Is Past Trauma Still Affecting You?

Can past traumatic events affect your health today, even if you rarely think about them anymore? You may feel that you have “moved past” the traumatic situation that you lived through years ago. But experiencing a shocking, scary or dangerous situation can launch a type of invisible assault on the brain triggering stress responses of the amygdala, hippocampus, and prefrontal cortex. The effects of traumatic experiences can persist for years and can include sleep difficulties, feeling “on edge,” being easily startled and struggling with vulnerability in relationships. About 7–8% of people will experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at some point in their lives. Contact the EAP to discuss your symptoms and get the help and support you need. You can also learn more about trauma and PTSD through the federal government’s National Center for PTSD.

Shorten Your Cold by Taking Zinc

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the common cold is the main reason that children miss school and adults miss work. Most of us get 2–3 colds per year, and each cold typically lasts 7–10 days. But here’s some good news, from this 2/10/2020 NPR story recent research shows that taking a zinc supplement at the onset of your symptoms can shorten the duration of your cold by two to three days. The study found that the effective dose is 80–92 milligrams per day of zinc acetate and/or zinc gluconate. Another key finding: choose a supplement that does not contain citric acid because it blocks zinc from being released in the body.

Mechanics of Making Deadlines

Don’t allow the quality of your work to suffer by missing deadlines. Meeting deadlines is an acquired skill with two influences—motivational and mechanical. Motivational: Agree on a deadline with your partner (the recipient of the work). Next, commit to the deadline. Then, acknowledge and empathize with the direct and indirect consequences of not meeting the deadline. Finally, make an accountability pact—allow your partner to contact you at any time about your progress toward meeting the deadline. Mechanical: Divide your project into smaller parts and determine how much time it will take to complete each part. Assign each part a “mini-deadline.” Adopt an early completion date for the project to ensure that you’ll meet the deadline you committed to. Success will reinforce your on-time habit, and a positive reputation will follow.
Help for Compulsive Video Gaming

Video gaming addiction is an obsessive preoccupation with online games at the expense of real-life activities or obligations. Although not a recognized psychiatric disorder, compulsive video gaming has the same psychosocial consequences of other compulsive disorders like gambling addiction. Since 2002, On-Line Gamers Anonymous (OLGA) has been helping people addicted to gaming and their families to heal and recover from this rapidly growing and disabling condition. And don’t hesitate to contact the EAP for additional support and resources to help yourself or a loved one.

Making the Most of a Bad Day at Work

Everyone experiences job-related setbacks and mistakes at work (“a bad day”). Our initial focus is usually how awful we feel or how unfair “it” all seemed. The challenge is moving past the negativity. Try out these strategies that add to your resilience. Here are six “T’s” to recapture a positive you:
Temporary: Remind yourself that feeling bad is temporary; it will soon dissipate. Teach: What can the day teach you? What part of it will add to your skills and abilities? Talk: Talk and vent your experience with a friend to experience emotional release. Twirl: Move, exercise, or play—engage in physical activity to influence a positive mood. Transcribe: Write down your feelings. Thanks: Focus on two to three things you are grateful for despite the setback, to help reenergize positivity.

Keep Work Stress from Coming Home

Is work stress coming home with you, along with tension, irritability, and anxiety? Experiment with these environmental controls and behavioral tactics to see if they steer your thoughts and reflexes away from work and worries. 1) Before leaving work, conduct a ritual that “completes your day.” For example, make a to-do list for tomorrow, put things away, stack paper neatly, roll your chair under your desk and empty the wastebasket. Take a good look at your office or work space, “feel the completion” of your day—and leave. These behaviors, practiced daily for just a week, will begin to compartmentalize work and home. 2) If bringing work home is unavoidable, don’t place your files, laptop, etc. on the kitchen counter or with house clutter as you walk through the door. Instead, create a special location for work in your home that is physically removed from areas where you engage with loved ones. 3) Create digital communication habits that reinforce boundaries. For example, on your voice mail, state your regular work schedule, including when you will be listening to voicemail and returning calls. Add specific instructions and guidelines for urgent matters. You can experience a dramatic reduction in calls if you give the caller the ability and the necessary information to decide if the concern is so urgent that it can’t wait. Most of the time, it really can. Compartmentalization, boundaries, and communications management—these are important instruments of work-life balance. Make them work for you.

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