



BALANCE

Employee Assistance Program Newsletter
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The EAP is a professional and confidential counseling service available to you and your family to help resolve personal problems before they affect your health, family or job. There is no cost to you or members of your family for services provided by the EAP.

In those cases where referrals are necessary, they can often be made to prescreened professionals or community organizations whose charges may be covered within the allowances of your health insurance. Call **845-638-8880** to arrange an appointment with an EAP specialist.

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From the Director

Susan Mazzarella, LCSW, CEAP

Positive thinking is in large part the key to our success and happiness. Thoughts are of crucial importance in shaping experiences in our life. So much so that we have dedicated this issue of BALANCE to exploring and understanding the benefits of positive thinking. First, we must distinguish what positive thinking is not. Positive thinking does not mean that thoughts alone can bring success or fulfillment. Good thoughts are important for success but must be combined with taking practical steps. Similarly, positive thinking does not mean ignoring hardship or our weaknesses.

Positive thinking can however allow us to have confidence in ourselves and see the best in others, helping us to be less judgmental. We will explore the power of positive thinking within families and how families can remain positive throughout challenges and adversity. We will also discuss how to maintain a positive mentality in the workplace especially during times of stress and transition. Developing our own positive coping strategies will also be reviewed, as well as the power of “glimpses” in our daily life. Lastly, we will explore the connection between positive thinking and our health.

A positive mindset focuses on strengths, virtues, and other factors that help people thrive and achieve a sense of fulfillment, as well as more effectively manage stress and overcome adversity in their lives.

“Every thought is a seed. If you plant crab apples – don’t count on harvesting Golden Delicious.”

Bill Meyer

Remaining Positive throughout Family Challenges

Everyone's family has its share of "ups" and "downs," challenges, and adversity. Often, these challenges bring about negative morale within the family. Although family problems cannot always be resolved with a "snap of the finger," remaining positive will help family members cope with their difficulties to resolve them.

Remaining positive when addressing challenges that create difficult emotions is beneficial for individual family members and the collective unit. Take the initiative early on to keep in mind all the positive things that have come from family relationships, including children, fond memories, and movement through various life events and experiences.

Having a positive mindset throughout family challenges requires patience, kindness, and the ability to refrain from negative communications both verbal and nonverbal. Consider the following tips for remaining positive in times of familial difficulties:

1. **Self -Talk** – Manage your internal dialogue. If you focus only on negative things, it will show in your actions. Take control and attempt to view things in a positive light. This will help to alter your mood, allowing you to address the issue at hand.
2. **Communication** – Tone of voice and choice of words are important especially during challenging family times. How things are said is extremely important. The right words and a gentle, upbeat tone versus a loud, harsh tone go a long way.
3. **Ask for advice** – When talking to a family member about a problem, ask for help/guidance. Engaging others, for assistance and support, such as getting opinions and/or advice on toilet training for your toddler or services for an elderly relative, is in and of itself positive.
4. **Be aware of your limits** – Remember we are human and can only do so much at any given time. Don't overextend yourself. Collaborating as a family during challenging times will positively affect family morale.

If you or a family member would like to learn more about remaining positive throughout family challenges, consider contacting the EAP for confidential, professional guidance and support at 845-638-8880 or email us at EAP@montefiorenyack.org

Reference:

www.livestrong.com www.selfgrowth.com www.ehow.com



Remaining Positive in the Workplace

It can be difficult to maintain a positive outlook in the workplace, but rather than falling victim to the work stress and negative attitudes that may surround you, strive to promote positivity and optimism. Try to look for the good in your coworkers and your workplace.

Simple strategies that lead to a positive attitude in the workplace are:

Be appreciative - Observe how you communicate with coworkers. If you practice asking useful questions, giving accolades and being gracious at work, you will notice a difference in the people you work with and your own feelings about work.

Give thanks - Thank coworkers for the work they do that makes your job easier – include peers, managers and office assistants. Cultivate a thankful, positive attitude in the workplace, and in return you'll notice a change in how coworkers treat you.

