Pentagon Employee Referral Service (PERS)

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

April 2015

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EAP Services Highlights:

- Assist Federal civilian employees in resolving issues adversely impacting work or home.
- Provide one-on-one assessment, short-term counseling, referrals to community resources and crisis intervention.
- Conduct a variety of educational workshops and classes (e.g., employee orientation, supervisor training).
- Website: http://www.dthc.capmed.mil/EAP/SitePages/Home.aspx

Resilience

Teresa Ross, PsyD

It's springtime…a time to refresh, renew, and restore resilience! What is resilience? Resilience is the ability to bounce back from setbacks and events that initially seem overwhelming. More specifically, resilience is defined as a pattern of positive adjustment when confronted with past or present adversity. Resilient people experience strong emotions, like grief, fear, and anger, which emerge in the aftermath of a hardship, but they do not get consumed by these negative feelings. They choose to handle these feelings in a healthy manner, learning from their experience, and moving on. In our daily lives, resilience is also the ability to cope well with ongoing or high levels of stress and change.

According to Al Siebert, PhD, the author of The Resiliency Advantage, *"It is important to understand when you are hit with life disrupting events, you will never be the same again. You either cope or you crumble; you either become better or bitter; you emerge stronger or weaker."*

What makes one person more resilient than another? Many factors contribute to resilience, but practicing good self-care and maintaining a solid personal support system are the most important factors. Maintaining a positive self-view, an optimistic attitude, and the capacity to manage strong emotions are essential for cultivating a resilient mind. Resilient people also have good communication and problem solving skills. Those who have strong and healthy family relationships, as well as relationships outside of the family, tend to be more resilient.

Resilience is not just something you have, but rather something you do, and something you can develop. The articles in this newsletter are provided to assist you in your journey to build confidence, and foster or enhance your resiliency when confronted with life's challenges.

If you would like more information on this topic the EAP will be offering the workshop "Resilient Living " on May 20, 2015. Please see our calendar for more information, or call 703-692-8917.

Is Green Good for You?

Svetlana Kahle, PsyD

Have you noticed when you are around nature your mood changes? Have you taken a walk in the park and felt more relaxed? So why not transform your workspace into a more relaxing place by adding plants. Having plants in the workplace can facilitate a more welcoming and relaxed perception of the environment. It can also create a sense of work-home balance and can help evoke positive emotions. Studies show that plants in the workplace increase concentration, productivity, lower blood pressure, improve attention, and reduce stress.

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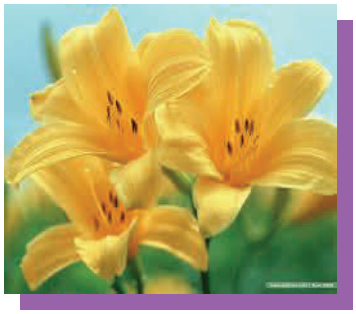
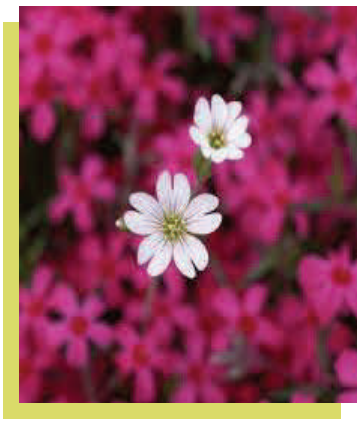


Managing Springtime Stress

Stacie Chapman, LCPC

"Spring is a time of rejuvenation and growth."



Spring means different things to different people. For some people it's the season of sneezing and itchy eyes. For others, it's time to get in the garden and start planting. Whatever the season means to you, remember that spring is also a time of rejuvenation and growth. A great area to grow your skills is stress management. You may be confronted with stressful situations at any time, therefore, learning how to cope in a positive way will not only make you a happier person, but it could improve your health as well.

The next time you are faced with a stressful situation, try using the **Four A's: avoid, alter, adapt, accept.**

STEP 1: AVOID UNNECESSARY STRESS.

Not all stress can be avoided and it is unhealthy to avoid situations that need to be addressed. Try these recommendations in order to eliminate some of your stressors.

- **Learn how to say no.** No is a complete sentence. Taking on more than you can handle is a guarantee that you will increase your stress. Be realistic before committing to one more activity.
- **Avoid people who stress you out.** Is someone in the office testing your patience? Instead of sitting at your desk potentially clenched and angry, take a walk outside! Research shows that people who have regular exposure to sunlight sleep an average of 46 more minutes a night. Going outside at the same time every day (even if it's just for 15 minutes, especially in the morning), signals to the brain that you are awake and can also improve your concentration throughout the day.

