



Balance

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APSA

Prevent Caregiver Depression



Caregivers suffer depression at three times the rate of other people. It's important to know the signs and symptoms of depression—and five important rules:

- 1) Don't dismiss stress and the symptoms of depression with self-talk lectures about "handling it better" or "brushing it off."
- 2) Understand the difference between "caring" and "doing." Be open to help from other people and from devices and technology that can ease your burden or encourage independence by your loved one when appropriate.
- 3) Don't wait to feel strained before asking for help.
- 4) Know what activities rejuvenate you so when you get respite, you can reenergize yourself.
- 5) Find another caregiver and develop a friendship with that person so you can bond socially for support.

Quick Change Your Mood



If you're feeling negative and grumpy today, here are some ways to turn on positivity:

- 1) Use deep-breathing exercises to reduce stress. The slow, rhythmic breathing will calm you down and the extra oxygen raises alertness.
- 2) Get moving. Even a quick 15-to 20-minute workout is enough to produce mood-elevating endorphins.
- 3) Push away and tune out negative influences. Read or engage in something that uplifts and inspires instead.
- 4) Fake it 'til you make it. Enthusiastically engage a friend or coworker and put your focus on brightening his or her day. You'll find that cheering others up cheers YOU up as well.
- 5) Finally, make a quick "gratitude list." Nothing shrinks upsetting events to a manageable size like focusing on what you are thankful for in your life.

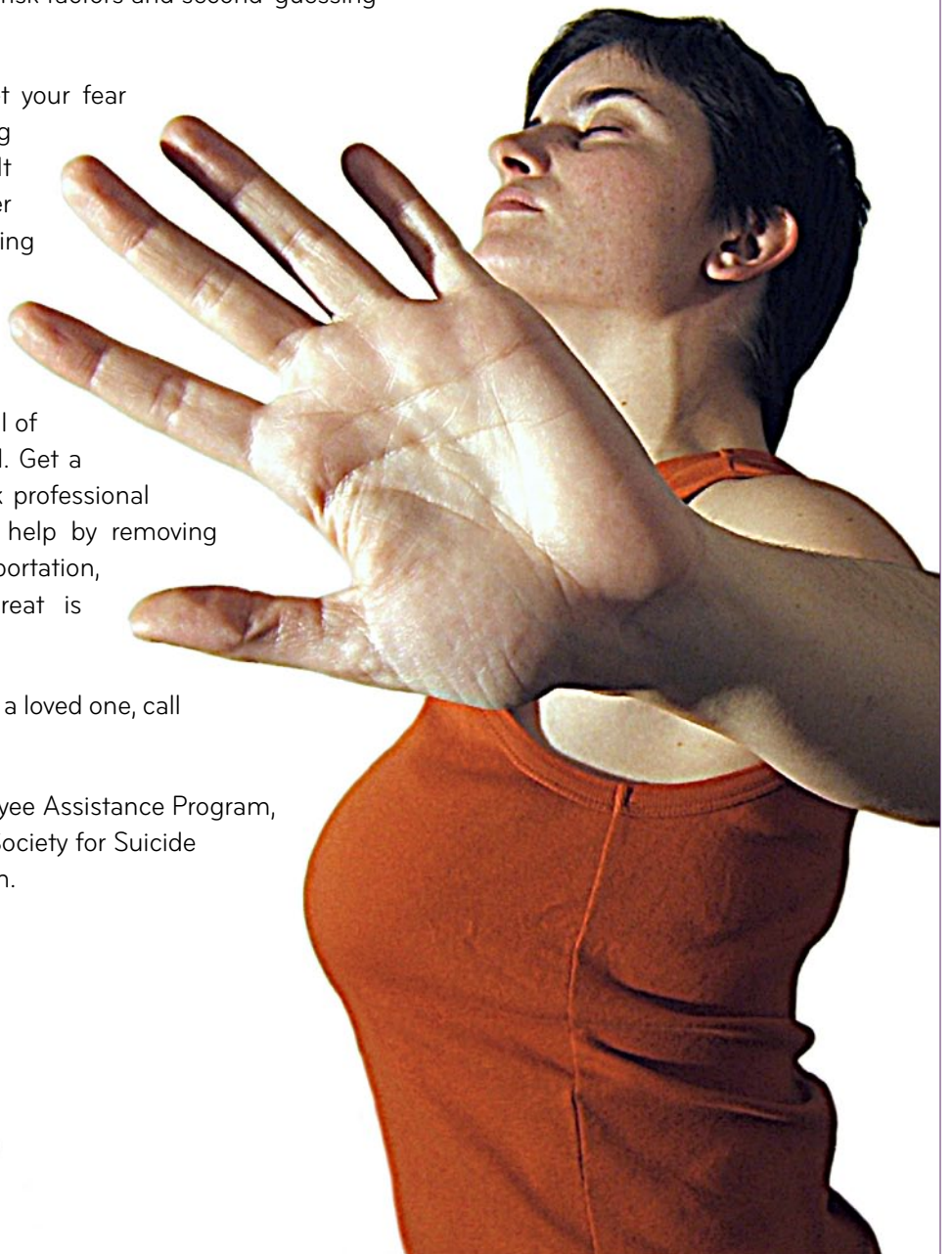
Don't Shy Away from the Signs of Suicidal Thinking

A person who attempts suicide will usually reach out for help first. Behaviors or cries for help may be subtle. Would you recognize the warning signs? If someone mentions having suicidal thoughts, don't shy away. Be ready to act by knowing the risk factors and second-guessing your denial response.

