

# Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

June 2014

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## Tips For Building Healthy Interpersonal Relationships

Human beings are social creatures and thrive in relationships with others. A healthy part to being a well-rounded, happy individual is engaging in healthy relationships with others. These friendships can provide safe environments in which individuals can thrive and help promote general well-being. Building healthy interpersonal relationships requires a willingness to work and participate in the growth of the friendship.

### **Know Your Worth**

One of the first steps to building healthy interpersonal relationships is understanding one's value. When an individual is aware of and treasures what she or he has to offer any relationship, the building of relationships can be founded on that knowledge. Everyone has worth. Everyone has talents.

### **Recognize the Value in Others**

Along with understanding one's worth also recognize and acknowledge the worth of others. In a healthy interpersonal relationship, both parties should be respected and feel as if they are valued in the friendship. When contributions to the relationship become one-sided, resentment can begin to fester and the relationship will move from healthy to unhealthy.

### **Seek Out Individuals With Similar Value Systems**

Another way to build healthy relationships is to seek out individuals with the same value systems and lifestyles. Knowing that a friend will not request something of an individual that will cause discomfort or take one far outside a comfort zone will help to foster trust in the relationship. Also, living within the same lifestyles can provide a link of familiarity on which the friendship can grow. Trust also can develop from these similarities and goes a long way in fostering a healthy relationship.

### **Be True to Yourself**

A healthy interpersonal relationship cannot be built on dishonesty. Individuals must always behave in ways that are true to the person they are. Attracting people into relationships with dishonesty can have results that are not healthy. One may begin to feel duped into a friendship if the other participant turns out to be a different person than he or she first showed themselves to be.

Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/7216470>

## Chat Reminder

### *Building Healthy Relationships*

Connect with Deer Oaks and a counselor for a live confidential chat.

#### When:

June 18, 2014

#### Where:

[www.deeroaks.com](http://www.deeroaks.com)

#### Session Time (CST):

12:15 PM to 12:45 PM

Public Employee Benefits Alliance





# Train like an Olympian

Olympic athletes inspire us with their fierce discipline and natural talent as they smash records, going higher, farther and faster. Their can-do spirit encourages us all to take on new challenges. Whether your goal is to complete your first marathon, improve your golf game or compete in a triathlon, there are lessons to be learned from the best of the best.

Saint Louis University assistant professor of physical therapy, Chris Sebelski, gives this guidance on how to train like a champion:

- *Set a goal and break it down.* Olympic-level athletes train for their next gold medal as part of a 4-year process. After setting a goal to medal or set a world record, athletes and their coaches will break the process down into tasks and time periods with smaller goals that mark progress along the way. For instance, if you're training to get in shape for a cross-country hiking trip, you might aim to walk 3 miles a day for the first 2 weeks and build up to 10 miles a day by the end of 10 weeks.
- *Cross-train.* Olympians may be unrivaled within their skill-set, but they use other skills along the way. Cross-training reduces risks of overtraining and helps avoid injury. It also enhances muscle performance and stimulates the mind so you don't become bored by too much repetition. Cross-training is also useful to prepare for sports you can't practice every day such as skiing.
- *Work out with others.* Olympic athletes don't train alone and they don't train only with those at the same skill level. Not only will you find that the spirit of competition and encouragement will keep your motivation high, but there are also training benefits to working out with others who compete at different levels. Run with different people. Partner with someone slower than your normal pace, and on that day, you'll stay out longer and practice endurance. Another day, run with someone faster than your average pace and experience a more intense cardio workout.
- *Create a team.* Olympic athletes are under no illusions that they can do it on their own, and you shouldn't be either. Think about the people who can help you accomplish your goal. Recognize that help is available in all different forms and find what works best for you. It might be a face-to-face session with a trainer, a nutrition class, or an online chat room of like-minded people.
- *Find your motivation.* You may feel silly rocking out to your iPod at the gym, but remember that Olympians use lots of techniques to manage their emotions. This year, for example, several athletes reported using yoga, meditation, and even watching their favorite TV shows to calm themselves prior to an event and also to pump themselves up for competition.
- *Put on an Olympic attitude.* For most of us, our jobs, families and personal commitments mean we can't devote as many waking hours to training as a world champion might. But you can adopt the mentality of an Olympian during the time you set aside for training, approaching that hour with the single-minded focus of a full-time athlete.
- *Enjoy.* Regardless of the scale of your goal, you should have the experience, at least once, of training for and accomplishing a physical goal you set for yourself. Crossing that finish line is a feeling unlike any other.

## Health-e headlines™

# Where's the Sodium?



Over 75% of dietary sodium (salt) comes from eating packaged and restaurant foods. But only a small portion (11%) comes from salt added at the table or in cooking. Too much sodium can raise blood pressure and lead to heart disease.

## These 10 types of food are the greatest sources of sodium in the American diet:

- Breads and rolls
- Cold cuts and cured meats
- Pizza
- Fresh and processed poultry
- Soups
- Sandwiches (hot dogs, hamburgers, subs)
- Cheese
- Mixed pasta dishes (spaghetti with meat sauce, for example)
- Mixed meat dishes (such as beef stew)
- Savory snacks (the ever-popular chips, pretzels, popcorn)

Because so much of our sodium is already added to food, it can be challenging to significantly reduce your sodium intake. The FDA offers some advice on how you can reduce sodium when making daily dietary choices.

