



Did you know this.....

About your EAP?

Q. Can my son's fiancée use the EAP? She and my son live with us and she doesn't have medical insurance. She has been having a very hard time since her father passed away last year and she would like to talk to a counselor.

A. With most of our contracts you are welcome to share your EAP counseling benefit with *household family members*. They do not have to be legal dependents. Please phone EAP first to out if your company contract allows this and to authorize her use of your sessions.

Q. Can I come to an EAP appointment on work time?

A. Each employer sets their own policy about this so you should check with your manager or Human Resources office. Generally, time off for an EAP appointment is handled in the same way as time off for a medical appointment.

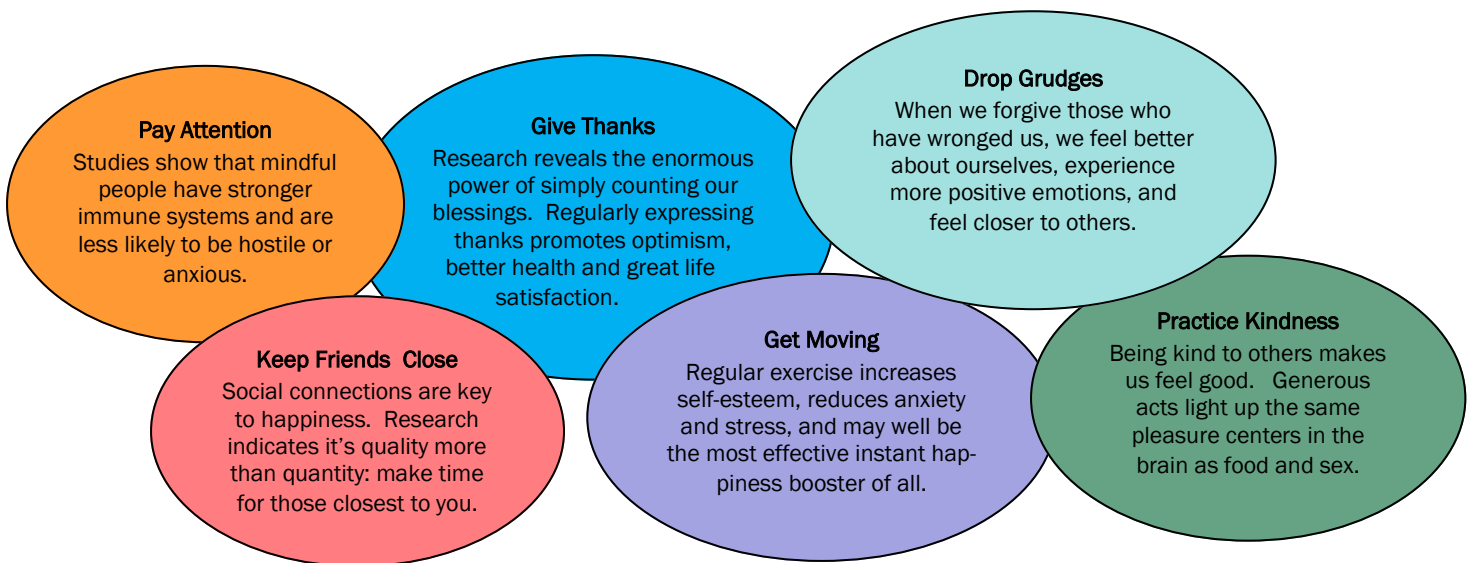


Q. Do I have to come to the EAP office to talk to a counselor? It's a very long drive for me.

A. There are EAP counselors at many locations on the Neighbor Islands. On Oahu we have counselors at our Kapiolani Boulevard office and also counselors in Kailua, Haleiwa and Aiea. If none of these are workable it may be possible to arrange for a phone session and very soon we will be offering e-counseling via the internet.



6 Habits of Happiness Worth Cultivating



..is a short term confidential counseling service, provided to you by your employer, that can assist in identifying and resolving issues that may be interfering with your job or personal life. Our experienced counselors are available across the Islands and can be contacted by phoning or emailing our Honolulu office.

Employee Assistance of the Pacific

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What to say ... when someone is hurting

When Susan, a psychologist in Michigan, had breast cancer, one of Susan's colleagues said she wanted to visit Susan after the surgery, but Susan didn't feel like having visitors, and she said so. Her colleague's response? "This isn't just about you."

"It's not?" Susan wondered. "My breast cancer is not about me? It's about you?"

The same theme came up again when another woman, Katie, had a very serious illness. She was in intensive care for a long time and finally got out and into a private room. She was no longer covered with tubes and monitors, but she was still in rough shape. A friend came and saw her and then stepped into the hall with Katie's husband, "I wasn't prepared for this," she told him. "I don't know if I can handle it."

This woman loves Katie, and she said what she did because the sight of Katie moved her so deeply. But it was the inappropriate thing to say. And it was wrong in the same way Susan's colleague's remark was inappropriate.

There is a simple technique to help people avoid this mistake. It works for all kinds of crises: medical, legal, financial, romantic, or family. It's called the Ring Theory.

Draw a circle. This is the center ring. In it, put the name of the person at the center of the current trauma. For a medical situation it is the person who is ill. Now draw

a larger circle around the first one. In that ring put the name of the person next closest to the trauma. In the case of Katie that was Katie's husband. Repeat the process as many times as you need to. In each larger ring put the next closest people. Parents and children before more distant relatives. Intimate friends in smaller rings, less intimate friends in larger ones.

Here are the rules. The person in the center ring can say anything she wants to anyone, anywhere. She can complain and whine and moan and curse the heavens and say, "Life is unfair" and "Why me?" That's the one payoff for being in the center ring. Every one else can say those things too, but only to people in larger rings.

When you are talking to a person in a ring smaller than yours, someone closer to the center of the crisis, the goal is to help. Listening is often more helpful than talking. But if you're going to open your mouth, ask yourself if what you are about to say is likely to provide comfort and support. If it isn't, don't say it. Don't, for example, give advice. People who are suffering from trauma don't need advice. They need comfort and support. So say, "I'm sorry" or "This must really be hard for you" or "Can I bring you stew and rice?" Don't say, "You should hear what happened to me" or "Here's what I would do if I were you." And don't say, "This is really bringing me down."

If you want to scream or cry or complain, if you want to tell someone how shocked you are, that's fine. It's a perfectly normal response. Just do it to someone in a bigger ring. Complaining to someone in a smaller ring than yours doesn't do either of you any good. On the other hand, being supportive to her closer loved ones may be the best thing you can do for the patient. Most of us know this. We know enough not to dump into the center ring. Ring Theory merely expands that intuition and makes it more concrete: Don't just avoid dumping into the center ring, avoid dumping into any ring smaller than your own.

Remember, you can say whatever you want if you just wait until you're talking to someone in a larger ring than yours. And don't worry. You'll get your turn in the center ring. You can count on that.

With thanks to Susan Silk and Barry Goldman. Susan Silk is a clinical psychologist. Barry Goldman is an arbitrator and mediator and the author of "The Science of Settlement: Ideas for Negotiators."

