

Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

May 2015

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Mental Health: What's Normal?



What's the difference between Mental Health and Mental Illness?

Sometimes the answer is clear, but often the distinction between mental health and mental illness isn't so obvious. For example, if you're afraid of giving a speech in public, does it mean you have a mental health condition or a run-of-the-mill case of nerves? Or, when does shyness become a case of social phobia?

It's often difficult to distinguish normal mental health from mental illness because there's no easy test to show if something's wrong. Also, primary mental health conditions can be mimicked by physical disorders. Mental health conditions are judged not to be due to a physical disorder and are diagnosed and treated based on signs and symptoms, as well as on how much the condition affects your daily life.

Possible signs and symptoms of Mental Health:

- Obsessive hand-washing or drinking too much alcohol might be signs of a mental health condition.
- Sometimes a mental health condition is characterized by a deep or ongoing sadness, euphoria or anger.
- Fixed beliefs that are not changeable in light of conflicting evidence —or thoughts

What is the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)?

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is a guide published by the American Psychiatric Association that explains the signs and symptoms of several hundred mental health conditions.

Mental Health providers use the DSM to diagnose everything from anorexia to voyeurism and, if necessary, determine appropriate treatment. Health insurance companies also use the DSM to determine coverage and benefits and to reimburse mental health providers.

Online Seminar Reminder

Estate Planning: Five Essential Documents

Connect with Deer Oaks and a counselor for a live seminar.

When:

May 19, 2015

Where:

www.deeroaks.com

Webinar Times (CST):

11:00 AM- 12:00 PM

AND

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM





Mental Health: What's Normal? cont...

How does Mental Health providers diagnose Mental Health conditions?

To determine if you have a mental health condition, a mental health provider will work with you and your loved ones to assess:

- ***Your Symptoms.*** Your mental health provider will ask about your symptoms, when they began and how they've affected your life. How you perceive your thoughts and behaviors and how much your signs and symptoms affect your daily activities can help determine what's normal for you. For instance, you might realize that you aren't coping well or that you don't want to do the things you used to enjoy. You might feel sad, hopeless or discouraged. If your sadness has a specific cause, such as divorce, your feelings could be a normal, temporary reaction. However, if you have symptoms that are severe or don't go away, you could have depression. You might also need to have a physical exam to rule out any underlying health conditions.
- ***Others' perceptions.*** Your perceptions alone might not give you an accurate picture of your behavior, thoughts or ability to function. Other people in your life can help you understand whether your behavior is normal or healthy. For example, if you have bipolar disorder, you might think your mood swings are just part of the normal ups and downs of life. Your thoughts and actions, however, might appear abnormal to others or cause problems at work, in relationships or in other areas of your life.

When is an evaluation or treatment needed?

Each Mental Health condition has its own set of signs and symptoms. In general, however, professional help may be warranted if you or a loved one experiences:

- Marked change in personality, eating or sleeping patterns
- Inability to cope with problems or daily activities
- Strange or grandiose ideas
- Excessive anxiety
- Prolonged depression or apathy
- Thinking or talking about suicide
- Substance abuse
- Extreme mood swings or excessive anger, hostility or violent behavior

Many people who have mental health conditions consider their signs and symptoms a normal part of life or avoid treatment out of shame or fear. If you're concerned about your mental health or a loved one's mental health, don't hesitate to seek advice.

Consult your family doctor, make an appointment with a counselor or psychologist, or encourage your loved one to seek help. With appropriate support, you can identify mental health conditions and explore treatment options, such as medications or counseling.

Source: https://www.advantageengagement.com/p_content_detail.php?id_element=001&search_term=mental%20health&id_cr=58405

Nutritional Treasure in the Trash



Sometimes the best parts of the vegetables get thrown in the trash. Here are some tips and tricks to make the most of your veggies from the American Institute for Cancer Research.

- Roasted pumpkin seeds are a fall favorite, but you can roast seeds from any winter squash, including butternut, acorn, and spaghetti squash. Squash seeds are a great source of protein. To roast, scoop out seeds, rinse, and drain. Let them dry, spread flat on a baking pan and bake at 300 degrees F for about 20–30 minutes until golden brown.
- Use a vegetable peeler or large knife to remove the thick, tough outer layer of the broccoli stem (if you use a knife, make 4 lengthwise cuts along the 4 sides of the stem to make a long rectangle). Try making creamy broccoli soup, which incorporates broccoli stems and florets into the soup.
- You'll be hard pressed to find edible sweet potato leaves at the grocery store—try farmers markets—but sweet potato leaves are tender and mild. They are also a good source of vitamins A and K, and carotenoids. Try them lightly braised. Please note that sweet potato leaves are edible, but other potato leaves and stems can be poisonous. If you're not sure, avoid.
- Using the whole cauliflower, including the stem, in cauliflower "steaks" is trendy right now. Cut all the way through a cauliflower head from the top to make cauliflower steaks, which can be broiled or pan roasted. Or try making mashed potatoes with the whole cooked cauliflower including the stem.
- Buy beets with the greens still attached and it's like getting two vegetables in one. Beet greens contain loads of vitamin C and beta-carotene—nutrients linked to lower cancer risk. Separate the greens from the beets by cutting just above where the stem begins. They're great sautéed in olive oil, with garlic, salt, and pepper to taste.

