



# solutions

The quickest and best way to contact the EAP is by calling **1-800-222-0364**



## Nurturing Healthy Relationships

We are all in relationships. Whether they involve loved ones, family members, colleagues, or friends, these social connections can have a tremendous influence on our self-esteem, quality of life, and overall health. Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help you stay close with those who matter most to you.

## Talking It Through

Humans cannot read minds. Nevertheless, couples often miscommunicate when they try—and quite often fail—to guess what each other is thinking. Such poor communication is the root of many relationship problems.

Here are three strategies for opening healthy exchange with your significant other.

### Listen

Active listening shows your partner you are interested in him or her and encourages honest, open dialogue. Maintaining eye contact, a relaxed and open posture, and leaning in slightly are good ways to show you're listening. Hear what your mate has to say without interrupting or anticipating what you'll say next. Restate in your own words what he or she said to confirm you understood it. After that, feel free to respond in an open, non-confrontational way.

### No blame

Talk about your own feelings and desires with "I" statements—"I feel," "I want"—rather than making accusations. Remember, you're working toward a resolution—not payback. Sometimes expressing your point of view without blame can be more helpful than trying to change or shame the other person's behavior.

### Defuse disagreements early

All couples experience conflict. But, what often separates lasting relationships from troubled ones is how quickly each party can move past a disagreement. Take steps to address tension before things boil over by looking for signs of pent-up frustration in your partner and asking what's wrong.

If communication remains strained between you and your companion after implementing these tips, don't be afraid to ask for help. Your EAP offers free referrals and relationship counseling.



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## Helping Your Children through Stress

Adults aren't the only ones who get stressed out. Children can also have a great deal on their plates—school, sports and extracurricular activities, the need to meet the expectations of parents and teachers, and struggles to make and maintain friends, just to name a few. Recognizing what they're experiencing and offering your support is a key role in your relationship with your children.

Use these four guidelines to help your child minimize stress:

**01**

**RECOGNIZE THE WARNING SIGNS:** Kids tend to keep their emotional struggles to themselves, so be aware of behavior changes. Indicators of stress may include irritability or pessimism, disinterest in activities they previously enjoyed, abnormal eating or sleeping patterns, avoiding parents, or feeling too "sick" for school or social events.

**02**

**INITIATE A CONVERSATION:** Talk with your child one-on-one, and make it clear you're there to support him or her. Hearing out your children and empathizing with them can often be an effective remedy for stress.

**03**

**TAKE THEIR WORDS TO HEART:** If your children open up to you, express your appreciation of how brave it was that they shared their feelings. Stay genuine and relaxed throughout the conversation.

**04**

**SEEK APPROPRIATE HELP:** Sometimes parents cannot manage their child's stress alone. If your child continues to struggle with stress after taking the above steps, contact your EAP. Our counselors can provide support in parenting and addressing feelings of stress.

## Hug to Fight Off the Bug

The verdict is in—meaningful social ties with others can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. But can strong relationships remedy strictly physiological ailments, too?

A recent study (December 2014) by researchers at Carnegie Mellon University found the simple act of hugging can help protect your body from infection. Frequent hugs and perceived social support help prevent you from catching

the cold and flu virus, and minimize your symptoms if you catch the virus.

Relationships may deter infection, but maintaining a healthy lifestyle may also be contagious among romantic couples. According to a 2012 report by researchers at University of Minnesota, practicing healthy behaviors rubs off on your significant other and can protect against obesity, while encouraging physical activity and nutritious eating.

So, take advantage of your EAP's readily available help to keep your social ties strong and enhance the well-being of your mind, body, and spirit.

Employee Assistance Program

24 HOURS A DAY

**1-800-222-0364**

(TTY: 1-888-262-7848)

**FOH4You.com**

Services are offered as a **FREE** benefit to you and your family members, and are confidential within the limits of the law.