



A Healthy Outlook!

240-314-1040 • FAX 240-314-1049 • www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/EAP • Vol. 18 No. 4

Are You or Someone You Know in an ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP?

DID YOU KNOW that, in the United States, an average of 20 people are physically abused by an intimate partner every minute? This totals more than 10 million women and men per year. And, did you know that one in three adolescents in the United States is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner—a figure that far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence? We are fortunate in Montgomery County to have the Family Justice Center (FJC), a one-stop-shop where individuals and families impacted by domestic violence can receive support and services.

◆ Who is eligible to receive services?

Anyone who lives or works in Montgomery County and is experiencing, or has experienced, domestic violence is eligible to receive FJC services. Children are welcome to explore the child-friendly environment while their parents are receiving services.

◆ Will it cost me anything for legal services?

No. There are no fees for services at the Montgomery County FJC.

◆ Do I need an appointment?

No. You can walk in between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except for county holidays and closures.

◆ Contact/Location:

The "Eagle Building" at 600 Jefferson Plaza, 5th Floor, Rockville, Maryland. It is directly in front of Richard Montgomery High School and accessible by public transportation. **Call 240-773-0444.**

Please contact the MCPS EAP at 240-314-1040 if you would like to get more information or discuss your specific situation with a counselor. Help is available; all you have to do is reach out.

Adapted from the Family Justice Center newsletter.



MUSIC Builds Strong Minds

PLAYING A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT engages many parts of the brain at once. This can



especially benefit children and teens, whose brains are still developing. Introducing music to young kids can influence positively their ability to focus, act, and use language.

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9 Traits of a GOOD LISTENER

1. You face the speaker and maintain appropriate eye contact.
2. You are attentive, yet relaxed.
3. You keep an open mind to the speaker's message—hold off on arguing or getting defensive.
4. You do not interrupt nor impose “solutions.”
5. You wait for the speaker to pause to ask clarifying questions. Avoid questions that may disrupt the speaker's train of thought; ask questions only to ensure understanding of something the speaker said.
6. You give the speaker regular feedback (e.g., summarize, reflect feelings, or simply say “uh huh”).
7. You pay attention to nonverbal cues—feelings, tone of voice, inflection, facial expressions, gestures, posture.
8. You are aware of potential barriers that affect your ability to listen effectively.



MUSIC *continued from page 1*

Nina Kraus, professor of neurobiology and otolaryngology at Northwestern University, and her research team, study how musical training influences brain development. They found that music has positive effects on kids' learning abilities, even when the training starts as late as high school.

“The teens in our study showed biological changes in the brain after two years of participating in consistent music-making activities in school,” she explains. Kraus says that these changes affect learning ability and can help improve skills like reading and writing. These benefits can be long-lasting.

“Once you teach your brain how to respond to sound effectively, it continues to do that well beyond when the music lessons stop,” Kraus explains. “A little music goes a long way, but the longer you play, the stronger your brain becomes.”

Being musical may also protect you from hearing loss as you age. We naturally lose our hearing ability over time. In particular, it becomes harder to hear conversations in a loud environment. But researchers have found that musicians are better at picking out a person's voice in a noisy background.

Source: <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/sites/nihNIH/files/2018/January/NIHNIH-Jan2018.pdf>. For more information, visit www.newsinhealth.nih.gov/2018/01/sound-health.

Upcoming Events

CAREGIVER Support Group September Workshop

◆ “Healthy Living for your Brain and Body,” by the Alzheimer's Association

**September 12, 4:30–5:30 p.m. 45 West Gude Drive,
Redwood Room, 4th Floor**

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 include guest speakers who share important topics related to caring for a loved one. All are welcome to attend.

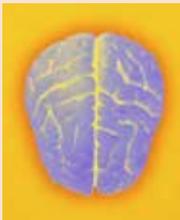
For more information or to register for the September 12 presentation, please contact the EAP at 240-314-1040.