Acknowledge a job well done - One way to create positive energy at work is to give a “Most Valuable Player” or “Employee of the Month” award. Once a year (or month) ask employees to nominate or vote on a coworker to receive the award.

Celebrate - Take time to celebrate birthdays, holidays, life changes and achievements. Not sure how to celebrate? Bake cookies and bring them to work or decorate an employee's office, door, or desk.

Be enthusiastic - Enthusiasm is infectious. If you're going to spend eight hours a day at work, why not make it more than just tolerable. Try to smile, laugh, and enjoy your job. If you work to create a more positive attitude in the workplace, others will follow.

Practice random acts of kindness - Each day try to do something kind and helpful. Offer to cover for a coworker so they can attend their kid's soccer game, bring a busy colleague a cup of coffee, or volunteer for a project.

Have fun - We all know someone who can make anything fun and make time fly. Be that person! It's amazing how a joke here and silly celebration there can breathe life into a stale office.

Resist sarcasm - It's tough to break the cycle of sarcasm, but it's worth the trouble. If you're feeling sarcastic, challenge yourself to come up with something clever to say that energizes the positive attitude in the workplace, rather than depleting your coworker's energy.

Look for the good - Instead of blaming and finger pointing, focus on the positive qualities of your coworkers. You'll be surprised how far this can go.

Be kind - Challenge yourself to be honest and friendly with coworkers without being mean and disrespectful.

Positive employees make for a positive work environment. If you would like additional information on remaining positive at work contact the EAP at 845-638-8880 or e-mail us at EAP@montefiorenyack.org.

References:

M. Levins. [When Your Negative Outlook is Killing Your Career.](#)

B. Rosner and S. Campbell. [Recession-Proof Your Career: Maintaining a Positive Attitude in the Workplace.](#)



Using Positive Psychology to Develop Optimistic Life Strategies

When we're happy, we're optimistic and feel great! But it's impossible to feel happy all the time. Life brings with it challenges, obstacles, and of course stress. It's how we manage these challenges and stress levels that become the strategies for which we can build resiliency and become open to more positive feelings.

Often our experience of stress comes from our perception of the situation. Sometimes that perception is accurate but other times it is not. For instance, on occasion we might be unreasonably harsh with ourselves or instinctively jump to the wrong conclusion about people's motives. This can cause a spiral down effect leading to negativity. Having an optimistic style is to see bad events as temporary, changeable, and localized.

Positive Psychology focuses on "well-being" as a combination of feeling good as well as having meaningful relationships and a sense of accomplishment in life. Psychologist, Martin Seligman, PhD, developed the **PERMA Model**, which includes five essential elements that should be in place for us to experience lasting well-being.

P - Positive Emotion

We need positive emotion in our lives. Any positive emotion like peace, gratitude, inspiration, hope, satisfaction, pleasure, curiosity, or love falls into this category. The message is to really enjoy oneself in the here and now.

E - Engagement

When we are truly engaged in a task, project, situation, we experience a "state of flow" during which time seems to stop, we lose our sense of self, and we concentrate intensely on the present. This is the process of identifying one's highest strengths and talents and using them more. Doing so allows for a sense of achievement.

R - Positive Relationships

As humans, we are social beings and healthy relationships are core to our well-being. Research has shown that those who have meaningful, positive relationships with others are happier than those who do not. Relationships take hard work and are strengthened only when we try to connect with other people.

M - Meaning

Most of us want to believe that we are working and living for a greater purpose. So, finding meaning is important to our overall sense of well-being. Meaning comes from serving a cause bigger than ourselves, whether this is a specific deity or religion, a nation you take pride in or a cause that helps humanity in some way.

A - Accomplishment/Achievement

Many of us strive to better ourselves in some way, whether we are seeking to master a skill, achieve a valuable goal or win some competitive event. Finding balance is key as exhausting ourselves in pursuit of the next achievement does not enhance well-being. Similarly, if you suspect you are not devoting enough time or energy to accomplishing your dreams, then start now.

Focusing on these five elements and identifying the positives in one's life takes commitment and effort.