STEP 2: ALTER THE SITUATION.

If the situation is unavoidable, try to identify what you have the power to change. It may involve expressing your feelings and changing the way you communicate with others such as:

- **Manage your time better.** Do you always feel rushed and overextended? Check your daily routine. On average, people spend approximately 10 minutes just saying "hello" to someone. A trip to the bathroom can take 45 minutes if you stop to greet everyone along the way. Monitor your time and you will find it all adds up! Imagine what you could do with 45 more minutes in your day.
- **Express your feelings.** Do you have something on your mind? Talk to someone about it. Bottling up negative feelings may lead to gastrointestinal distress, headaches, and back pain. Instead of letting resentments build up, discuss your feelings in an open and respectful manner. Set time aside at night to talk to your loved ones about the ups and downs of your day. Use your daily walk as a venting session. By talking about your feelings instead of ignoring them, you will be on your way to a whole new attitude and a lot less stress.

STEP 3: ADAPT TO THE STRESSOR

If you are unable to change the stressor, change yourself. Sometimes a stressor can be eliminated or the impact can be lessened if you change your expectations and your attitude.

- **Reframe the problem.** Look at the positives of the situation. Stuck in traffic on the way home? Roll down those windows, enjoy the spring air, and enjoy some alone time. The traffic jam isn't fun but it can be an opportunity for reflection and quiet.

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Managing Springtime Stress

(continued from page 2)

- **Look at the big picture.** Is what you're worried about now going to matter in a month? Is it worth getting upset over? If the answer is no, focus on something else. You may find you have more energy by focusing on what really matters to your life.

STEP 4: ACCEPT THE THINGS YOU CANNOT CHANGE.

Some stressors are impossible to prevent. In situations where this is true, it is best to accept things the way they are. Acceptance may be difficult at first but it's better for your health and easier in the long run than fighting an unchangeable situation. Remember that acceptance doesn't always mean that you like something or agree with something; it may mean that you choose to move through the situation to a more productive and less stressful place.

If you have tried the Four A's and are still having difficulty practicing stress management, the EAP can help. Please call us at 703-692-8917 to schedule an individual appointment.

Is Green Good for You?

(continued from page 1)

Have you been feeling down lately? Research shows that simply looking at your plants can interrupt the cycle of negative emotions and can improve your overall outlook on life. Studies also show that people who have indoor plants tend to be happier, optimistic, more understanding, and less stressed.

People that spend time taking care of plants also tend to have improved relationships with coworkers and increased compassion toward others.

If you are under stress or experiencing a decline in mood, get a plant! Try putting a small plant on top of your filing cabinet or desk at work to dramatically improve your mood and reduce stress.

If you would like more information about other feel-good techniques to boost your mood, please contact the EAP at 703-692-8917.

"People that spend time taking care of plants tend to have improved relationships with others."

Coping with Change in the Workplace

Amanda Maher, LCSW

Change is an inescapable part of life, especially in the ever changing world of work. Everyone at some point in their life will face changes at work that are stressful and overwhelming. Since change is so common in today's workforce, it is essential for employees to equip themselves with the necessary tools to positively cope with organizational change, and remain a healthy and productive employee.

The following are simple and effective ways to positively manage change in the workplace:

- **Keep a realistic outlook.** When it comes to changes in the workplace, unrealistic expectations can be a major source of stress. Whether you are expecting the change to result in increased productivity or make processes more complicated, understand that change may be initially difficult. It is important to have realistic expectations of yourself, colleagues, and management.
- **Seek support.** Try talking with family, friends, an EAP professional, or another available resource. It is important to get emotional support during times of change to keep you on track.
- **Control what you can and let go of the rest.** Make a list of what parts of the change you have control over versus the parts you don't have control over. Find a way to let go of the aspects that are outside of your control. Focusing too much on situations that are outside of your control will only result in increased stress and frustration. Focusing on situations that fall within your control will help you to feel empowered and productive.
- **Acknowledge your feelings about the change.** Allow yourself permission to have feelings about the change, but don't get stuck in a web of negative emotion. Find ways to cope with the feelings you have in a healthy way. One of the most destructive things you can do to cope with changes at work is to allow a negative attitude to take over. While changes at work can stir up some negative feelings it is important that you acknowledge your feelings, but choose to have a positive outlook. This will be beneficial to you and your colleagues in the long run.
- **Seek to find the positive part of the change.** This can be difficult, but try to find one small positive about the change and focus on that. Ask yourself, what is one good part of this change? Try reframing the situation. While change can be stressful and uncomfortable (especially in the beginning), perhaps the change will lead to positive outcomes for the organization and for you. Try to imagine how things might improve and seek to find the silver lining.
- **Get more organized.** Ask questions, take notes and learn all you can about the change. If you hear rumors floating around the office make sure to ask upper management to get the correct information. This will eliminate worrying about information that may not be 100% correct. This will also empower you to get the information you need to best prepare for the change.