Health-e headlines™

Smells Make Sense

To make clothes smell fresh, put a couple of drops of an essential oil onto a piece of fabric or tissue and place it in your closet or drawers. If you choose lavender, it will also deter moths.

Health-e headlines™

I do

For centuries, the month of June has been the most popular choice for weddings. One of the supposed reasons was that hundreds of years ago, this time was just after May's annual bath, so the happy couple and the guests were about as clean as could be hoped. Advances in plumbing changed all that. June still remains a popular month for nuptials. Each year, there are some 2.1 million weddings across the nation. Americans are marrying at older ages—the median age at first marriage for women is now almost 27 years old, up 5 years since 1980. Men are now an average age of 29 when they first take their vows, according to the US Census Bureau.

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



"The way you treat yourself sets the standards for others on how you demand to be treated. Don't settle for anything other than respect." –Anonymous

May is National Mental Health Month. So often, mental health is tied in with experiences such as depression, anxiety, and stress. Undoubtedly, these constructs best fit here, but what about the flip side of that same coin? Instead of focusing on how to improve the negative, what about enhancing the positive? Innate in all of us are some really wonderful things, so for this month's feature, let's look at how to optimize our potential to lead to increased happiness and overall wellbeing.

Self-care 101: I know, I can hear it already. "I don't have time." Sure, not all of us have the luxury of time or excess money lying around with which to indulge in massages, vacations, or recreational pastimes. But self-care isn't always about the big stuff. In fact, small doses of self-care in frequent doses can do wonders. Set your alarm five minutes earlier in the morning or turn off the TV five minutes earlier at bed time. Take those five minutes to reflect inward. What's your stress level? Are there any tense spots on your body? Identify any areas of stress, physical or emotional, and take five simple minutes to do deep breathing, meditation, or whatever you find relaxing. You may find that your day will start out or end up on a much calmer note.

Give: The act of donating your time does wonders for the mind. It reminds us that we do have something to give, that we have strengths that can make a difference and lead to change and gratitude. Volunteering can also lead to increased feelings of satisfaction and perspective-taking, much needed elements for happiness. Volunteering can mean picking an organization that is important to you, but it can also be as simple as helping a neighbor or expressing gratitude to someone who has helped you out. Ever brought treats to a local firehouse? Or to your child's teacher for no reason?

An attitude of gratitude: Each and every day, we all wake up with stressors and worries. But, we also all wake up with many more things to be thankful for. Take some time at the end of each day to reflect or even write three things that you were grateful, and what you did to lead to those things happening. For example, "I'm grateful for my health. In order to be healthy, I have walked more this month, and decreased sweets." Doing this will lead to us seeing ways in which we do care for ourselves in addition to ways in which things aren't so bad.

So this month we challenge you to be kind to yourself. Find small ways to enrich your mind, body, and soul and note how little steps can lead to big outcomes. Need more ideas? Visit us at www.deeroaks.com.

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Ten Quick Tips for Financial Planning Together



When you and your partner are busy balancing everything in your lives, sometimes financial planning can fall to the wayside.

Ten quick tips about financial planning together for when life gets hectic:

- Set priorities and specific goals. Don't assume you both have the same goals without discussing them.
- Discuss values. Sometimes differing values make agreement on goals difficult. When one person wants to spend now and one wants to save for later, it can be a source of friction. The same is true when one spouse tends to be less risk oriented than the other about investments.
- Plan in five year units. When planning for five year blocks, you can set both intermediate and long-range goals without feeling you're being deprived forever.
- Budget together. Set up a manageable system for your cash flow together.
- Know where your money is going. Keep records of your spending.
- Don't assume that because you're both working that you have a lot more to spend.
- Save regularly so you aren't locked into that second income.
- Who handles the actual paperwork can be a matter of personal preference, although both of you should practice at it.
- Don't confuse the task of doing paperwork with the act of financial decision making.
- Sit down together and discuss finances at least once a month.

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.