



EAP EMPLOYEE ENHANCEMENT NEWSLETTER

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DEER OAKS PRESENTS

October On-Demand Seminar

Reactions: Pause. Breathe. Resume.

*Available OnDemand starting October 17th
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PAUSE. BREATHE. RESUME.



The next time you're feeling the signs of stress during a busy day or find yourself getting drawn into an unproductive conflict, try this simple exercise:

Pause. Breathe. Resume.

It's an easy and effective way to pull yourself back from a situation, calm yourself, clarify your thinking, then choose how to move forward. Here's how to do it!

Pause.

Stop what you're doing. Pause for a moment, and step back from the situation. If you're engaged in an activity that's making you tense or anxious, give yourself permission to take a quick break. If you're in a conversation that's becoming heated or going in circles, you might say, "Let's pause this here so I can give it some more thought. Can we get back to this later today or tomorrow?"

Taking a brief pause can help you calm yourself so you can think more clearly. It can help you avoid quick or emotional reactions that you might later regret.

Breathe.

Take a few deep breaths to relax and remove yourself emotionally from the situation. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose, then let your breath out easily through pursed lips. It can help to place a hand on your abdomen to feel your breaths rising and falling. Repeat for a few slow, deep breaths, and feel the tension leaving your body and your mind.

As you become calmer with deep breathing, pay attention to your body. Notice how you feel and where you still sense tension. Notice your thoughts, too. As your mind clears, consider different ways of approaching the task you're working on or different ways of resolving a difficult conversation. What can you let go of so that you can focus on what's most important? What would help you move forward productively? That might be a longer break, a walk outside, more information, or guidance from someone with a different area of expertise.

Resume.

Once you're feeling calmer and thinking more clearly, and once you've had a chance to consider different ways of moving forward, you're ready to resume. That might not mean returning directly to your task or conversation. In your pause, you may have come up with new approaches you hadn't considered before. You may have realized that you need to break your task down into smaller steps. You may have decided that you need to do something else first before you go back to what you were doing. The key is to move forward in a way that doesn't draw you back into a cycle of increasing stress or conflict.

Make it a regular practice.

Once you've tried it, make a regular practice of pausing, breathing, and resuming. Use the technique whenever:

- You feel tension from stress building in your body.
- Your thinking narrows or freezes in response to anxiety or fear.
- A conversation becomes confrontational, overly emotional, or otherwise unproductive.

Pausing, breathing, and resuming can help you choose more thoughtful and effective responses to difficult situations. With practice, you'll find that when you resume, you're more productive, collaborative, and creative.

Source: Morgan, H. (2023, February 9). Pause. Breathe. Resume. (B. Schuette & E. Morton, Eds.). Raleigh, NC: Workplace Options (WPO).

OCTOBER IS DEPRESSION AWARENESS MONTH & OCTOBER 10TH IS WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

Helping Someone with Depression

Your support and encouragement can play an important role in your loved one's recovery. Here's how to make a difference.

How can I help someone with depression?

Depression is a serious but treatable disorder that affects millions of people, from young to old and from all walks of life. It gets in the way of everyday life, causing tremendous pain, hurting not just those suffering from it but also impacting everyone around them.

If someone you love is depressed, you may be experiencing any number of difficult emotions, including helplessness, frustration, anger, fear, guilt, and sadness. These feelings are all normal. It's not easy dealing with a friend or family member's depression. Also, if you neglect your own health, it can become overwhelming.

That said, your companionship and support can be crucial to your loved one's recovery. You can help them to cope with depression symptoms; overcome negative thoughts; and regain their energy, optimism, and enjoyment of life. Start by learning all you can about depression and how to best talk about it with your friend or family member. But as you reach out, don't forget to look after your own emotional health—you'll need it to provide the full support your loved one needs.

