experiences, strengths and weaknesses. One size does not fit all. Stop comparing yourself with others, and trying to live up to the expectations of what other people think you should be like. This is a self defeating response and will only lead to discouragement and negative self image rather than self acceptance.

2. Give Yourself Permission to Make Mistakes

To make mistakes is a natural part of learning and self improvement. Everyone makes mistakes; it is a normal part of life. We all go through negative and embarrassing experiences. Success and personal development comes, not through going through experiences, but learning from them and becoming experienced. Your attitude to mistakes and failures has far more power for personal growth than the experiences themselves. Accept that making mistakes will always be part of your life, learn from them. Failure is sometimes unavoidable, however it is not a reflection of who you are as a person, but merely a consequence of a choice or an action that was made. Do not give it unnecessary negative power in your life and future.



Chat Reminder

Healthy Self-Esteem

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

When:

August 21, 2013

Where:

www.deeroaks.com

Session Times (CDT):

- 12:15 PM to 12:45 PM

- 6:00 PM to 6:30 PM





Four Ways to Improve Your Self-Esteem continued...

3. Remember You Always Have A Choice As To How You Will Respond Or React.

No matter what the situation or circumstance, you always have a choice as to how you will respond to it. We may only have a few seconds to choose how we will react to a negative situation or comment, but we still have the choice to embrace, or reject its potential power over us. No one can have power over you unless you give them permission.

4. Look At Your Fears From A Different Perspective.

You are not alone in feeling fear. We all have the ability to scare ourselves into inaction. Learn to look at your fear from another perspective. Our body is unable to tell the difference between a real event and an imaginary event, and so we experience intense feelings of fear and self protection. Sometimes this fear originates from what we imagine may happen. If this is the case, our fear is not based on a real event. Whenever we step outside of our comfort zone we feel fear. This is because our fear is not necessarily based on fact, but unfamiliarity. Stepping out of our comfort zone, however, is an important part of our personal development and growth, and the fear we experience is not necessarily an indication of impending personal danger. Visualize what you would like the successful result of an action to look like, rather than focus on the worst case scenario that your imagination would have you believe might happen. Remember you have handled everything that has happened to you in your life so far, and have survived, or you would not be reading this!

Which one of the behavior patterns describes you the most? Start with that one. Set yourself a goal to choose to respond differently. Watch your self-esteem start to grow and positively change your life.



Article Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/313420>

Simplify to reduce stress



Stress is a feeling you get when faced with a challenge, according to the Office on Women’s Health. While everyone responds to stress differently, common signs include changes in eating habits, feeling as if you have no control, forgetfulness, headaches, lack of energy and focus, short temper, trouble sleeping, upset stomach, and aches and pains. Studies show that women experience more physical symptoms of stress than men.

“Women experiencing stress differently from men often has to do with the roles they impose on themselves,” explains Susanne Fogger, assistant professor in the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing.

“Ask a woman what her roles are and she may reply: wife, mother, sister, friend, caregiver, cook, cleaner, worker, and so on. Ask a man what his role is and he may mention worker, husband, father — but he may not incorporate as many roles as women often do.”

Fogger notes, “Women often have difficulty letting go [of roles] without feeling guilty about not being able to maintain that role.”

But letting the pressure of this load continually weigh on the body can lead to trouble.

“Our bodies release the stress hormones cortisol and norepinephrine during stressful events, and these are responsible for the elevation of blood pressure, heart rate, and blood glucose levels,” explains Aimee Holland, a women’s health nurse practitioner program coordinator at UAB.

“It’s not good for the human body to continuously be exposed to stress hormones, because this can lead to depression, anxiety, obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, sleep disorders, and menstrual changes,” Holland says.

In fact, “stress is erosive,” says Fogger, “in the sense that the longer a person remains under what they perceive as stress, the less their body is able to fight off infection because their natural immune system decreases. Stress is inevitable, and not all stress is bad, but how one handles it makes the difference in being able to stay healthy or getting sick.”

- Exercise every day to protect against the negative impacts of stress. If your body’s in shape, you’ll be better able to tolerate stress.
- Cut out working within 1 to 2 hours of going to bed. Your brain needs time to unwind.
- Eat a balanced diet of nutrient-rich foods and limit the amount of high-glucose, high-carbohydrate foods you eat. And take it easy on the booze. Alcohol is really a depressant, not a way to relax.
- Keep life simple. Eliminate the things in your life that don’t match up with or help you achieve your life goals. And remember to surround yourself with good people.