Try these exercises in pursuit of remaining positive:

- 1. Author your positive story** - One page in length showing yourself at your best and illustrating the use of your highest character strengths.
- 2. Practice Savoring** - Take the time to enjoy something you usually hurry through such as eating a meal, taking a shower, driving your car, etc. Then reflect on the experience you had versus when you are rushing through it and note the difference.
- 3. Use Active/Constructive Responding** - visibly react positively and enthusiastically to good news you hear.
- 4. Write a gratitude letter** to someone who impacted your life positively. Then mail or hand deliver it to them if possible.

If you or a family member would like to learn more about using positive psychology to develop optimistic life strategies, consider contacting the EAP for confidential, professional guidance and support at 845-638-8880 or email us at EAP@montefiorenyack.org

Reference:

www.authentic happiness.org www.mindtools.com Flourish, Martin Seligman, PhD, (2011)

Glimmers

“What we see depends mainly on what we look for”- John Lubbock

Glimmers are those tiny seemingly insignificant moments when you feel a sense of joy, pleasure, peace and gratitude. They are often tied together with simple, daily things like petting an animal, taking a hot shower or listening to the rain outside your window. If you've ever seen a sunset that has taken your breath away, stopped what you're doing to delight in a child's smile or feel a gentle breeze against your skin, then you have experienced a glimmer. Glimmers aren't grand experiences but rather they are small moments that begin to shape our system in very unique ways.

We have the power to take in our world in a way that helps us to feel good. The practice of noticing and appreciating glimmers sparks positive feelings and cues your nervous system to relax which has a positive effect on mental health. Learning to find glimmers helps to enhance well-being and reduce stress.

Often, we are unaware of the power that we have over how we take in the world. There is a reason that multiple people can experience the exact same events and have completely different interpretations and responses to that event. The power does not lie in the details but instead in the filter in which we take in those details. Setting a glimmer intention such as, I will see a glimmer before lunch, can help to shape that filter and allow for the awareness and embracing of glimmers when you come across one.

To increase the likelihood of noticing glimmers,

1. Spend time in places that nourish you and connect you with people you enjoy.
2. Start a glimmer journal, where you write down each glimmer as it appears as well as the relating emotion attached to the glimmer.
3. Since we are wired for connection, you may choose to someone in your life to go on a glimmer journey with you and share your experiences with each other.

Once you notice and embrace one glimmer, your brain will begin to look for connections and glimmers will appear more easily. When we pay attention to glimmers, we'll see them everywhere thereby producing feelings of calm and happiness.

For more information or support on shifting how we take in our world please reach out to the EAP at 845-638-8880 or e-mail us at EAP@montefiorenyack.org.

References:

Newport Institute, January 2024.

Glimmers are the Opposite of Triggers, USA Today, March 23, 2022.



Positive Thinking and Our Health

No doubt about it there is a close link between positive thinking and our health. The impact it has on our bodies is so strong that it can even extend our life. The power of positive thinking and its effects on our health is heavily researched and has already pointed to specific benefits including lower risk of cardiovascular disease, lower levels of stress hormones, lower levels of inflammation and lower incidence of depression and anxiety disorders.

Positive psychology focuses on strengths, virtues, and other factors that help people thrive and achieve a sense of fulfillment, as well as more effectively manage stress. Several positive emotional states can contribute to greater emotional resilience and health. Three of these are gratitude, optimism, and mindfulness. Positive thinking encourages the development of positive emotions, experiences, and character traits.

Putting positive psychology into practice:

- Reverse the focus from negative to positive. Be aware of what your thoughts are, positive or negative, and replace negative with positive thoughts.
- Develop a language of strength. Identify and talk about positive qualities, emotions, and personal strengths.
- Practice your strengths. People who use their strengths regularly will function better in life.
- Balance the positive and negative. Identify and foster the positive in yourself and others to balance out the negative.
- Build strategies that foster hope. Fostering hope in oneself and others will likely increase the odds of successfully dealing with adversity and overcoming a challenge.

Positive thinking is a way to foster well-being and optimal functioning. If you would like to know more about the power of positive thinking or the principles of positive psychology, to apply to yourself personally or at work, contact the EAP at **845-638-8880** or e-mail us at EAP@montefiorenyack.org.