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"Without change, there would be no butterflies."

Saying Goodbye in the Workplace

Andre Peri, PhD

Whether you are leaving a position due to finding a better opportunity, for retirement, or due to downsizing or termination, it is important to say appropriate goodbyes to colleagues and supervisors. Saying goodbye allows you to attain a sense of closure, and maintain business/career contacts for the future and continued social relations with those close to you at work. Saying goodbye is often overlooked due to being busy with tying loose ends at work, transitioning knowledge to someone else, and exit tasks (i.e., returning badges and exit interviews). You may also be busy prepping for the next endeavor. Consider the following when saying goodbye.

Do schedule time to say goodbye. Schedule time to say your goodbyes and stagger the times over multiple days if you have a number of people/groups to say goodbye. Waiting until the last day may lead to insufficient time, due to completing exit tasks.

Don't schedule one event to say goodbye to everyone. Although there may be one big event planned, such as a group luncheon or dinner, do make time to meet with colleagues individually or in small groups to allow more time with those you have known longer. Relying solely on the big event to say goodbye could lead to inadequate closure.

Do provide contact information to colleagues. Choose the level and type of contact information that you would like to provide for various individuals. For some, it may include more personal contact information, such as home address, telephone numbers, and social media, while others it may only include an email address. Consider providing at least an email address to those who want your contact information.

Don't boast about the new job or opportunity. Although you may be excited about the next chapter in your life, and may want to share it with everyone, avoid talking about it incessantly. Talking about the various benefits (e.g., salary increase) may sound like bragging.

Do meet with supervisors and Human Resources staff for exit interviews. Meet with your supervisor to review job performance including strengths and areas of development. Use this meeting to highlight accomplishments and discuss requests for future recommendations and references. When meeting with HR, do discuss the positive and negatives of working for the company. Avoid being overly critical. Do discuss interests in future employment with the company, if appropriate. Thank them for the opportunity for employment.

Don't burn bridges. It is important to leave a job on a good note, even if you disliked the employer, coworkers or supervisor. Although you may feel in the moment that you will not need anything from a previous workplace, some positions and security processes may require documentation, or references from all of your employers.

Do make plans for health insurance and retirement accounts. Do have an active plan for health insurance coverage after leaving the job. Find out how long you will be covered and make plans to have enough prescription medications during that time. Do meet with your HR specialist to discuss what will happen to your retirement account and/or company stocks. Do meet with a personal financial advisor to discuss ways to manage your retirement funds.

"Saying goodbyes provides a sense of closure, and contacts for continued social relations with others."

Don't leave a mess behind. Do be courteous and leave a clean workspace, taking your personal belongings with you, and disposing of unwanted materials.

For more information about this topic please contact the EAP at 703-692-8917.

April 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3*	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17*	18
19	20	21	22*	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30*		

EAP April 2015 Training Calendar

PENTAGON

April 3: Social Security 101, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, Pentagon Library Conference Center (PLCC), Rm. M1

April 10: Federal Benefits 101, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, PLCC, Rm. B1

April 15: Sleep Hygiene, 10 – 11 am, PLCC, Rm. B9

April 17: Estate Planning, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, PLCC, Rm. M3

April 22: Procrastination, 9:30 – 10:30 am, PLCC, Rm. B8

April 24: Social Security 101, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, PLCC, Rm. B1

April 28: Stress Management, 9:30 – 11:00 am, PLCC, Rm. B9

April 30: EAP Supervisory Training, 9:30 – 11:00 am, PLCC, Rm. B8

MARK CENTER

April 2: Stress Management, 9:00 – 10:30 am, Rm. 2

April 3: Social Security 101, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, Rm. 18

April 7: Sleep Hygiene, 10 – 11 am, Rm. 16

April 9: Enhancing Communication, 9 – 11 am, Rm. 9

April 14: Conflict Resolution in the Workplace, 9 – 11 am, Rm. 1

April 17: Federal Benefits 101, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, Rm. 19