Understanding Depression in a Friend or Family Member

- **Depression is a serious condition.** Don't underestimate the seriousness of depression. Depression drains a person's energy, optimism, and motivation. Your depressed loved one can't just "snap out of it" by sheer force of will.
- **The symptoms of depression aren't personal.** Depression makes it difficult for a person to connect on a deep emotional level with anyone, even the people they love the most. It's also common for depressed people to say hurtful things and lash out in anger. Remember that this is the depression talking, not your loved one, so try not to take it personally.



- **Hiding the problem won't make it go away.** It doesn't help anyone involved if you try making excuses, covering up the problem, or lying for a friend or family member who is depressed. In fact, this may keep the depressed person from seeking treatment.
- Your loved one isn't lazy or unmotivated. When you're suffering from depression, just thinking about doing the things that may help you to feel better can seem exhausting or impossible to put into action. Have patience as you encourage your loved one to take the first small steps to recovery.
- **You can't "fix" someone else's depression.** As much as you may want to, you can't rescue someone from depression nor fix the problem for them. You're not to blame for your loved one's depression or responsible for their happiness (or lack thereof). While you can offer love and support, ultimately recovery is in the hands of the depressed person.

Recognizing Depression Symptoms in a Loved One

Family and friends are often the first line of defense in the fight against depression. That's why it's important to understand the signs and symptoms of depression. You may notice the problem in a depressed loved one before they do, and your influence and concern can motivate them to seek help.

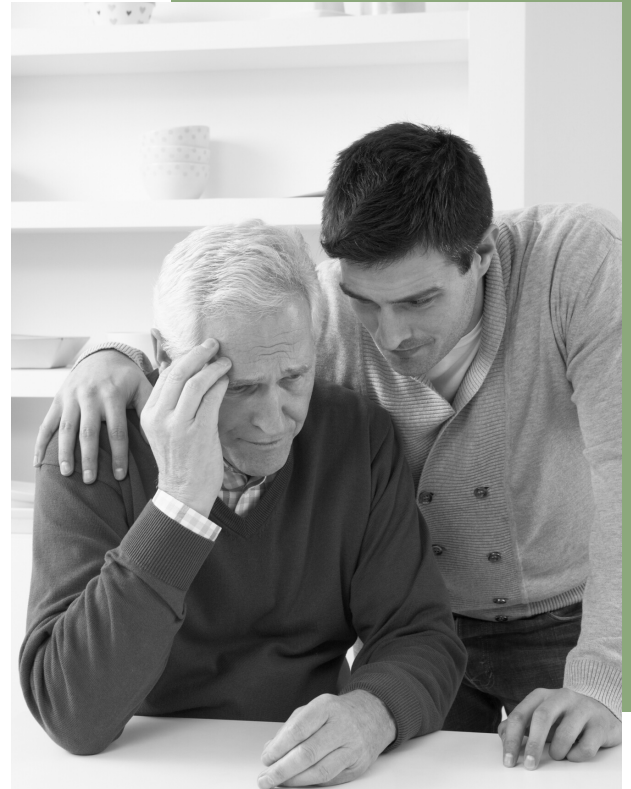
Be concerned if your loved one:

- **Doesn't seem to care about anything anymore;** has lost interest in work, sex, hobbies, and other pleasurable activities; has withdrawn from friends, family, and other social activities.
- **Expresses a bleak or negative outlook on life;** is uncharacteristically sad, irritable, short-tempered, critical, or moody; talks about feeling helpless or hopeless.
- **Frequently complains of aches and pains** such as headaches, stomach problems, and back pain, or complains of feeling tired and drained all the time.
- **Sleeps less than usual or oversleeps;** has become indecisive, forgetful, disorganized, and "out of it".
- **Eats more or less than usual,** and has recently gained or lost weight.
- **Drinks more or abuses drugs,** including prescription sleeping pills and painkillers, as a way to self-medicate how they're feeling.

How to Talk to Someone About Depression

Sometimes it is hard to know what to say when speaking to someone about depression. You might fear that if you bring up your worries the person will get angry, feel insulted, or ignore your concerns. You may be unsure what questions to ask or how to be supportive.

