

# Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

April 2015

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Public Employee Benefits Alliance

## Anxiety Disorders in the Workplace



Anxiety disorders are highly treatable, yet only one-third of those who suffer from an anxiety disorder receive treatment. Anxiety disorders are medical illnesses. They are chronic, relentless, and can grow if left untreated.

Most people feel a little anxious before a big speech, a job interview, or a visit to the doctor. Sweaty palms and butterflies in your stomach are normal reactions. Crippling fear, however, is not normal.

Having an anxiety disorder is not a sign of moral weakness. In fact, experts believe that anxiety disorders are caused by a combination of biological and environmental factors, much like physical disorders, such as heart

disease or diabetes. The most common anxiety disorders are panic disorders, phobias, post-traumatic stress disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, and generalized anxiety disorders.

### Major Signs and Symptoms of an Anxiety Disorder

Although each anxiety disorder has its own distinct features, all include some degree of excessive, irrational, or ongoing anxiety or fear, and feelings of dread and terror. Specific symptoms can include:

- Sweating, trembling, nausea, and difficulty talking
- Painful, intrusive memories, or recurring nightmares
- Fatigue, headaches, muscle tension, muscle aches, irritability, or difficulty swallowing
- Persistent obsessive thoughts
- Intense feelings of panic and fear

### Tips for Employers

- Educate employees and managers about mental health disorders, including anxiety disorders. Encourage employees to seek care when they need it by educating the workforce that mental illnesses are real and can be effectively treated. Teach supervisors how to (and how not to) intervene appropriately by focusing on job performance.
- Promote the use of employee assistance and health programs. Early intervention is key. Remind employees of the availability of resources for staying healthy and productive. Ensure that employees know how to access care confidentially and quickly by providing information on how to do so in multiple places and throughout the year. Heavily push these messages during times of stress, at the holidays, and so forth.
- Integrate mental health educational messages in health communication strategies. Include content about anxiety disorders in company newsletters, on the intranet, and in other regular employee communication platforms.

Source: Partnership for Workplace Mental Health. (n.d.). Anxiety disorders. Retrieved November 18, 2013, from <http://www.workplacementalhealth.org/>

[www.deeroaks.com](http://www.deeroaks.com) | 866-327-2400 | [eap@deeroaks.com](mailto:eap@deeroaks.com)

## Online Seminar Reminder

### Disrupting Negative Thoughts

#### When:

April 21, 2015

#### Where:

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

#### Webinar Times (CST):

11:00 AM- 12:00 PM

AND

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM



DEER OAKS EAP SERVICES



## You See a Shrink?



You can avoid the judgment that comes when you admit you need help—professional help, from a mental health therapist.

It is often the assumption that if you go to therapy that you have serious problems you cannot manage on your own and there is something fundamentally wrong with you. In reality, if someone is attending therapy, they tend to be on the healthier side of self-love and self-awareness.

Because seeing a therapist is stigmatized, many people who want to seek help, either often don't, or they keep their therapy private so they do not invoke judgment.

Clinical psychologist Dr. Sherrie Campbell, author of *Loving Yourself: The Mastery of Being Your Own Person*, offers this advice:

- Everyone can benefit from therapy. We are not here to do life on our own nor are we equipped to be 100% objective in our own lives. Therapy is the perfect way to get that objective view, get to know yourself more deeply, analyze your habits of behavior and find solutions and resolutions to life's everyday issues. Even healthy people seek therapy.
- Deniers don't attend therapy. The unhealthiest people, the people who need treatment the most, are the ones who never consider therapy. In their mind they are never wrong, it is always someone else's problem, and they should not have to change. The people who end up in therapy are those trying to deal with the relationships they have with these people who deny there is a problem.
- Own your personal journey. If you have chosen to attend therapy, be proud of it. Most people who are seeing the benefits of therapy tend to brag about how much the therapy is changing their lives. We all want to be happy, and when you communicate about your therapy as a major benefit to your life, you will be surprised how many people either ask for your therapist's information or confess back to you they have also sought therapy. When you own and take pride in your growth, much to your surprise many others will take your lead.

Health-e headlines™

## Prevent Diabetes—Smart Steps Toward a Healthier Life

Just because diabetes may run in your family, you can avoid or delay its development.

You can reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes by eating a healthy diet, getting plenty of physical activity, and losing excess weight, according to NIH in Health.

Type 2 diabetes arises because of problems related to a hormone called insulin. When your body digests food, it's broken down and converted to glucose and other molecules, which then travel through the bloodstream. Insulin signals cells to let glucose in for use as an energy source.

In a person with type 2 diabetes, either the body's cells have trouble using insulin or the body isn't producing enough insulin. As a result, glucose can build up to harmful levels in the blood. That's why people with diabetes often have high blood glucose levels.

These high levels raise your risk for heart disease, blindness, amputations, and other serious conditions.

People who are overweight, obese, or inactive are much likelier to develop type 2 diabetes. You can change these risk factors. Studies look at weight loss, even small amounts, as helping reduce risk.