Health-e headlines™

To sleep, perchance to learn

Get a good night’s sleep before learning. Lack of sleep can cut learning ability by up to 40%, according to the NIH.

Health-e headlines™

The most read label on foods...

is the expiration date, read by 75% of shoppers, followed by the nutrition facts panel, ingredient list, front-of-pack nutrition information, icon or graphic, and the brand name, according to the International Food Information Council.

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.





Clinician's Corner..

Monthly Advice from the Deer Oaks Clinical Team

HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is your overall opinion of yourself. It includes all of the good traits and flaws we have about ourselves. Our self-esteem development begins in early childhood and can be influenced by many different factors. These factors include:

- Your own thoughts and perceptions
- How other people react to you
- Experiences at school, work and in the community
- Illness, disability or injury
- Culture
- Religion
- Role and status in society

Many of our beliefs are developed with several experiences over time. The biggest influence on self-esteem, though, is our own thoughts – and these YOU can control. If you tend to focus on all of your flaws or weaknesses, then you will have a low opinion of yourself and your behaviors will reflect those thoughts. This is where the common questions come in: “What does it mean to have healthy self-esteem and how do I maintain it?”



Some people think that having good self-esteem interprets as, “I think I am better than everyone else.” This perception is as unhealthy as having low self-esteem. To develop and maintain a healthy self-esteem, a balance has to be created of the following:

- Knowing your strengths
- Becoming aware of flaws or limitations
- Feeling secure and confident about abilities
- Being aware of one's own needs and being assertive in communicating them
- Confidence in your ability to make decisions and take responsibility
- Realistic about expectations for self and others
- Resilient and able to feel in control of one's own life

Self-esteem affects every part of our lives. Even with a good, healthy self-esteem, you will have low points and challenges in life. Perception of self and ability to handle it will make the difference. If you do not believe you can handle the challenges, you will be like a turtle that tucks away and hides at any sign of adversity. If you believe that you can handle the challenge even if it may be difficult, then you will most likely find a way to cope appropriately.

Look at the statement by Eleanor Roosevelt, “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” People will have opinions about you that you may never be able to change. You can, however, choose whether to believe them or ignore them. You are the only one of you. You need to like you whether or not anyone else chooses to like you.

Kimberly Dyke, LPC

~ Excerpts taken from article mayoclinic.com/health/self-esteem/MH00128

Financially Helping Your Adult Children



Helping someone obtain his or her financial goals can be very rewarding, especially if you are helping your own child. When your adult child asks for financial help, they can be difficult to refuse; however, you need to be careful. Every child (even those within the same family) is different, and you'll need to assess each situation individually. If your normally responsible child needs help, that can be a very different situation than a not-yet-independent adult child needing financial help yet again.

If you feel that your normally responsible child needs help because of an emergency situation, you may consider assisting them, especially if you and your spouse are in agreement. Be very clear with your child about the kind of assistance you are providing, as well as the terms of that assistance. If you offer a loan that must be repaid, discuss loan terms prior to giving any money.

However, if you find that your adult child needs help yet again because he or she isn't financially responsible, providing them financial education rather than money is going to help them more in the long run. Try to talk with your child about developing a long-term financial plan as well as possible solutions to their short-term problem. Constantly providing your child with the money they request will not teach them financial responsibility.

Be especially careful if your child asks for help co-signing a loan. Co-signing a loan carries many risks and very little reward. In fact, many financial experts believe that you should never put your name on someone else's loan. As a parent, however, it can be hard not to help your own child. If you have been asked to co-sign a loan, understand the risks before you sign on the dotted line.

You are responsible for the debt

If the primary borrower does not pay the debt as agreed, for any reason, the creditor will hold you responsible. You should not assume that the lender will pursue collecting from the primary borrower if the borrower is unresponsive. In most cases, collectors will seek payment from the person who offers the best chance of recovering the money, which is likely to be you, and if you do not pay, you could be sued.

Your credit report may suffer

Any late payments made by the primary borrower will appear on your credit report. This is true even if you were unaware that late payments were being made. In addition, the co-signed loan could change your debt-to-income ratio, making it harder to qualify for future credit.

Co-signing does not equal ownership

It is a common misperception that co-signing a secured loan entitles you to ownership. However, if you co-sign a loan for a vehicle and your name is not on the title, you are not entitled to ownership of the vehicle. This is true even if you are the one making payments.

The decision to co-sign a loan for someone comes down to this: Are you willing to pay the debt? If you are not willing to assume total responsibility, you should not agree to sign for the loan. There are other options—you could offer assistance in a different way, one that may help your adult child get back on his or her feet in a more responsible way.

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.