If you don't know where to start, the following suggestions may help. But remember that being a compassionate listener is much more important than giving advice. You don't have to try to "fix" your friend or family member; you just have to be a good listener. Often, the simple act of talking face to face can be an enormous help to someone suffering from depression. Encourage the depressed person to talk about their feelings, and be willing to listen without judgment.



Don't expect a single conversation to be the end of it. Depressed people tend to withdraw from others and isolate themselves. You may need to express your concern and willingness to listen over and over again. Be gentle, yet persistent.

Starting the Conversation

Finding a way to start a conversation about depression with your loved one is always the hardest part. You could try saying the following:

- "I have been feeling concerned about you lately."
- "Recently, I have noticed some differences in you and wondered how you are doing."
- "I wanted to check in with you because you have seemed pretty down lately."

Once you're talking, you can ask questions such as these:

- "When did you begin feeling like this?"
- "Did something happen that made you start feeling this way?"
- "How can I best support you right now?"
- "Have you thought about getting help?"

Remember, being supportive involves offering encouragement and hope. Very often, this is a matter of talking to the person in language that they will understand and can respond to while in a depressed state of mind.

Tips for Talking About Depression

Here's what you can say that helps:

- "You're not alone. I'm here for you during this tough time."
- "It may be hard to believe right now, but the way you're feeling will change."
- "Please tell me what I can do now to help you."
- "Even if I'm not able to understand exactly how you feel, I care about you and want to help."
- "You're important to me. Your life is important to me."
- "When you want to give up, tell yourself you will hold on for just one more day, hour, or minute—whatever you can manage."

Here's what you should avoid saying:

- "This is all in your head."
- "Everyone goes through tough times."
- "Try to look on the bright side."
- "Why do you want to die when you have so much to live for?"
- "I can't do anything about your situation."
- "Just snap out of it."
- "You should be feeling better by now."

Encouraging the Person to Get Help

While you can't control someone else's recovery from depression, you can start by encouraging the depressed person to seek help. Getting a depressed person into treatment can be difficult. Depression saps energy and motivation, so even the act of making an appointment or finding a doctor can seem daunting to your loved one. Depression also involves negative ways of thinking. The depressed person may believe that the situation is hopeless and treatment pointless.

Because of these obstacles, getting your loved one to admit to the problem—and helping them see that it can be solved—is an essential step in depression recovery.

Here are some ideas if your friend or family member resists getting help:

- Suggest a general check-up with a physician. Your loved one may be less anxious about seeing a family doctor than a mental health professional. A regular doctor's visit is actually a great option, since the doctor can rule out medical causes of depression. If the doctor diagnoses depression, they can refer your loved one to a psychiatrist or psychologist. Sometimes, this professional opinion makes all the difference.
- Offer to help the depressed person find a doctor or therapist, and go with them on the first visit. Finding the right treatment provider can be difficult, and it is often a trial-and-error process. For a depressed person already low on energy, it is a huge help to have assistance making calls and looking into the options.
- Encourage your loved one to make a thorough list of symptoms and ailments to discuss with the doctor. You can even bring up things that you have noticed as an outside observer, such as, "You seem to feel much worse in the mornings," or "You always get stomach pains before work."

Source: Smith, M., Robinson, L., & Segal, J. (Updated 2022, December 30). Helping someone with depression. Retrieved January 12, 2023, from <https://www.helpguide.org>

10 TIPS FOR BECOMING MORE ACTIVE AS A FAMILY

Physical activity is important for children and adults of all ages. Being active as a family can benefit everyone. Adults need two and a half hours a week of physical activity, and children need 60 minutes a day. Follow these tips to add more activity to your family's busy schedule:

- **Set specific activity times.** Determine time slots throughout the week when the whole family is available. Devote a few of these times to physical activity. Try doing something active after dinner or begin the weekend with a Saturday morning walk.
- **Plan ahead and track your progress.** Write your activity plans on a family calendar. Let the kids help in planning the activities. Allow them to check it off after completing each activity.
- **Include work around the house.** Involve the kids in yard work and other active chores around the house. Have them help you with raking, weeding, planting, or vacuuming.
- **Use what is available.** Plan activities that require little or no equipment or facilities. Examples include walking, jogging, jumping rope, playing tag, and dancing. Find out what programs your community recreation center offers for free or a minimal charge.
- **Build new skills.** Enroll the kids in classes they might enjoy such as gymnastics, dance, or tennis. Help them practice. This will keep things fun and interesting, and introduce new skills!
- **Plan for all weather conditions.** Choose some activities that do not depend on the weather conditions. Try mall walking, indoor swimming, or active video games. Enjoy outdoor activities as a bonus whenever the weather is nice.
- **Turn off the TV.** Set a rule that no one can spend longer than 2 hours per day playing video games, watching TV, and using the computer (except for school work). Instead of a TV show, play an active family game, dance to favorite music, or go for a walk.



- **Start small.** Begin by introducing one new family activity and add more when you feel everyone is ready. Take the dog for a longer walk, play another ball game, or go to an additional exercise class.
- **Include other families.** Invite others to join your family activities. This is a great way for you and your kids to spend time with friends while being physically active. Plan parties with active games such as bowling or an obstacle course, sign up for family programs at the YMCA, or join a recreational club.
- **Treat the family with fun physical activity.** When it is time to celebrate as a family, do something active as a reward. Plan a trip to the zoo, park, or lake to treat the family.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. (Revised 2017, July 18). 10 tips: Be an active family (DG Tip Sheet No. 29). Retrieved December 2, 2021, from <https://naldc.nal.usda.gov>

HALLOWEEN FOOD SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS

Even though it's not an official holiday, Halloween is much beloved by children and adults alike. What could be more fun than trick-or-treating, apple bobbing, or costume parties?

To make sure treats are safe for children, follow these simple steps:

- **Snacking:** Children shouldn't snack while they're out trick-or-treating. Give them a light meal or snack before they head out—don't send them out on an empty stomach. Urge your children to wait until they get home and let you inspect their loot before they eat any of it.
- **Safe Treats:** Tell children not to accept—and especially not to eat—anything that isn't commercially wrapped. Inspect commercially wrapped treats for signs of tampering, such as an unusual appearance or discoloration, tiny pinholes, or tears in wrappers. Throw away anything that looks suspicious.
- **Food Allergies:** If your child has a food allergy, check the label to ensure the allergen isn't present. Do not allow the child to eat any home-baked goods he or she may have received.
- **Choking Hazards:** If you have very young children, be sure to remove any choking hazards such as gum, peanuts, hard candies, or small toys.

Bobbing for apples is an all-time favorite Halloween game. Here are a couple of ways to say "boo" to bacteria that can cause food-borne illness.

- Reduce the number of bacteria that might be present on apples and other raw fruits and vegetables by thoroughly rinsing them under cool running water. As an added precaution, use a produce brush to remove surface dirt.
- Try this new spin on apple bobbing: Cut out lots of apples from red construction paper. On each apple, write activities for kids, such as "do 5 jumping jacks." Place a paper clip on each apple and put them in a large basket. Tie a magnet to a string. Let the children take turns "bobbing" with their magnet and doing the activity written on their apple. Give children a fresh apple for participating.



If your idea of Halloween fun is a party at home, don't forget these tips:

- Beware of spooky cider! Unpasteurized juice or cider can contain harmful bacteria such as Salmonella. To stay safe, always serve pasteurized products at your parties.
- No matter how tempting, don't taste raw cookie dough or cake batter that contain uncooked eggs.
- Scare bacteria away by keeping all perishable foods chilled until serving time. These include finger sandwiches, cheese platters, fruit or tossed salads, cold pasta dishes with meat, poultry, or seafood, and cream pies or cakes with whipped-cream and cream-cheese frostings.
- Bacteria will creep up on you if you let foods sit out too long. Don't leave perishable goodies out of the fridge for more than two hours (1 hour in temperatures above 90°F).

Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (Updated 2018, September 22). Halloween food safety tips for parents. Retrieved January 11, 2019, from <https://www.fda.gov/>