

A monthly newsletter published by Interface EAP

9 Tips to Increase Your Happiness

Spiritual Time: Be sure to take time each day to get in touch with your spiritual center, whatever that is for you. Soul replenishment is vital, whether it is reading scriptures, meditating, or listening to inspiring music. Having silent time to self-reflect on the bigger meaning of it all will help you stay calmer throughout your day.

Self-Care: We all know what this means, but how many of us make a practice of it? When you feel stressed, stop and consider what self-care technique you have been neglecting. Make a list of things that work for you as stress relievers. Here are some “S” suggestions in case you have forgotten: soak in the tub, schedule a massage, sing to your favorite CD’s, socialize with friends, stare at the sunset, stare into space, send the kids to the sitter, spend time with your spouse, spend time alone . . . you add the rest!



Schedule: Make your “to do” list and then actually schedule it into your calendar. This will give you an idea of what you are actually committed to. It will also help you know in real time what your limits are and give you more control over your time.

Say No: This goes hand in hand with the one above. Once you know in black and white where you are over committed, you will be able to make choices based on what is really important to you. Then give yourself permission to say no to the rest.

Space: Make sure you give yourself empty space on that calendar--time for the self-care, time for the unexpected, time to just do nothing. If every minute is scheduled, then something has to go.

Simplify: If you are still struggling with too much on the calendar--time to see where you can

simplify. Where can you be less than perfect? Who can you delegate some jobs to? Where are your expectations too high? Again, what is most important here--trying to be perfect or enjoying time with family and friends?

Shine your light: Remember to be a light for others. Give your best. Create small acts of random kindness. Hold the door for someone, pay the toll for the car behind you, vow to look for the best in people you see every day, and compliment them on it, etc.

See it all in a new perspective: When the normal stresses of these busy times start to get to you, try lightening up and seeing things from a different view. Do not forget to have a sense of humor! Pull above it all, look at it from a Martian perspective, or your dog’s view, or maybe that of the other person. The more we can accept what is, look from the bigger picture, and have the perspective of gratitude, the happier we will be.

Seize the Day: Remember Carpe Diem? Slow down. Be in the moment. Really soak up the small moments of life. This can be done anywhere, anytime. Here is a secret, it is really the key to true peace and joy: Really slow down and experience the moment fully--right here, right now. Know this moment is precious and will never be here again. Feel the air in your lungs, the warmth of the socks around your feet. No matter what chaos is around you, how much you have to do the rest of the day--RIGHT NOW is perfect just as it is. Remember to stop and consciously BE HERE NOW as often as possible, especially during those precious ordinary moments that are already finding their place in your memory of “the good old days”.



Understanding Alcoholism



Alcoholism is a chronic, progressive, and often fatal disease. The chemistry of alcohol allows it to affect nearly every type of cell in the body, including those in the central nervous system. After prolonged exposure to alcohol, the

brain becomes dependent on it. The severity of this disease is influenced by factors such as genetics, psychology, culture, and response to physical pain.

Alcoholism is a chronic illness marked by dependence on alcohol consumption. It interferes with physical or mental health, and social, family, or job responsibilities. This addiction can lead to liver, circulatory, and neurological problems.

Alcoholism, alcohol dependence, and alcohol abuse are associated with the following:

- Alcoholics have little or no control over the quantity they drink or the duration or frequency of their drinking
- Alcoholics are preoccupied with drinking, deny their own addiction, and continue to drink even though they are aware of the dangers
- Alcoholics might drink alone and start their drinking early in the day
- Alcoholics periodically quit drinking or switch from hard liquor to beer or wine, but these periods rarely last
- Severe alcoholics often have a history of accidents, marital and work instability, and alcohol-related health problems

Alcoholism can develop insidiously, and often there is no clear line between problem drinking and alcoholism. Eventually alcohol dominates thinking, emotions, and actions and becomes the primary means through which a person can deal with people, work, and life.

Definition of Alcohol Use and Abuse

In addition to alcohol dependence, alcohol use is defined by levels of harm that it may be causing. This information is useful to determine possible interventions at earlier stages.