April 21: Dealing with Difficult People, 9 – 11 am, Rm. 25

April 22: Time Management, 9:00 – 10:30 am, Rm. 23

April 30: Managing Parent/ Child Conflict, 9 – 11 am, Rm. 2

* Training also at the Mark Center

MAY 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8*	9
10	11	12	13	14*	15	16
17	18	19	20*	21*	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

EAP May 2015 Training Calendar

PENTAGON

May 5: Advanced Social Security, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, PLCC, Rm. B3

May 8: Taxes & the IRS, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, PLCC, Rm. B1

May 12: Coping with Change, 9:30 – 11:00 am, PLCC, Rm. B9

May 14: Retirement Planning, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, PLCC, Rm. B1

May 19: Enhancing Communication, 8:30 – 10:00 am, PLCC, Rm. B9

May 20: Resilient Living, 9:00 – 11:30 am, PLCC, Rm. B3

May 21: EAP Supervisory Training, 9:30 – 11:00 am, PLCC, Rm. B9

May 26: Positive Aging, 9:00 – 11:30 am, PLCC, Rm. B9

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May 6: EAP Supervisory Training, 9 – 11 am, Rm. 16

May 8: Estate Planning, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, Rm. 19

May 13: Anger Management, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, Rm. 16

May 14: Advanced Social Security, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, Rm. 14

May 20: Alcohol Awareness, 9:00 – 10:30 am, Rm. 16

May 21: Suicide Prevention, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, Rm. 16

May 27: Working Effectively with Different Personality Styles, 9:00 – 10:30 am, Rm. 16

* Training also at the Mark Center

June 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3*	4*	5	6
7	8	9	10	11*	12	13
14	15	16	17	18*	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30*				

EAP June 2015 Training Calendar

PENTAGON

June 3: Social Security 101, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, PLCC, Rm. B8

June 4: Time Management, 9:30 – 11:00 am, PLCC, Rm. B8

June 10: Dealing with Difficult People, 9:30 – 11:00 am, PLCC, Rm. M3

June 11: Financial Planning During Uncertain Times, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, PLCC, Rm. B7

June 18: EAP Supervisory Training, 9:30 – 11:00 am, PLCC, Rm. B9

June 18: Estate Planning, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, PLCC, Rm. M3

June 24: Mindfulness, 9:30 – 11:00 am, PLCC, Rm. B9

June 30: Building Better Boundaries, 9:30 – 11:00 am, PLCC, Rm. B8

MARK CENTER

June 3: Improving Your Sleep, 9:00 – 10:30 am, Rm. 5

June 4: Retirement Planning, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, Rm. 20

June 9: Conflict Resolution Skills, 9 – 11 am, Rm. 21

June 11: Stress Management, 10:30 – 12:00 pm, Rm. 15

June 18: Anger Management, 9 – 11 am, Rm. 9

June 23: Social Security 101, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, Rm. 20

June 26: IRAs & 401Ks, 12:00 – 1:30 pm, Rm. 3

June 30: Parents Beware: Teen Substance Abuse Trends, 9:00 – 10:30 am, Rm. 9

* Training also at the Mark Center

Pentagon Employee Referral Service

PERS/Employee Assistance Program
9000 Defense Pentagon, Rm. BE834
Washington, D.C. 20301-9000

Phone: 703-692-8917
Fax: 703-692-6121
E-mail: whs.pentagon.hrd.mbx.pers-eap@mail.mil

Motto: "Provide short-term services for…long-term benefits."

WE'RE ON THE WEB!!

http://www.dthc.capmed.mil/EAP/SitePages/Home.aspx

What is the EAP?

The Employee Assistance Program's (EAP) mission is to ensure the well-being of employees by assisting them in resolving issues that may be adversely impacting work or home. The EAP provides one-on-one problem assessment, short-term counseling, referrals to community resources and crisis intervention. In addition to working with you on an individual basis, we conduct a variety of educational workshops and classes. We are frequently asked to speak at employee orientation sessions and offer monthly supervisor training classes.

Coping with Change in the Workplace

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- **Avoid unhealthy coping strategies.** Work changes often create high stress levels, which may lead to unhealthy coping strategies. Avoid using alcohol, drugs, overeating, or other unhealthy coping strategies to deal with the stress associated with change. Use of these strategies ultimately leads to more problems and may negatively impact your health and safety. Instead of turning to unhealthy ways to manage stress, find more positive ways of coping. Try exercising, practicing relaxation/meditation, journaling, or engaging in activities outside of work that are enjoyable, and promote good work-life balance.

Despite these suggestions, coping with change in the workplace may be a lot easier said than done, and flexibility will be important. If you need additional support, help is available. Please contact the EAP at 703-692-8917.