

Coping Together

BACK TO SCHOOL!



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Newsletter II, 2014



LOOKING FOR A GUEST SPEAKER?

Contact Coping Together to have an experienced and licensed professional speak at your next upcoming event. We are able to educate your group on many topics ranging from parenting skills, mental health issues and concerns and available services for children and adolescents.



How Do You Manage Stress by Healthy Roads?

By: Tamara Denton, Ed.D., CADC

Some ways of dealing with stress are healthier than others. Taking a hot bath at the end of a long day is a healthy way to relax. Collapsing in front of the TV with a spoon and a tub of chocolate ice cream is not so healthy.

Take a moment to think about some of your current ways of dealing with stress. Are they working for you? Are they healthy?

If your stress management habits aren't working so well, or they don't support the healthy changes you want to make, it might be time to trade up. Here are some healthy ways to manage stress that you can try:

- Reach out. Talk to a friend or family member for support.
- Remember to breathe. Take several slow, deep breaths when you're feeling stressed.
- Get moving. Exercise a little bit every day—enough to get your heart pumping. Exercise is a terrific stress-buster.
- Tell it to the page. Write your thoughts and feelings down in a journal.
- Do something for you. Set aside time each week to do something you enjoy. Don't break this date with yourself.
- Tackle something manageable. Break down a large problem into smaller, more manageable steps.
- Analyze the problem. Brainstorm a list of possible solutions to a problem. Look at the pros and cons of each.
- Take action. Choose one concrete step you can take to address the source of your stress. Then do it.
- Let go. Some things are beyond your control. Accept what you cannot change.

Stress is a given. But falling back on unhealthy ways of dealing with stress doesn't have to be. Keep trying different healthy ways of managing your stress until you find what works best for you.



5 Personality Traits That Can Help Combat Depression

Overcome depression by incorporating these 5 traits into your everyday mindset.

By: Shelley Skas LCPC

When someone is depressed, they feel like there is nothing in the world that can make things better. When someone seeks help from a mental health professional, they are looking for something that is going to make it better. Whether this is medication or some type of inner discovery, there is still usually something missing. When someone is depressed it may be harder for them to tap into the discovery of themselves.

The piece that is missing is what the depressed person may not be bringing to the session. Everybody possesses certain personality traits, some are inherited and some are learned. When people are depressed they are not functioning as healthy as they can be, and coping and problem solving skills don't come as naturally as they had before. It is possible to learn how to incorporate the five traits below to your life, which may help make it easier for someone to overcome a depressive episode.

1. Empathy

First, people with depression usually can't think about anything except what is happening to them. When someone is depressed they isolate themselves and are blaming themselves or others for things that have gone wrong in their life. When people are depressed they may go through a stage of "*It's all about me*" and "*why is this happening to me.*" But the truth is that other people are usually not doing things on purpose to make someone else miserable, they are usually too self-absorbed and are doing things to benefit themselves.

We on the other hand take this very personal. It is important to remember that it's not always about *you*. Sometimes people have other things going on in their life that prevent them from following through in the relationship that you are used to having with them. Think about others as you go about your day. Doing something small for someone else may in turn help you feel better about yourself.

2. Extraverted

It's important not to isolate yourself. Staying in your bed or alone in your house will get you nowhere but *more depressed*. Go to a coffee house, go to a bookstore, just being around people will make you feel more productive and give you more motivation. Don't be afraid to say *hi* to someone you don't know as you're walking past — a small smile can brighten your day.

3. Conscientious

Be mindful of what you are doing. Be mindful of how you are feeling. Your thoughts are affecting your behavior. If you're aware that you've been sitting in the house for the past 36 hours doing nothing but laying in your bed, then perhaps *that* is affecting your mood. If your mindful of this then you'll be



more conscientious of changing that behavior. Notice how it feels to smile; how it feels to frown. Be mindful of your breathing as you go about your day. Being mindful of what you are doing and how you are feeling will give you the skills that you need to be conscientious of how your day could be going better by making healthier choices.

4. Optimistic

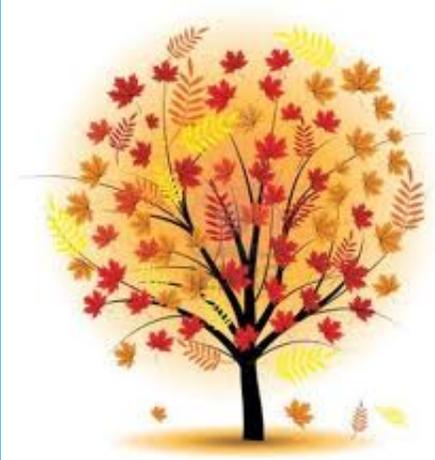
Thinking more positive can give you better self-esteem which may make you more motivated. This will allow you to be better at problem-solving. When someone is optimistic it allows you to feel healthier — which will usually help you plan for your future. Also, being more optimistic makes it easier for people to want to be around you. This can help your self-confidence and encourage you from isolating yourself from others. It feels good inside to know that people want you around them!

5. Open-Minded (agreeableness)

Keep an open mind. Try not to think that no matter what you do or what someone says to you, that things won't get better. Try to take into consideration how medication may help you. Try to be open-minded about talking to a mental health professional. Be open-minded to the fact that things couldn't *possibly* get worse, simply by talking to someone about how you feel and think. To the contrary, keeping things in and stuffing them is what brings about depression to begin with. Think of this situation as a learning experience, and it will be easier for you to use the new skills that you're learning and adapt them into your everyday life.

Mission

Coping Together is committed to lead in the advancement of Community-Based Mental Health Education by utilizing outreach activities in the Chicagoland Area. Quarterly newsletters, community-based mental health awareness presentations, mentoring programs for children, and parent education classes serve as vehicles to increase prevention and treatment awareness and achieve measurable outcomes.



COPING TOGETHER

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