Here's rule No. 1: Ask about it. Don't let your fear hold you back. Empathizing or inquiring about suicidal statements saves lives. It is not what pushes a suicidal person over the edge. People who are contemplating suicide will usually talk about it, but they often need to be led into the conversation. Always take the matter seriously. Stay calm, and express your concern and assure the suicidal individual of how much he or she is loved and valued. Get a commitment from the individual to seek professional help, and agree to facilitate access to help by removing obstacles to it. Provide childcare or transportation, or summon emergency help if a threat is imminent.

If you need immediate help for yourself or a loved one, call 911, 1-800-SUICIDE or 1-800-273-TALK.

Other resources include your Employee Assistance Program, www.suicide.org, www.afsp.org (American Society for Suicide Prevention) or www.survivorsofsuicide.com.





Sleepless Teens and Difficult Behavior

Is that glow under your teenager's door another late-night Facebook session? It's time to get your kid off the grid and into bed. Health experts say teens need at least eight and a half hours of sleep a night, and most aren't getting anywhere near that. If your adolescent is regularly staying up too late, expect more than a little morning grumpiness. Lack of sleep in teens is linked to disciplinary problems, increased physical aggression, substance abuse and other behavioral issues. It can also lead to poor academic performance. The best way to get your teen to hit the sack at an appropriate time is to enforce a consistent sleep schedule. Eliminate caffeine close to bedtime, and shut down stimulating devices such as cell phones, laptops, MP3 players, etc.



Alcohol Use Prevention, and Parents

No one can guarantee that your teenager won't be influenced by peers to consume alcohol someday, but you can reduce the risk. Communication is the key - not just for a direct message of disapproval, but also for its ripple effect on peers. Simply being firm and saying you do not want your child to consume alcohol reduce risk. Say nothing and risk will increase. The same goes for marijuana. Being a watchful parent can create a "repellent" effect, because alcohol-using peers who would otherwise call with invitations to drinking events may bypass your child. You may get a reputation as a strict parent, but the payoff can be immeasurable. Start early by sharing information about the effects of alcohol with your child.

Do not omit risk of death from overconsumption. Tragic news stories easily provide testament. Many parents resist being firm about teen abstinence. They fear being seen as uncool or contributing to their child's decrease in popularity. Reject this thinking. It is not safe or legal for a teenager to drink alcohol. More steps: Be aware of what your kids are doing, where they are, where the phone numbers of friends' parents are, and who is accompanying them when they leave point A and go to point B. Some parents think this is too much "watching" or "helicoptering," or that it interferes with their busy schedules. **Do you?**



National Eating Disorder Screening Week: February 26 – March 3, 2012

While we often see headlines in the tabloids about actors and other famous people who suffer from an eating disorder, the shame and secrecy surrounding these life threatening illnesses keeps many from seeking help for these treatable conditions. Without proper treatment, an eating disorder can lead to anemia, osteoporosis, heart attacks, cardiovascular disease and, in severe cases, death. These serious health effects, along with increased risks for mental health concerns like depression and substance abuse, underline the need for early identification and treatment.

How can you recognize an eating disorder?

- **Anorexia nervosa:** individuals with this form of eating disorder distortedly perceive their bodies to be overweight when they are actually dangerously underweight, and often are perfectionistic.
- **Bulimia nervosa:** individuals eat excessively, later purging food by vomiting, using laxatives, and exercising excessively. They often exhibit impulsive personality traits.
- **Binge eating disorder:** similar to bulimia nervosa, persons with binge eating disorder consume excessive amounts of food, but do not purge after consumption.

APS Healthcare's Employee Assistance Program. The EAP program through APS Healthcare assists organizations and their workforce in managing the personal challenges that impact employee well-being, performance and effectiveness. APS' life management consultants employ a comprehensive approach that identifies issues impacting the employee and assists them in developing meaningful solutions.

Please call the phone number below for more information about your Employee Assistance Program and the services available to you.

1-866-598-3978

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How common are eating disorders?

According to National Eating Disorder Awareness (NEDA), approximately 10 million females and one million males struggle with anorexia or bulimia in the U.S., and binge eating disorder afflicts millions of Americans. Four out of ten individuals have suffered from an eating disorder, or have known someone else who has, and experts believe the statistics underestimate the actual number of individuals suffering from these conditions.

Participate in a National Eating Disorder Screening Week Event

NEDA will also provide screenings and presentations by health professionals, fashion shows and panel discussions, as well as other resources for eating disorder awareness.

Screening for Mental Health, Inc., a public advocate for mental health screenings and resources, will provide valuable resource kits to participants of its College Response Screening Week.

For event information and other resources, visit:

- NationalEatingDisorders.org
- MentalHealthScreening.org/programs/colleges/nedsp.aspx
- APSHelpLink.com – using the search function, enter “eating disorders” for an assessment tool, articles and online seminar on healthy eating.

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