Moderate Drinking. Moderate drinking, particularly red wine, appears to offer health benefits. Moderate drinking is defined as equal to or less than two drinks a day for men and one drink a day for women.

Binge Drinking. Binge drinking is associated with increased risk of injury and behavioral changes. Binge drinking occurs when:

- 4-5 drinks or more in a two hour period
- 5 or more drinks per day, at least once in the last 30 days

Hazardous (Heavy) Drinking. Hazardous drinking puts people at risk for adverse health events. People who are heavy drinkers consume:

- 5 or more drinks per day, on each of 5 or more days in the last month
- Frequent intoxication

Harmful Drinking. Drinking is considered harmful when alcohol consumption has actually caused physical or psychological harm. This is determined by:

- Clear evidence that alcohol is responsible for such harm
- The nature of that harm can be identified
- Alcohol consumption has persisted for at least a month or has occurred repeatedly for the past year

Alcohol Abuse. People with alcohol abuse have one or more of the following alcohol-related problems over a period of 1 year:

- Failure to fulfill work or personal obligations
- Recurrent use in potentially dangerous situations
- Problems with the law
- Continued use in spite of harm being done to social or personal relationships

Alcohol Dependence. People who are alcohol dependent have three or more of the following alcohol-related problems over a year:

- Increased amounts of alcohol are needed to produce an effect
- Withdrawal symptoms, or using alcohol to avoid these symptoms
- Drinks more over a given period than intended
- Unsuccessful attempts to quit or cut down
- Gives up significant leisure or work activities
- Continues to drink in spite of the knowledge of its physical or psychological harm to oneself or others

If you or someone you know has a problem with alcohol, contact your EAP!

Coping with Crisis



When unexpected, traumatic events occur, it is normal to have strong physical and emotional reactions. Sometimes these appear immediately after the events, and sometimes they do not begin for several days, weeks or even months. While unpleasant, these reactions are normal and usually temporary, leaving no long-term effects on the individual experiencing them. How strongly the event impacted the individual determines his or her response afterward, as do the person's past experiences, values, attitudes, beliefs and personal support systems. Some of the wide range of normal responses are listed below.

EMOTIONAL	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	BEHAVIORAL
Anxiety	Fatigue	Confusion	Isolation
Fearfulness	Twitching	Forgetfulness	Increased alcohol use
Numbness	Nausea	Distractibility	Increased drug use
Uncertainty	Headache	Impaired memory	Restlessness
Depression	Sleep problems	Poor judgement	Jumpiness
Anger problems	Sweating	Poor concentration	Interpersonal problems
Guilt	Dizziness	Flashbacks	Appetite changes
Irritability	Intestinal problems	Past traumas remembered	Sleep disturbances
Grief	Breathing problems	Intrusive thoughts	Reduced sex drive
Vulnerability	Nightmares	Outbursts	
Disbelief	Suspiciousness		

While each of these can be an expected response to a crisis, there are things that can be done to reduce their impact and to help restore normal feeling and functioning.

Strategies for Self-Care

- Stay away from mood-altering substances
- Get plenty of rest
- Eat well-balanced meals
- Practice stress reduction techniques
- Progressive relaxation massage
- Give yourself permission to feel bad. Let yourself cry
- Give yourself permission to feel good
- Make small decisions daily to get back control of your life
- Structure your time
- Lower expectations of what you “should be doing”
- Have breaks from periods of isolation
- Give yourself permission to do something that could feel good to you
- Exercise—even a little bit—is beneficial physically and psychologically
- Remind yourself that your reactions are normal
- Engage in practices that are meaningful to you, such as: prayer, services, walk in woods, sitting quietly, reading inspirational material, or journal writing
- Talk it out—even with a professional
- Utilize your EAP

Stress

For free and confidential assistance, call your Employee Assistance Program and speak with a Care Coordinator:

Marital Problems

Financial

(713) 781-3364

Se Habla Español

Family Problems

Legal

(800) 324-4327

(800) 324-2490

Alcohol/Drug Problems

Depression

www.4eap.com

Other Referrals

Your employer has contracted with Interface EAP to provide you an Employee Assistance Program.