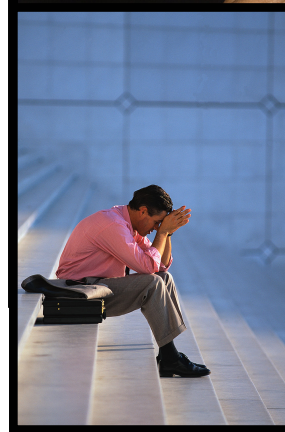


Stress & Mental Health in Tough Times

Looking after your mental health will help you manage stress and stay well. Most of the time we can identify and deal with the causes of stress. Sometimes high levels of stress may develop into a more serious health issue and if it does it is important to remember you are not alone and there is help available.

Mental health is about how you think and feel and your ability to deal with ups and downs. Your mental health does not always stay the same. It can change as you move through different life stages or in response to difficulties in your life such as losing your job or having money worries. There are things you can do to look after your mental health in the same way you can look after your physical health.

Stress and worry can affect your mental and physical health. We all have times when we feel down or stressed or worried. The stress of the economic downturn, losing a job or having money worries has a different effect on each of us.



HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

~ To look after your mental health, choose one or two steps below to start and build up to as many as you can each day.

Take it one day at a time ~ Focus on the here and now and trust that

you will have what it takes to cope with tomorrow. While this may feel impossible, think of times when you overcame certain situations in your life. This will improve your self confidence. Plan your day so that at the end of it you will feel you have achieved something.

Talk about it and ask for help ~ Talking about your feelings is a good way to cope with a problem. Speak to someone you trust such as your partner, family member or friend. If you are feeling overwhelmed by sadness or despair, contact your EAP or a mental health professional. If you feel there is no one to talk to call **The National Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or 211**

Get Involved ~ Keeping or taking up new hobbies or volunteering may help you meet people, feel less alone and more confident.

Get advice on Money Problems ~ Taking control of your money problems may help reduce your stress. Solutions EAP can connect you with American Consumer Credit Counseling (ACCC): **1-800-526-3485**

Alcohol, watch what you drink ~ Sometimes people drink alcohol to deal with or forget about problems but this can make you feel worse when the alcohol wears off. Avoiding too much alcohol is important if you are feeling down or worried.

Eat and sleep well ~ A healthy balanced diet and trying to get regular sleep will help your physical health and will also help you to be more positive and have more energy.

Keep active ~ Regular exercise will help you sleep and relax, look and feel better. A half an hour on most days can make all the difference.



SIGNS OF COMMON MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

Losing your job, having money problems as well as everyday stress can make you feel alone, angry, tired or withdrawn. These feelings are normal and usually pass, but if they don't go away they can be signs of a mental health problem. The signs listed below might indicate a mental health problem:

- Feelings of sadness or hopelessness
- Withdrawing from friends, family, school, work, sports or other things that are usually enjoyable
- Excessive and undue worry
- Changes in sleeping or eating habits
- Feeling tired all the time



- Major changes in mood
- Problems paying attention or staying focused
- Apathy – not caring about the things that important to you
- Not being able to function as well at work, college or home

If you are concerned that you or someone you know might be showing signs of a mental health problem, it is important to get support. Support can range from informal support from friends or family or advice from a mental health professional. For more information on supports see below:

- **National Hopeline:
I-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)**

- **The National Lifeline:
I-800-273-TALK (8255)**

- **2-1-1 INFO LINE or
911 for emergencies**

- **<http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/>**
go to the 24 hours crisis link and you will find resources to call listed by town.

Solutions
FOR PEOPLE IN THE WORKPLACE

I-800-526-3485
www.solutions-eap.com