

A Healthy Outlook

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Workplace Mediation

The Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County offers free mediation services to MCPS employees. Mediation provides participants the opportunity to find common ground and understanding and

reduce conflict in the workplace. It allows for the workplace environment to be restored and opens communication between staff members. Mediation gives staff members a space to talk about issues or concerns affecting the workplace in a neutral and confidential environment.



Reasons to Participate in Mediation:

- Resolve conflict
- Free
- Voluntary
- Convenient time/location
- Confidential
- Neutral mediators
- Opportunity to speak openly
- Be part of the decision making around agreements and moving forward

If you would like more information or have questions about mediation, please give us a call at 240-314-1040. ●

Living With Mental Illness and Treatment

Nearly one in five U.S. adults live with a mental illness and figuring out how to handle treatment can be a daunting task. Mental illnesses include many different conditions that vary in degree of severity, ranging from mild to moderate to severe. Currently, only half of those experiencing these issues receive treatment. A good treatment plan is important for recovery.

How to Begin Treatment:

- **IF YOU ARE IN AN IMMEDIATE CRISIS** Please do not wait to seek help. Call 911 if you are having thoughts of self-harm or suicide. Also, you can call the National Suicide

Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255); en Español, 1-888-628-9454.

- **IF YOU ARE NOT IN A CRISIS** but have never seen a mental health provider before, you will need to first see someone for a full assessment to understand your diagnosis and develop a clear treatment plan. If you are unsure of where to start, consider visiting your primary care physician as a first step. Many primary care physicians have some training in mental health and can offer referrals to mental health practitioners and programs.
- **CHOOSE A MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER** you feel comfortable seeing. Research shows

that having a good “fit” with a therapist or mental health provider is an important factor in how effective treatment will be.

- **IN ADDITION TO OFFERING COUNSELING SERVICES**, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can offer referrals to treatment programs, therapists, and psychiatrists in your area. You also can ask for referrals from your insurance company, friends and family. Some things to consider when looking for a therapist are: location and availability, therapist payment options, and level of expertise.

To reach the EAP, call us at 240-314-1040. ●

If I Have a Commercial Driver's License, Can I Use Medical Marijuana If I Have a Prescription?

Are you using medical marijuana and have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL)? According to the United States Department of Transportation Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance, you might want to reconsider.

● In a memo, they state

"The Department of Transportation's Drug and Alcohol Testing Regulation - 49 CFR Part 40, at 40.151(e) - does not authorize "medical marijuana" under a state law to be a valid medical explanation for a transportation employee's positive drug test result."

● That section states:

§ 40.151 What are MROs prohibited from doing as part of the verification process?*

As an MRO, you are prohibited from doing the following as part of the verification process:

(e) You must not verify a test negative based on information that a physician recommended that the employee use a drug listed in Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act. (e.g., under a state law that purports to authorize such recommendations, such as the "medical marijuana" laws that some states have adopted.)

** A Medical Review Officer (MRO) is a person who is a licensed physician and who is responsible for receiving and reviewing laboratory results generated by an employer's drug testing program and evaluating medical explanations for certain drug test results.*

Therefore, medical review officers will *not* verify a drug test as negative based upon information that a physician recom-



mended that the employee use "medical marijuana." Please note that marijuana remains a drug listed in Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act. It remains unacceptable for any safety-sensitive employee subject to drug testing under the Department of Transportation's drug testing regulations to use marijuana.

What this means is that if you come up positive for THC, having a medical marijuana prescription will not be considered a valid excuse at this time, so you will face the full consequences of a positive test.

While medical marijuana seems to be therapeutic for a variety of medical issues, if you are a CDL holder, please consider talking to your doctor about other means to treat your medical problem. If you come up positive on a random test, you will no longer be able to use that CDL at MCPS. It would be a shame to have that happen when you are merely seeking to find help for a medical issue.

If you have questions please contact the MCPS EAP at 240-314-1040. ●

Resources for Families Coping with Mental and Substance Use Disorders

Every family is unique, but all families share a bond that can be used to support one another during trying times.

While there is no one-size-fits-all solution for helping a family member who is drinking too much, using drugs, or dealing with a mental illness, research shows that family support can play a major role in helping a loved one with mental and substance use disorders.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

● Caregiver Support Group

To support our caregivers, MCPS EAP offers a Caregiver Support Group, designed to provide helpful resources and establish connections among the caregivers within our MCPS community. The meetings are held from **4:15 TO 5:30 P.M. AT 45 WEST GUDE DRIVE**. Guest speakers present on important topics related to caring for a loved one. **All are welcome to attend. For more information or to register, please contact the EAP at 240-314-1040.** ●

Resources for Families Coping with Mental and Substance Use Disorders

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When a family member is experiencing a mental or substance use disorder, it can affect more than just the person in need of recovery. Evidence has shown that some people have a genetic predisposition for developing mental and substance use disorders, and may be at greater risk, based on environmental factors such as having grown up in a home affected by a family member's mental health or history of substance use. Families should be open to the options of support groups or family therapy and counseling, which can improve treatment effectiveness by supporting the whole family.

