



# TheLexLine

A newsletter from TheLexingtonGroup, Inc.  
Employee Assistance Program

**SPRING 2016**

## For Your Information



### HEADACHE PREVENTION

Concentrating on your computer screen for a long time can cause eyestrain which in turn can cause temporary head pain. Take occasional "eye breaks" by looking away from your computer screen and into the distance. This will give your eyes relief.

### FORMING NEW HABITS

If you're going to start doing something new, try it out for at least three weeks. Experts say this is how long it takes to form a new habit.

### STRESS RELIEF TIPS

When you're feeling overstressed, do something physical. Stress is a preparation for physical action. Walk,

swim, jog, or workout at the gym to blow off steam in a safe and healthy way.



## WELLNESS

### Healthy Ways To Improve Your Mood

Bad moods are an inevitable part of life. What can be particularly frustrating, however, is when we know we're in a bad mood, but seem unable to snap ourselves out of it. Are you aware of the many short-term and long-term, healthy techniques and strategies you can utilize to improve your mood?



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If you find yourself feeling down, anxious, grumpy, low in energy, irritable and quick to snap at family, friends or coworkers, try a few of the suggestions below and find what works best for you:

**1. Practice deep breathing.** Break the grip of a bad mood with controlled, slow and deep breathing. Here's what to do: Sit comfortably at your desk or alone in a quiet room. Close your eyes and inhale slowly and deeply through your nose (for approx. 7 seconds), then exhale slowly through your mouth (for approx. 8 seconds). Focus your attention entirely on your breathing. If you prefer, say (or think the word) "relax" or "calm" or another soothing word as you exhale. Do this for ten repetitions any time you feel particularly anxious or stressed. This technique, known as the "relaxation response," will calm your brain, relax your body and lift your mood.

**2. Exercise.** When you exercise, your brain releases endorphins, adrenaline, serotonin and dopamine – natural brain chemicals that work together to relieve tension, lift your energy and boost your mood. Researchers report that even a short brisk walk can give you an energy and mood boost. What types of exercise are best? Cardiovascular exercise (such as brisk walking, running, cycling, swimming or other aerobic activity), weight training and yoga have all been shown in studies to reduce tension and anxiety and improve your emotional state.

**3. Adjust your diet.** When you eat and what you eat affects your blood sugar levels, which in turn affect your energy and mood. Nutritionists recommend the following to help stabilize your blood sugar levels and mood:

- Eat small meals and snacks every few hours to avoid peaks and valleys in your blood sugar levels. Eating consistently throughout the day provides your brain with a constant source of fuel to help stabilize your energy and mood.
- Limit consumption of simple sugars and refined carbohydrates to lessen major blood sugar swings. Concentrated sources of sugar like soda, candy, fruit juice, jam and syrup can create radical spikes (and drops) in your blood sugar levels,

## Improve your mood...

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which can leave you feeling irritable and tired. Additionally, refined white starch foods like white bread, crackers, bagels, muffins, breakfast cereals and white rice can have the same effect on your blood sugar and mood. Limit your consumption of these foods. Instead include more complex carbohydrates in your diet, such as vegetables, fruit, beans, peas, lentils, whole grains, brown rice and oatmeal.

- Include protein with meals and snacks. The addition of protein to a meal or snack will help slow the absorption of carbohydrate in the blood and lessen blood sugar and mood swings. Good protein sources include chicken, turkey, seafood and fish, veal, pork tenderloin, tofu, eggs and low-fat yogurt.

- Cut down on caffeine. Although it can provide an initial boost in energy and concentration, too much caffeine is linked to depression, fatigue and mood swings.

**4. Let it out.** If you're in a bad mood, there could be an obvious problem or emotional reason for it. Try to determine why you're in a bad mood and talk to a family member, friend or counselor about it. Simply talking about your problem will help you start to feel better. Allow yourself to feel your emotions. Remember, bottling up your feelings will only darken your mood, so let your feelings out.

**5. Make adequate sleep a priority.** Scientists have documented the link between sleep deprivation and a poor mood. According to a survey conducted by the National Sleep Foundation, those who got fewer than six hours of sleep on weekdays were more likely to describe themselves as stressed, sad, angry and pessimistic. Conversely, those getting adequate sleep reported more positive feelings. For a better mood, make the quality and quantity of your sleep a priority. Research suggests that most healthy adults need seven to nine hours of sleep each night.

## WELLNESS

# Recognizing Panic Disorder

Imagine you're safe at home, sitting comfortably in front of the TV when out of nowhere, you feel your heart rate accelerate, your breathing becomes erratic, and you experience true terror for no reason whatsoever. This is the experience of the panic sufferer.

People suffering from panic disorder may not be anxious all of the time. However, they do experience unanticipated "attacks" that recur after periods of normal functioning. These "attacks" are sudden, overwhelming periods of intense fear (panic attacks) that seemingly come out of nowhere. Quite often, a person suffering from a panic attack will believe he or she is suffering from a heart attack and dying.



### Common symptoms

Typically beginning in the teens or early adulthood, common symptoms of panic attacks include shortness of breath, dizziness, heart palpitations, nausea, numbness or tingling, chest pain, a sense of "strangeness" or being detached from one's surroundings and fear of going "insane" or dying. The person suffering from panic disorder often develops anticipatory anxiety, tension and worry that the panic will happen again.

### Getting help for panic disorder

The key symptom of panic disorder is the persistent fear of having future attacks. If you or a family member suffers from repeated panic attacks, and especially if you have had a panic attack and are in continued fear of having another, these are signs that you should consider getting help from a mental health professional who specializes in panic and anxiety disorders.

If you or a family member needs help, call your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for confidential counseling, referrals or information. We're here to help you.

# The Lexington Group

## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Caring and individualized help for personal and family concerns is only a phone call away.

For confidential help 24 hours a day, call The Lexington Group, an international Employee Assistance Program provider at:

United States	1-800-676-HELP (4357)	Marshall Islands	1-800-676-4357
Canada	1-800-567-4343	Mexico	001-888-819-7162
England	0-800-169-6706	Puerto Rico	1-800-676-4357
Cayman Islands	1-855-328-1185	TTY	1-800-955-8339
Ireland	1-800-812-411		