

TEAMWORK

A publication of



Total Employee Assistance & Management, Inc.

A T.E.A.M. NEWSLETTER FROM YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Relationships

Re-Connecting in Relationships

The problem most often cited in relationships is "we just don't communicate anymore." One wonders how this is possible with the technological advances in communication now available to us such as cell phones and email.

Today's couples have busy lives and engage in multiple activities. Though these activities may be stimulating or even educational, the thing that suffers most in relationships is the communication between partners. When couples communicate via cell phone, email or while multi-tasking, communication becomes impersonal. Nuances of communication are missed. This can lead to either total miscommunication or the feeling that "my partner never listens to me." What is often missed is the quiet time that a couple would have to just talk and share thoughts and feelings at the end of the day.

We all know that eating dinner together can improve nutrition. But did you know that it also improves family relationships and language skills for children? The family dinner can be a time for families to reconnect. If a small amount of time is taken with your partner after dinner to enjoy a cup of coffee or tea or to just straighten things up together, many communication issues can be eliminated. This becomes a time to catch up on the day, find out how your partner is doing, and plan for future activities. It allows you to take time, to relax and to really listen to what your partner is saying. Modeling this behavior for our children is important as well. Remember, time to reconnect in relationships is important and beneficial. Make the time for this worthwhile practice! □

Family

Dealing with Family Conflicts

Are there days when you wish, "Why can't my family just get along?" Conflicts and disagreements are a natural part of human relationships and all families have varying degrees of skill in resolving differences. Successful conflict resolution involves both parents and children making every effort to understand the feelings, attitudes and needs of one another. This requires an environment of support, love, caring and respect for one another. It requires a sense of security and belonging as well as open communication. In order for conflicts to be resolved, a family needs to be able to negotiate effectively and come up with a win/win agreement. Parents, either singly or as a couple, have the challenging task of teaching and modeling negotiation to their children.

The following are techniques that often result in successful negotiation:

- ◆ Maintain conversational voice tones and as soon as volume levels increase, make an agreement to stop the conversation, take a break, and come back to it when the situation has calmed down
- ◆ Be willing to listen to all sides of the situation before expressing a judgment or opinion; acknowledge others' feelings even if not the same as yours
- ◆ Stay focused on the present issue and do not bring up past incidents or events
- ◆ Don't personalize the issue and attack, blame or ridicule a family member's character
- ◆ Brainstorm and list all the options and potential solutions, discussing the pros and cons of each.
- ◆ When an agreement is reached, make sure it is specific and all family members involved know what is expected of them
- ◆ Continue to show love, trust, respect and concern even when there are disagreements

Healthy families are realistic in knowing that family members will experience differences among them. What is most important is that the differences are resolved in a way that strengthens and enhances family relationships and do not destroy or damage them. For further assistance and support in dealing with family conflict, contact T.E.A.M. EAP at 800-448-8526. □

Health

New Years Resolutions That Work!

New Years Day is the most popular time of the year to initiate positive change in our lives. In fact, many people actually delay giving up a bad habit (sometimes for months) until New Years Day! While some have enjoyed success picking one day to give up a habit which may have endured for years, many find that their resolutions do not stick, or they simply never get off the ground.

When we think about making changes, it can become overwhelming. There may be several changes which we feel are necessary. Because of this, people often plan goals which are overly stringent, and often difficult, if not impossible to meet. In addition, when making goals for change, people often conceptualize success as being "all or nothing". In other words, an inability to fully complete the goal is viewed as a failure, even though there may have been many positive changes made along the way. In reality, slip ups are not failures, but an opportunity to learn different ways to keep ourselves on track when a

challenging situation arises. Look at the big picture. Congratulate yourself for small successes and get back on track!

Here are a few additional tips for making your new years resolutions last:

1 Don't Keep It A Secret- People often don't tell friends or family that they are trying to make a change for fear that if they don't meet their goal they will be humiliated or judged by others. However, friends and family can be a tremendous support when trying to create positive change. You may even help inspire them!

2 Avoid Pitfalls- Early in our efforts to initiate change, many things will trigger interest in resuming the habit. Plan ahead to avoid these pitfalls. For example, if you're trying to quit smoking, you might want to avoid going to places, or participating in activities in which you are more likely to smoke. We are creatures of habit, so try changing your routine.

3 Respect Your Bad Habit- Habits (both good and bad) actually serve a purpose: to reduce stress, to enhance socialization, etc. Therefore, it is difficult to let go of a bad habit without realizing what its function is for you. Consider replacing a bad habit with one that is healthier. Eventually, it will serve a similar purpose for you, but this time with the added bonus of contributing to your good health!

4 Don't Try To Change Everything At Once- Often people have several habits they would like to give up, however attempting to make too many changes at once can set us up for failure. Instead focus on one thing at a time, or take smaller steps to address several issues. For example, a novice at exercise should not have a goal of running a marathon. Start with smaller, more manageable goals first, and then move on to more difficult steps. □

Welcome to the Team

Total Employee Assistance and Management, Inc. continues to grow. We would like to welcome the following organizations that have recently become part of our team.