It is also important to remember that the unique challenges that come from helping a loved one with a mental or substance use disorder can be taxing, so

caregivers should take steps to prioritize their own health as well.

Family members may be more likely to notice when their loved ones are experiencing changes in mood or behavior. Being able to offer support, family members can connect those in need with treatment, resources, and services to begin and stay on their recovery journey.

● Need Help?

If you or a family member need help with a mental or substance use disorder, call SAMHSA National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or TTY at 1-800-487-4889, or use the [SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator](#) to get help.

You also can get support by contacting your MCPS in-house EAP (240-314-1040) or our external EAP partner, KEPRO (1-866-496-9599).

Article from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Mental Health Information Center, "Coping With Mental Health and

ASK THE EAP

Q. Do I have to pay for EAP services?

A. There is no cost to you as an employee or to any of your immediate family members who use the program. EAP is provided to you as a free resource, paid for by MCPS. Your insurance will not be billed and you do not have any copay to worry about. Payment comes into play only if you are referred to an outside resource, and in that case every effort will be made to make sure the resource is compatible with your financial situation. ●

One

kind word

can warm three

winter months.

Japanese proverb

Getting Help for You or a Loved One: Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is one of the most prevalent health concerns in the country. Domestic violence is the pattern of



abusive behavior in any relationship. The abuse may be physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological. Additionally, abuse can be present in the form of threats, stalking, or economic control.

In the United States 20 people, on average, experience domestic violence every minute; 19.3 million women and 5.1 million men have been stalked. Targets of domestic violence miss 8 million paid work days per year, which is equivalent to 32,000 full-time jobs. Being a target of domestic violence is not your fault. Domestic violence

can lower confidence and self-esteem. It also may cause isolation between social supports like family and friends. This can make it difficult to seek help, but knowing resource options is imperative for safety.

● Warning signs of an abuser:

- Extreme jealousy
- Overly controlling
- Impulsive
- Bad temper
- Violent toward animals

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Getting Help for You or a Loved One: Domestic Violence

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- Verbally abusive
- Displaying outdated ideologies about gender roles in a relationship
- Forcing sex or refusing to honor decided method of contraception
- Placing unwarranted blame on the target
- Hindering the target's ability to work or attend school
- Controlling all the finances
- Repeating accusation of infidelity
- Belittling the target in both private and public settings
- Hounding the target while at work

A number of programs are available to you. If these signs are familiar to you or a loved one, consider contacting:

- **THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP): 240-314-1040.** The EAP is a great first step when looking for confidential support. Information about the EAP is on their website at

www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/eap/

● THE FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER



*HELP when you need it
with life's challenges—
BIG OR SMALL*

(FJC): **240-773-0444**. The FJC of Rockville is a center offering free relief and resources for victims of family violence and their children. The center collaborates with agencies for advocacy as well as law enforcement and legal and social services. The center has a playroom for children with snacks available while meetings are taking place. To find out more about the resources they offer, please visit their website at

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/fjc/>.

● THE ABUSED PERSONS PROGRAM: 240-777-4673

This program offers Montgomery County residents free counseling, shelter, and support to victims of partner violence and domestic abuse.

● DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE: 1-800-799-7233.

However, in the case of an emergency, people should not hesitate to dial 911. More information on county services that can help is available at

https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgportalapps/Press_Detail.aspx?ItemID=23552.

● Resources:

- www.montgomerycountymd.gov/fjc/
- <https://montgomerycomd.blogspot.com/2019/10/public-can-access-free-county-services.html>
- <https://ncadv.org/statistics>
- <https://ncadv.org/signs-of-abuse>
- <https://family.findlaw.com/domestic-violence/what-is-domestic-violence.html>

*If we had no winter,
the spring would not be
so pleasant: if we did not
sometimes taste of adversity,
prosperity would not be
so welcome.*

Anne Bradstreet (1612–1672),
*'Meditations Divine
and Moral,' 1655*

A HEALTHY OUTLOOK

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phone: 240-314-1040 • www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/eap

Important Notice: Information in *A Healthy Outlook* is for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional. For further questions or help with specific problems or personal concerns, contact your employee assistance professional.

You may contact us or send your questions and comments to Jeffrey_Becker@mcpsmd.org

Please note that email is not necessarily confidential.

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