- Buy fresh or frozen meat and poultry instead of canned, smoked, or processed meats.
- Choose fresh, frozen, or low sodium or no-salt-added canned vegetables.
- Flavor food with herbs and spices instead of salt.
- Choose unsalted snacks.
- Consider sodium when dining out.
- Request nutrition information or check the restaurant's web site in advance, and choose lower sodium options.
- Ask for your meal to be prepared without salt.
- Order sauces and salad dressings on the side and use less.

Health-e headlines™

## Lights Out

The next time you want to turn down the emotional intensity before making an important decision, you may want to dim the lights first. A University of Toronto Scarborough study shows that human emotion, whether positive or negative, is felt more intensely under bright light.

Health-e headlines™

## Variety

In a single day, Americans typically eat and drink 14 different kinds of food and beverages from sandwiches, fruit, vegetables, carbonated soft drinks, milk, coffee, potatoes, salty snacks, juices, and ready-to-eat cereal, reports the Institute of Food Technologists.

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*

### Building Healthy Relationships

One of the most common reasons for people to seek professional support is to help cope with difficult relationships and for good reason - building and maintaining strong relationships at home and at work takes a lot of effort. Whether you're married, just starting a relationship, or are trying to improve your relationships at work, there are several pillars of healthy relationships that can help give you a head start:

- *Communicate* – Of course communication is number one! So often we will stew over a gripe we have, leading to it becoming a major issue when it could have been resolved just by bringing it to the attention of those around us. If you need to give feedback or constructive criticism, do it respectfully, as soon as possible and use specific examples. Check out our online articles and skill builders to learn more about positive communication so that you can get your message and concerns across as easily and tactfully as possible.
- *Focus on You* – Inevitably, when I give a training on dealing with difficult people or healthy relationships, questions always center on the other person, “How can I get my co-worker to understand?” or “Why doesn't my spouse listen?” Although valid (and frustrating), we don't have any control over how others think, feel, or react. Try an experiment: for one day, instead of focusing on what you would like others to do differently in your relationship, try focusing on what you can do to improve your role. You might be surprised not only to find that you feel better knowing you've given 100%, but to see that others respond to your positive attitude and efforts.
- *Pick Your Battles* – What are your biggest co-worker gripes? Listening to loud music? Heating up a smelly lunch in a common area? Not contributing their fair share? What about your spouse? Leaving towels on the floor, keeping an empty milk carton in the fridge, or not telling you about an important upcoming change in his/her work schedule? Take a moment to think about the big picture; which of these will matter in a week? Constantly pointing out what's bothering you may lead to others feeling resentful or closed off. Pick the things that really matter and have an impact on you, and remember to bring them up as respectfully as possible.
- *See in Shades of Grey* – Over time, we start to see things in very black or white terms. In other words, once someone starts to bother you, you now only see the things about them that you find offensive, irritating, or bothersome. Try to find the middle ground, or grey area, here. What is one thing, no matter how small, that you like about this person? By reminding yourself of these positives, you yourself are less likely to be constantly set off by the small stuff.
- *Praise the Positives*- To increase positivity in any relationship, let someone know when they've done something that you appreciate. Communication is key and certainly not limited to conveying things that others do that bother you. In fact, the more that you praise someone for doing something that makes you happy/feel appreciated, etc., let them know; they're more likely to continue the behavior in the future.



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# Alternatives to Filing for Bankruptcy



Many bankruptcies are caused by unforeseen emergencies. In fact, the most common catalysts to payment problems are medical expenses, layoffs, divorce, and overspending. Based on this knowledge, there are a few simple things you can do to avoid future problems.

## **Obtain adequate insurance**

In addition to required insurances, such as auto coverage and homeowners insurance, health insurance is a must. Studies show that the majority of bankruptcies in the U.S. are due in part to medical reasons.

## **Establish a savings cushion**

Three to six months of living expenses in an accessible savings account may make the difference between a minor financial setback and a serious financial problem.

## **Watch your debt ratio**

Aim for your monthly debt obligations to equal no more than 20 percent of your take-home pay. If you do find yourself facing unmanageable debt, bankruptcy may be considered. However, before you file, you might first want to try these other options.

## **Adjust your spending**

Is it possible for you to make changes that would allow you to pay off this debt? This path may not be easy, but would result in lasting change.

## **Consider your options: Debt Management Plan (DMP)**

Consider working with Money Management International (MMI) to establish a debt repayment program. On a DMP, the terms of your accounts are renegotiated. You agree to include your unsecured debts on the program and make one deposit each month that is distributed to your creditors until your debt is repaid.

## **Consider your options: Settling debts**

You can also try to “settle” your debts for less than the full balance. While paying less than you owe sounds appealing, there are several things consumers need to consider before attempting to settle a debt including income tax obligations. For information concerning debt settlement companies, visit [FTC.gov](http://FTC.gov).

## **Consider your options: Consolidation of debt**

A third alternative to bankruptcy is to consolidate your debt. In this scenario, the first hurdle will be to qualify for the debt consolidation loan. If you do qualify, you may be able to obtain a “good” interest rate and the interest may be tax-deductible (for a home equity loan) in the event you used the principal to pay for certain home improvements. However, you also need to consider the length of time it will take you to repay. To understand the true cost of credit, figure out what you will be paying over the life of the loan, rather than just looking at the monthly payment. Be sure to factor in any closing costs.

## **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](http://www.MoneyManagement.org).