

Memorial EAP

New Patient Toolkit



ChooseMemorial.org/MemorialEAP | 217-788-9345

Thank you for reaching out to Memorial EAP. Our primary focus is the health and continued safety of our colleagues and their families. We recognize that from time to time employees may experience stress, trauma or other life events that affect both their personal and work lives as well as overall quality of life. In an effort to support you and your family's recovery, we would like to offer the following information to help develop your own mental health toolkit.

Using Technology Effectively

Technology can offer many resources and allows for confidentiality and privacy, but sorting through the information can be overwhelming. We have done some of the work for you! Please check our list of self-help apps recommended below and feel free to visit and register on the Memorial EAP website to access many additional resources at [MemorialEAP.PersonalAdvantage.com](https://www.MemorialEAP.PersonalAdvantage.com).

The following list includes apps that help with managing depression and anxiety, substance use, supporting children, and mindfulness and stress relief:

What's Up

Free app for devices utilizing CBT (cognitive behavioral therapy) and ACT (acceptance commitment therapy) methods to help you cope with depression, anxiety, anger, stress and more.

MindShift CBT - Anxiety Relief

MindShift CBT is a free self-help anxiety relief app that helps you reduce worry, stress and panic by following evidence-based strategies. Using CBT tools, you can challenge negativity, learn more about anxiety, develop more effective ways of thinking, be mindful and relax.

Mood App: Journal

Use Mood App to process what you are going through. Whether it's a break-up or a panic attack, Mood App gives you the tools to express what you are feeling, so you don't get stuck in your thoughts.

Smiling Mind

Smiling Mind is a mindfulness meditation app for all ages to help bring balance to your life. Programs are designed to assist in dealing with the pressure, stress and challenges of daily life, in about 10 minutes a day.

Penny for Your Thoughts?

Often our thinking becomes clouded by negativity, misinterpretations, assumptions and unrealistic expectations that affect our perspectives, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and behaviors. Often, these unhelpful thought patterns worsen during high-stress periods and can increase stress as well. These patterns reduce our ability to manage stressors effectively. The good news is that by identifying and challenging unhelpful thinking, we can change unhealthy thinking patterns.

Please take a look at the list below and challenge yourself to identify some patterns that you might have experienced or are currently experiencing:

All-or-nothing thinking: This type of thinking causes people to see things as being the extremes of either great or horrible.

Overgeneralization: You see a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat. If you have failed at something in the past you believe that there is no use in trying because you will only fail again.

Mental filter: This type of thinking involves focusing on negative things so much that they become almost the only things an individual thinks about.

Disqualifying the positive: When an individual thinks this way they disrespect the good things in their life. This type of thinking makes it seem that the good things in your life don't really matter.

Jumping to conclusions: You make a negative interpretation and/or judgment even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support your conclusion.

- **Mind reading:** You think or assume that someone is reacting negatively to you even though you don't actually know what they are thinking.
- **The fortune teller error:** You anticipate or predict that in the future that things will turn out badly and feel convinced that your prediction is an already-established fact.

Catastrophizing: This type of thinking involves using words like horrible or terrible to describe an event. It also makes problems seem like they are bigger than we can handle by thinking things like, "I can't stand it."

Emotional reasoning: Our emotions are not necessarily an accurate guide to reality—especially if an individual is depressed, manic, angry and/or anxious. Just because we feel something doesn't make it true.

Should statements: Avoid trying to motivate yourself with “should” and “shouldn’ts.” “Musts” and “oughts” are also offenders. The emotional consequence is guilt. At the same time, when you direct should statements toward others, you feel anger, frustration and resentment.

Labeling and mislabeling: This happens when we start using swear words or insulting language in our thinking to describe either ourselves or others. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself: “I’m a loser.” When someone else’s behavior rubs you the wrong way, you may attach a negative label to him, “They are a #!&#@ idiot.” Mislabeling involves describing an event with language that is highly colored and emotionally loaded.

Personalization: You see yourself or others as the cause of some negative external event for which, in fact, you/they were not actually responsible.

After you have picked out some of the patterns that might be occurring, work on challenging those thoughts by asking yourself some of the following questions: “What is the evidence for/against the thought?” “Am I basing the thought on facts or feelings?” “Could my thought be an exaggeration of what’s true?” “Might other people have different interpretations of this same situation? What are they?”

Remember, your thoughts and emotions are not facts, but fleeting responses to experiences. Log your thoughts in a journal and practice switching up the language.

You Care for Others—Now Care for Yourself

Self-care is the practice of taking action to preserve or improve your own health. It is also the practice of taking an active role in protecting your own well-being and happiness, particularly during periods of stress. How you feel can affect your ability to carry out everyday activities, your relationships and your overall mental health. How you react to your experiences and feelings can change over time. Emotional wellness is the ability to successfully handle life’s stresses and adapt to change and difficult times. We suggest practicing the following coping strategies as often as you are able.

Sensory Self-Care: Calm the mind through the senses of touch, smell, sound, taste and sight. Take a soak with bath salts, snuggle up in your softest blanket while watching your favorite show, listen to your favorite song and snack on something healthy (or indulgent).

Emotional Self-Care: Be fully engaged and accept emotions in order to move on. Talk to yourself in a way you would talk to your best friend. Learn to forgive yourself and spend time affirming your value.

To help get in tune with your emotions and thoughts, try practicing mindfulness. This ancient practice is about being completely aware of what's happening in the present—of all that's going on inside and all that's happening around you. It means not living your life on “autopilot.” Find some time to take in some deep breaths, inhaling through the nose and out through your mouth, repeating often. Pause, Breathe, Center, Enter.

Spiritual Self-Care: Get in touch with your values and what really matters to you. Treat yourself in a way that is in line with your values and remember your good deeds. Spend your time on activities that bring you calm, meaning or joy. Practice gratitude and patience with yourself and others. Volunteering, learning something new or committing random acts of kindness can help feed the spirit.

Physical Self-Care: Improve physical aspects of your health as well as practice opportunities to blow off steam. Practice healthy habits and set goals. Increase physical exercise, make sleep a priority, avoid excess alcohol and stimulants and talk to your doctor about a diet that works for you. Go for a leisure walk while listening to your favorite album. Ride bikes or play tag with your children.

Social Self-Care: Combat loneliness and isolation through strengthening social connections with others who make you feel good. Spend time with safe and trusted loved ones to laugh or share struggles. Engage in groups that focus on a cause or interest that brings you meaning or happiness. Sometimes, just being in public around others can be helpful, like the park.

Don't hesitate to seek out additional support before or between counseling appointments by calling the Memorial Emotional Support Line.

Monday – Friday 8 a.m.–8 p.m. | 217-588-5509

This free, confidential hotline is staffed by graduate-level and licensed behavioral health clinicians and is available to anyone experiencing anxiety, depression or other behavioral health concerns.

Comprehensive. Caring. Confidential.

