

Winter
2013

FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE

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Confidential Counseling

- Addiction
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- Grief/Loss

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This issue:

- Exercise Your “Resiliency Muscles”
- Helping Children with Traumatic Stress
- More Sleep for Kids
- Stopping Covert Aggression at Work
- Achieving Your Goals:
No More Anger Over Failure
- Instilling a Desire to Exercise in Children
- Avoid Teaching Emotional Eating

Exercise Your “Resiliency Muscles”



Do you anticipate major changes in your life in 2013, either at work or at home? You can increase the likelihood of successfully adapting to these changes when they arrive by practicing a key principle of coping with change: see change as opportunity. Taught by change management experts, this perspective helps you establish resilience. Instead of dreading or feeling fearful of change, your new attitude will empower you to anticipate and spot its benefits more quickly, thus acting on opportunities sooner. To understand how this strategy works, start practicing the following: respond to unexpected, undesirable events in your daily life by looking for the opportunities each presents. Stuck in traffic? It’s an opportunity to listen to an educational CD or podcast. Flat tire? Use your waiting time at the tire center to catch up on reading or paperwork. No milk for your cereal? Get the grocery shopping done earlier this week. Practicing this “what’s in it for me?” perspective when faced with these mini-crises will exercise your “resiliency muscles.” Over time, you will become less resistant to change, and will be better equipped to deal with problems that linger.

Helping Children with Traumatic Stress

The Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting raises many issues; one such concern requiring closer examination is how small children respond to trauma, and what can be done to effectively intervene when trauma occurs. Several years ago, a state-of-the-art, little-known resource was assembled by the National Institute of Mental Health, titled “*Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Violence and Disasters*”. A copy of this parents’ education guide on trauma is available for download at <http://www.tinyurl.com/little-kids-1>.



More Sleep for Kids

If your child appears to have behavioral issues in school, pay attention to those you trust for medical advice or counseling, but also consider whether sleep issues might exist. New research on the subject appeared in the October 2012 issue of *Pediatrics*, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, demonstrating that additional sleep for kids—about 30 minutes more than their peers—made them more attentive in school, allowed for more emotional self-control, and improved alertness. Source: <http://tiny.cc/kids-sleep>.

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Stopping Covert Aggression at Work



Employees often rank improved communication and reduced conflicts as top concerns in the quest for a more positive workplace. Resolving these problems often requires an important skill: being able to share your thoughts and feelings appropriately and assertively when conflicts or squabbles arise. This opens the door to dialogue and solutions. Fail to understand this principle, and you risk becoming passive-aggressive in your dealings with others. You might exhibit stubbornness or unwillingness to cooperate, resist performing tasks assigned to you, pout, or place blame. You may feel negative more often, and may risk passing negativity on to others. Become a new you by recognizing that expressing your thoughts and emotions in close interactions with others is essential, even at work. Practice catching yourself “feeling” your feelings. Label what you are feeling so you can describe it in interactions with others. Practice this life skill, and you’ll foster closer relationships and experience fewer conflicts. The payoff is feeling more control over your life, and being more positive about people at work.

Achieving Your Goals: No More Anger Over Failure

If you discover yourself slipping back into old habits and returning to behaviors you committed to giving up in your pursuit of new goals, commit to not beating yourself up over failure. The nature of change is not a straight line to the goal. There is an old saying that “defeat is temporary; only quitting makes it permanent.” Instead of berating yourself, remember that tomorrow is another day. Search for hidden opportunities to make a tweak and, like the scientist searching for a cure for cancer, try again.

Instilling a Desire to Exercise in Children



Obesity, type 2 diabetes and heart disease are growing problems among youth, making it crucial to instill a desire to participate in regular exercise. Of course, physical benefits of exercise are just the beginning. Improved mental health and managing future stress are important too. Rule #1: Don’t put exercise on par with household chores. Don’t link it to pain or drudgery. Instead, ask “How can I make exercise something that is associated in my child’s mind with enthusiasm, excitement, fun, and a feeling of accomplishment?” Part of the answer is modeling these emotional states yourself, both before and after exercise. Start young and begin this link-building early. Down the road, you’ll be amazed by the results of your positive parenting.



Avoid Teaching Emotional Eating

“Comfort food”—it has a pleasantly inviting sound to it, but it refers to the inappropriate use of food for purposes other than to satisfy nutritional needs or hunger. Research has shown that weight gain is more strongly associated with emotional eating than any other lifestyle factor. Tying emotions to food can happen quickly and be reinforced unwittingly. What did you learn about food and feelings growing up? Are you passing the “use food for comfort” message to those you love? Boredom, anger, depression, happiness, loneliness, stress, and resentment are common feelings that trigger eating behaviors. To intervene, learn more about emotional eating. The latest book on this subject will be released in June 2013: “Why Can’t My Child Stop Eating? A Guide to Helping Your Child Overcome Emotional Overeating” by Debbie Danowski, Ph.D. Source: <http://www.tinyurl.com/comfort-food-1>