### **Steps to prevent diabetes**

- Move more. It doesn't matter what activity you do, as long as you enjoy it.
- Choose healthy foods. Eat fiber-rich fruits and vegetables.
- Maintain a healthy weight. With healthy eating and physical activity, you can drop pounds and keep them off.
- Set reasonable goals. Start with small changes, even walking 15 minutes a day. Add 5 minutes per day next week and so on. Goal: 30 minutes, 5 days a week.
- Record your progress. Keep a diary of what you eat and drink and the number of minutes you exercise to stay focused on your goal.
- Keep at it. Making even small changes is hard in the beginning. If you get off track, start again.

### **Best exercise for people with diabetes**

The best exercise for anyone with diabetes may be a notch above a casual walk, according to Jamie Cooper, assistant professor of nutritional sciences at Texas Tech University.

"A person should exercise to the point when they're breathing a little bit harder and sweating a little bit—then they know they're working more intensely," Cooper said.

The type of exercise really doesn't matter as long as you're moving and getting some exercise in regularly. Find something you enjoy and are motivated to do is probably more important than the specific type of exercise to treat diabetes. The reason for this is that exercise needs to be done regularly and long term.

"It's not something you just do once a month or for a couple of weeks and quit. It has to be something you adapt into your new, healthier lifestyle and do on a regular basis," Cooper said.

Health-e headlines™

## *Look Who's Walking*

Dog owners walk nearly twice as much as their neighbors without dogs, according to a study in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. Maybe it's the extra duty to get up and out for exercise that gives dog owners a new leash on being active with their pets.

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## *Sound Asleep*

If you live to age 85, you may have slept nearly 250,000 hours—more than 10,000 full days, according to the Baylor University sleep researchers. Sleep is not "lost time," as many think. Sound sleep is linked to better mental health, improved cardiovascular health, and fewer severe disorders and diseases, they said.

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*

"Anxiety is the gap between now and the future" –Fritz Pearls



Anxiety is one of the most prevalent mental illnesses in the United States, with the National Institute of Mental Health citing 18% of adults in the United States as suffering from some type of anxiety disorder. Of that percentage, 22% have been diagnosed with a severe anxiety disorder. Furthermore, the average age of the onset of anxiety is shockingly young – 11 years old. Anxiety disorders range from having very specific fears or anxiety-based behaviors (phobias, Panic Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) to reacting to traumatic life events (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). As uncomfortable and prevalent as these disorders may be, certain talk therapies have found to be very effective in decreasing symptoms and improving quality of life.

At some point in our lives, all of us have triggers and life events that cause us stress and worry. Usually, these phases pass and we are able to resume normal every day activities. People who suffer from anxiety tend to feel anxious or worried most of the time and their worry includes fearing worst-case-scenarios (such as the health and well-being of themselves and others). Anxiety can affect sleep, appetite, concentration, memory, mood, and can co-occur with many other mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.

Treatment for anxiety can involve multiple interventions, the first of which is teaching relaxation. When we become anxious, our bodies react physically (increased heart rate, feeling hot, weakness in extremities, ringing in the ears, etc) and then our mind picks up on those cues and increases our anxiety. The same holds true for the reverse – we become anxious in our minds and our bodies follow suit. By teaching relaxation techniques, we can relax our bodies and then encourage our minds to do the same. Specific techniques that produce great outcomes for relaxation include deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and visualization.

Another intervention for anxiety is retraining our brain to think in less black or white terms. When we become anxious, our brain starts to send extreme messages leading us to believe that the worse possible outcome is likely to occur in any situation. By targeting these thoughts and replacing them with more realistic outcomes, we can alleviate anxiety and worry considerably.

When left untreated, anxiety can worsen and lead to the development of other physical and emotional issues. If you feel as if worry has impacted your day-to-day life, consider reaching out for professional support. Deer Oaks counselors are available 24/7 and can provide supportive listening, tools, and referrals for overcoming anxiety.

By:  
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# Beware of Credit Repair Scams



It's almost impossible to open your email or surf online without stumbling across ads to "repair your credit" or "fix your credit." Companies that pledge instant and remarkable improvements to your credit cannot deliver on their lofty promises.

These days, with credit at a premium, families are suddenly finding that they may be rejected for credit cards, loans, and mortgages, and the temptation to pay for services to "fix" the problem on their credit report can certainly be enticing. While there are steps that consumers can take to repair bad credit, all of these steps require little to no money, just time. There's usually no reason to pay someone to do these things for you, and no one can or should promise to improve your credit. The majority of these credit repair company offers cost significant money, and they often are unable to deliver on their grand promises.

Furthermore, these "credit repair" companies often recommend or use fraudulent and illegal methods to repairing credit. For example, some companies will send multiple credit disputes of negative (but accurate) records to the credit reporting agencies, claiming that information is incorrect, under the law that information must be verified as accurate within 30 days or should be removed from your record. This is illegal—accurate, negative information should not be disputed, and this information can be added back to your record once it's verified as accurate.

Another fraudulent method is to recommend that you open a new social security number or employer identification number. This is also illegal and fraudulent and definitely does not work.

The FTC website offers recommendations on how to recognize a credit repair scam. Beware companies that require money up front and recommend that you do not contact credit agencies yourself, among other things.

Keep in mind that any legal, ethical method to repairing credit can be done by you, without any fee. This includes sending a 100-word statement to the credit agencies, explaining your delinquencies, disputing any inaccurate information, and continuing to pay bills on time.

## 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).*