



# TheLexLine

A newsletter from The **Lexington** Group, Inc.  
Employee Assistance Program

**SUMMER 2016**

## For Your Information



### LIFT YOUR MOOD

Being around negative, unhappy people can bring you down and make you feel equally unhappy. Negative energy is infectious, but so is positive energy. To improve your mood, spend as much time as you can around the happy people in your life.

### WORK/LIFE BALANCE TIP

Make the most of family time. Spend some time alone each day with your spouse and each child. Even if it is only for a few minutes, talk, read, or participate in an activity together. Also, plan special family events and ignore your weekend agenda of household duties once in a while and enjoy family time together.

### DO YOU KNOW THE SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION?

Many people recognize excessive sadness as a sign of depression but did you know that symptoms of depression often include headaches, back pain, irritable bowel syndrome, chronic fatigue, anxiety, sleep problems, shortness of breath, and many other conditions? If you have persistent symptoms that resist treatment, the underlying problem might be depression. Call your EAP or doctor and ask to be examined for depression.

## FAMILY LIFE

# The Challenge Of Step Parenting

Whether you are already a parent or not, taking on the responsibility of being a stepparent can be a difficult and challenging job. Depending upon the ages and number of children that are involved, you may have to deal with several different responses to you, as a new parental figure. It is quite normal for a new stepparent to feel like an outsider or an interloper in someone else's family. It is important to remember that you and your new spouse are creating a new family. If you have children too, you will be creating something called a "Blended Family", because you will be blending your two families into one. It may take some time, but everyone involved needs to find their new place.



The following are some guidelines that may be helpful:

### Work it out.

Sit down with your spouse and talk about the problems, fears, expectations or roadblocks that you may have. You might have to take your wife or husband's ex into consideration when making decisions about how much authority you will have as a parental figure.

### Create new family traditions.

As a new family, you have no traditions. One of the things that makes a family a cohesive unit is a history composed of shared memories and experiences. Over time, this new family will create its own history which will help solidify it into a family unit. It is important to let everyone mourn the loss of their old ways and traditions while creating new and unique ones for the future.

### Love me, love my kids.

It is very common and normal to believe that because you love your new spouse, you'll also love their children. Good intentions aside, you can't force or just expect that people will love or care for one another. It's not fair or reasonable to believe that because you're married, everyone in the family will be in love with each other. Initially, what's most important is that there is a mutual respect among all the family members. Forging a new relationship as a parental figure with the children of your spouse will take time, patience and some hard work on everyone's part.

### Second parent, second best?

Not surprisingly, many stepparents feel like they are second best. They have a whole lot of history to try and compete with. Don't try to compete. Be yourself. The best thing for everyone is to just be who you are.

# Better Communication For Couples



Why do we always seem to argue about “silly” things? How can I get my partner to open up more? These are examples of the kinds of questions couples often ask counselors. While every couple’s situation is unique, these general guidelines can help you improve your communication with your partner:

**Set An Example** – If you want your partner to open up more, set the example by sharing more of your own thoughts and feelings. Try sharing interesting things you have read or overheard. Relate an experience that happened during the day.

**Keep It Light** – Try talking about something else besides the “problems.” Pass on a joke or bit of gossip. Make a decision not to bring up the hassles with work, kids or finances, at least not until the appropriate time.

**Make “I” Statements** – Avoid starting a sentence with “you.” “You” messages blame and judge the other person. “You” messages often trigger defensiveness or hostility in your partner and tend to increase conflict. Instead, put yourself on the line by sharing how it is for you. Say, “I think” or “I want” or “I feel.” “I” messages can express emotions in a way that is not threatening. No cheating by saying, “I think that you...!”

**Use “Feeling” Words** – It’s not fair to expect your partner to guess or “figure out” what you are feeling, as in “If he loved me, he’d know!” Quit playing the guessing game and say it. Be sure to use feeling words like “sad,” “happy,” “excited,” “angry,” “worried,” etc. Remember to start the sentence with an “I.”

**Ask Open-Ended Questions** – Avoid questions that can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.” Otherwise, that’s often all you’ll get. Try starting out the question with “how,” or “what,” as in, “What do you think about...” or “How do you feel about...” Don’t ask “why.” Chances are the other person doesn’t know anyway and “why” can sound like an accusation.

**Do Something Together** – Experience has shown that people, particularly men, are more likely to share their feelings when they are doing something together that both can enjoy.

## Your EAP is here to help

If you are concerned about a particularly difficult relationship issue, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for FREE and CONFIDENTIAL counseling, referrals or information. Remember, your EAP is always available to help you or your immediate family members with most-any personal, family or work-related concern. If you need help, why not call an EAP counselor today? We’re here to help you.

## Step Parenting...

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**“You’re not my real father/mother. I don’t have to do what you say.”**

Don’t be surprised when you hear this or something very much like it. Working with your spouse and creating a plan for parenting will go a long way to help remedy this type of situation. At some point, the whole family will need to talk openly about these issues and how you will all deal with them. What is most important is that you and your spouse agree on how to proceed and be consistent with kids.

## Your EAP is here to help

Contact your EAP if you need help with an on-going or difficult family issue.

# 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		