



Dartmouth College  
Faculty & Employee Assistance Program  
603-646-1165

# HEALTHY

## EXCHANGE

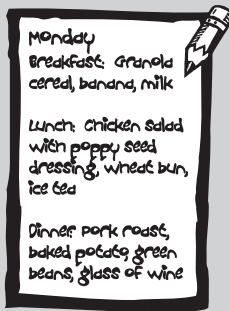
Dedicated to providing quality confidential assistance to employees and or their families who may be experiencing difficulties that impact their lives

**SPRING 2010**

## For Your Information

### DECREASE EMOTIONAL EATING

To decrease emotional eating, use a food diary to identify when and why you eat for emotional reasons. Keep an accurate record for at least one week of what you eat, when, and where. Include how you feel when you are eating. You may discover patterns that reveal the emotional cues that cause you to turn to food. Next, find healthier ways to deal with your emotions and find alternative behaviors to eating.



### ENDING PROCRASTINATION

If you frequently procrastinate, try the following tips to end this bad habit:

- Put yourself on a schedule.
- Break big tasks into smaller ones.
- Write your tasks down and prioritize them.
- Do tasks before you can put them off.

### ANGER MANAGEMENT

Make regular exercise a part of your long-term solution for stress and mood management. People who are stressed are more likely to experience anger and numerous studies have documented that regular exercise can improve your mood and reduce stress levels.



## Working Through Relationship Problems

### The Benefits of Marriage Counseling

*Less than 5% of divorcing couples seek marital counseling*



According to renowned marriage and relationship expert Dr. John Gottman, less than 5% of divorcing couples seek marriage counseling. Why do most couples in trouble fail to get professional help? What are the benefits of couples counseling? If you're experiencing marital difficulties, the information below is intended to encourage you and your partner to consider marriage counseling as a way to gain the perspective and skills needed to improve the quality of your marriage, overcome a relationship crisis and/or save your marriage.

#### Relationship skills must be learned

Listed below are some of the benefits and other important information about marriage/relationship counseling and how it can help:

#### 1. You need to "earn" your way out of a marriage.

Perhaps you've heard the preceding phrase, made popular by television psychologist and author Dr. Phil McGraw. "Don't consider divorce," says Dr. Phil, "Until you've investigated every potential avenue of rehabilitation. Unless you can look yourself in the mirror and know that you've tried everything there is, then you're not ready to be discussing divorce." Divorcing couples who never attempt to solve their problems by seeking the help of counseling, are throwing their marriages away without even trying.

#### 2. Seek help early.

According to Dr. Gottman, the average couple waits six years before seeking help for marital problems. Keeping in mind the fact that half of all marriages fail in the first seven years, the average couple lives for far too long with unhappiness. Marriage therapists agree that more couples can be helped if they seek help earlier, and if you wait too long to seek marriage counseling, the odds are against you.

#### 3. How can marriage counseling help?

Marriage counseling is generally provided by licensed therapists known as marriage and family therapists. These therapists provide the same mental health services as other therapists, but with a specific focus – a couple's relationship.

Marriage counseling affords you and your spouse numerous ways to bring about change that you would not normally know how to accomplish on your own. It provides a safe and supportive environment for you to identify and communicate the issues, feelings and behaviors that are bothering you, to facilitate understanding and positive change.

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## COUPLES COUNSELING...

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A qualified marriage and family therapist can provide instruction, coaching and feedback to help you develop new skills to improve your marriage, including:

- Learning ways to communicate better
- Learning how to argue in a healthier way
- Learning how to resolve conflict and problem solve in a productive manner
- Learning appropriate expression, disclosure and resolution of painful emotions
- Learning how to state your needs clearly and openly within your relationship
- Learning how to work through unresolved issues
- Learning how to negotiate for change within your relationship

### 4. Marriage counseling is hard work.

For marriage counseling to be effective, you must approach counseling with a realistic attitude. Don't expect a quick fix, or that the counselor will be doing all of the work. Marriage counseling is hard work for the participants. The process of unlearning bad habits and learning new, more effective habits is often intense, frustrating and exhausting. Expect the process to be difficult and take time, but that it can be worth the effort.

### 5. How did I contribute to this problem?

The reason to participate in counseling is to learn how to change. You must be willing to change to make counseling work. A sure sign of your willingness is asking yourself, "How did I contribute to this problem?" Simply put, you got yourself into this mess and now it's up to you to change it. Taking responsibility for your share of your marital problems is the first step toward finding effective solutions. Don't expect to change your partner. No one has the power to change another person. Instead, focus on learning what you contribute to your marital problems and changing your own attitude, behavior and skills.

**NOTE:** Some problems within a relationship may reach beyond the scope of therapy. Relationships in which physical or sexual abuse is an issue, may require other forms of intervention. Do not endanger yourself or your children by remaining in an abusive relationship. Seek professional help immediately.

# What Are The Signs Of An Addictive Disorder?

Addictions are most often associated with alcohol, drugs or smoking, but millions of individuals suffer from numerous other types of addictions. Known collectively as addictive disorders, in addition to abuse of substances such as alcohol, drugs and smoking, individuals can also become addicted to compulsive types of behavior such as: gambling, shopping, eating, sexual activity, pornography or use of the internet.



## How do you know if you have a problem?

Whether the abuse is to a substance or a behavior/activity, an addictive disorder exists when you cannot control your habit or behavior despite the fact that it is undermining your health, your relationships, your work, your finances, or your self-respect. If one of these behaviors has gotten out of control for you (or a family member), review the symptom checklist below to recognize if your behavior has become an addictive disorder. A "yes" answer to one or more statements below may indicate a problem:

1. The person thinks about the activity a lot when they're not doing it.
2. The person seems unable to control the amount of time spent doing the activity.
3. The person denies having a problem, when many things are obviously going wrong.
4. The person hides the activity from family and friends.
5. When unable to do the activity, the person becomes irritable, moody, tearful, angry, or hostile.
6. The person would rather do the activity than spend time with family or friends.
7. The person has extreme mood swings that are completely unpredictable.
8. The person blames other people for his/her troubles and does not take responsibility for his/her own actions.
9. The person has headaches, stomach disorders, and other unexplained and ongoing physical symptoms.
10. The person begins to neglect his/her appearance and to do hurtful or illegal things.

## Getting help

Whether you have reached the "addiction" stage or not, recognizing and admitting that your habit is negatively impacting your life is the first step toward overcoming it. If you need help, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for CONFIDENTIAL counseling, referrals and/or information. We're here to help you.



## Faculty & Employee Assistance Program Services

Provided by Dartmouth College for you and your family members

The Faculty Employee Assistance Program (F/EAP) is a free, confidential, professional counseling service for members of the Dartmouth College faculty and staff and their families. The FEAP may be used to address work-related or personal conflicts, including relationship or family problems, substance abuse, stress, and legal or financial concerns. We also provide consultation services for supervisors and departments, as well as maintain a resource directory.

For FREE confidential counseling and consultation call: 603-646-1165

E-Mail: [FEAP@Dartmouth.EDU](mailto:FEAP@Dartmouth.EDU)

Web: [www.dartmouth.edu/~eap](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~eap)