Andersen & Associates
Easter Seals- Michigan
Clark Hill
Trott & Trott
Bowling Green Metalforming
NSK - NSSA
Magna Donnelly - Duncan, SC
NGS American Inc
Rex Materials Inc of Virginia

Welcome aboard! We look forward to working with you. Thank you for joining T.E.A.M.

Emotions

Attitude Is Everything!

Do you ever wonder why some people seem resilient even in the most difficult situations? They are always smiling and willing to help others. They are task oriented at work. Are you that kind of person? Do you want to be? Following are seven suggestions for developing a healthier, brighter outlook.

1 Learn to reframe events in your life. Divide a sheet of paper into two columns. In the left column, write all your negative thoughts about the situation. In the right column, rewrite each thought in a positive light. For example, you run out of gas and have to walk a mile to the nearest gas station for gas. The negative reaction to this situation focuses on your irresponsibility for not getting gas earlier or the waste of time involved. When reframing the situation, you may think about the exercise you are getting or the lesson learned. Practice doing this in your mind until it becomes a habit.

2 Reconnect with old friends, take the dog for a walk or listen to your favorite music. Enjoy a long, relaxing bath, read a great book, visit your favorite museum, tell your child a story. It is the simplest things in life that give us the most pleasure.

3 Help someone out. The simple act of helping others helps us feel good. Pick up groceries for an aging neighbor or volunteer at your local animal shelter.

4 Find your spirituality. Research has shown that those who have developed their spirituality through associating with other spiritual individuals or having their own unique personal beliefs, live longer, more satisfying lives. The secret is practicing those beliefs, either through organized spiritual associations or simple meditation in a quiet place.

5 Allow yourself to be loved. The ability to love and be loved is the most basic human trait. We, as a society, have become disconnected from this most basic need. Fear-centered emotions such as depression, loneliness, guilt and anger are the symptoms. Finding ways to reconnect with others is extremely helpful in developing a positive attitude.

6 Participate in new physical and mental activities to improve confidence levels and coping mechanisms. Good nutrition and exercise help improve mood and attitude.

7 The media focuses on information that leads to negative thoughts and emotions. Find other more positive things to do with your precious time ☐



Your T.E.A.M. EAP benefit is a counseling, coaching and referral service provided by your employer to you and the members of your family. This is a free benefit, and it is strictly confidential!

Neither your employer nor your coworkers will have any knowledge of your use of the EAP.

We have offices conveniently located to serve you. No matter how big or small the reason is for calling us, give us a call and let us help. We assist people every day with a wide variety of personal problems, including marital difficulties, financial or legal concerns, emotional problems, family difficulties, grief, loss, death and personal or work crisis.

If you have a problem with which you need help, please give us a call.

We are only a phone call or mouse click away!

1-800-448-TEAM
www.team-eap.com

~QUARTERLY QUOTE~

"I always wanted a happy ending... Now I've learned, the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it without knowing what's going to happen next. Delicious ambiguity."

~ Gilda Radner (1946-1989)

Life Issues

The Stress Of Making Major Life Changes

Everyone goes through major life changes at one time or another. Many people can vividly remember their first day on a new job or their first day of class at a new school. Major changes in our lives are stressful because change forces us to try out new behaviors and unfamiliar situations. They also make us leave something familiar behind. Some changes, like getting married, having children, getting a promotion or buying a new home are seen as positive. Even these changes can cause stress.

There are times in our lives when we may have the opportunity to choose and plan carefully before making a major life change. Here are a few tips on how to plan ahead and reduce the stress of change.

- * Picture your life after making the change you are contemplating. Compare it with your present reality. How do your "before" and "after" pictures compare? When you have the opportunity to make a choice and plan ahead for change, you are able to compare the advantages and disadvantages of keeping things the same versus making the change.
- * Talk to friends and family members, make a list of the positive and negative factors influencing your decision, and try to name the key factor that is driving you to seek something different.
- * List any steps you may need to prepare for the change. For example, if you are considering going back to school, you may investigate the cost of colleges and universities or talk with people who are currently in school. Make sure you have the support of key people in your life as well as those who will be affected by the change, such as immediate family members. Discuss your plan with those people and listen to their feedback. Have a backup plan.
- * Be prepared for the feelings associated with taking a risk, and recognize that some decisions may only be made as things unfold. Remind yourself of times in your past when you have taken risks. Everyone experiences anxiety with change. Taking the risk is often worth the outcome.

Remember, life may not always seem fair, but attitude is a personal choice! ☐

It's Been Studied!

A recent study conducted in the United States has determined that repeated panic attacks in people with diabetes can lead to poorer control of the illness, more severe health complications and a reduced quality of life. The study, conducted by Group Health Cooperative in Seattle, surveyed nearly 4,400 people with diabetes. The patients who reported panic attacks had higher average HbA1c levels - a measure of long-term glucose control - than those who did not suffer panic attacks. The people with panic attacks reported

an average of 4.2 symptoms of diabetes compared with 2.4 symptoms for people with no panic episodes.

Researchers surmised that panic attacks may interfere with diabetes patients' self-care and their ability to follow their treatment regimens which results in poorer outcomes. If you are a diabetic who has panic attacks, anxiety disorder or symptoms of depression, consult with your health care professional; or contact a T.E.A.M. counselor for assistance. ☐