SUPERVISOR TIP: Employee Recognition

PERSONALIZING THE RECOGNITION process is the most effective way to motivate and increase performance, acknowledge employees' contributions, and meet organizational objectives. It is important to be mindful of how to recognize your staff members as an element of motivation. Here are some simple ways to recognize them:

- ◆ Match the recognition to the person according to individual preferences.
- ◆ Directly link recognition to performance and goal achievement.
- ◆ Be timely. Give recognition as soon as possible after desired achievement.
- ◆ Always state why recognition is given, this will ensure clarity and repeat behavior.
- ◆ Make it fair. Allow all employees to have equal opportunities for recognition.
- ◆ Be creative. Use a variety of methods to recognize employees' accomplishments.
- ◆ Involve your team in determining what recognition to value.
- ◆ Give ongoing words of praise according to accomplishment.
- ◆ Always remember the golden words “Thank You.”

If you are not engaging in these behaviors currently, consider how to make recognition a habit. Words of praise and a “thank you” are simple to do, much appreciated, and worth the effort.



ANXIETY DISORDERS: The Difference Between Panic Disorder and Phobias

ACCORDING TO MENTAL-HEALTH.

GOV, people who have an anxiety disorder respond to certain objects or situations with fear and dread. They have physical reactions to those objects, such as a rapid heartbeat and sweating.

An anxiety disorder is diagnosed if a person—

- ◆ has an inappropriate response to a situation,
- ◆ cannot control the response, and
- ◆ has an altered way of life due to the anxiety.

Anxiety disorders include panic disorder and phobias. A brief description of each follows.

Phobias

A phobia is a type of anxiety disorder. It is a strong, irrational fear of something that poses little or no real danger. There are many specific phobias.

- ◆ **Acrophobia** is a fear of heights. You may be able to ski the world's tallest mountains but be unable to go above the fifth floor of an office building.
- ◆ **Agoraphobia** is a fear of public places.
- ◆ **Claustrophobia** is a fear of closed-in places.
- ◆ **If you become anxious and extremely self-conscious in everyday social situations, you could have a social phobia.**

Other common phobias involve tunnels, highway driving, water, flying, animals, and blood. People with phobias try to avoid what they are afraid of. If they cannot, they may experience—

- ◆ panic and fear,
- ◆ rapid heartbeat,
- ◆ shortness of breath,
- ◆ trembling, and
- ◆ a strong desire to get away.

Treatment helps most people with phobias. Options include medications, therapy, or both.

Panic Disorder

Panic disorder is an anxiety disorder. It causes sudden feelings of terror for no reason. You also may feel physical symptoms, such as—

- ◆ fast heartbeat
- ◆ chest pain
- ◆ breathing difficulty
- ◆ dizziness

Panic attacks can happen anytime, anywhere, and without warning. You may live in fear of another attack and avoid places where you have had an attack. For some people, the fear takes over their lives and they cannot leave their homes.

Panic disorder is more common in women than men. It usually starts when people are young adults. Sometimes it starts when a person is under a lot of stress. Most people get better with treatment. Therapy can show you how to recognize and change your thinking patterns before they lead to panic. Medications can help also.

For more information on mental health, go to <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/what-to-look-for/anxiety-disorders>

“Take those chances and you can achieve greatness, whereas if you go conservative, you’ll never know. I truly believe what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger. Even if you fail, learning and moving on is sometimes the best thing.”

~ DANICA PATRICK
([HTTPS://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/DANICA_PATRICK](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danica_Patrick))

Ask the EAP:

Q. *If I am in trouble for lateness, attendance, or a work performance issue, will going to the EAP get me out of trouble?*

A. If a personal problem is the cause of lateness, attendance, or a performance problem, working with the EAP on the issue can only help. However, the expectation is that you will need to improve your work performance, whether or not you participate in the EAP. Therefore, just coming to the EAP will not save you. You will need to make some changes.

Do you have a question for the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)? Send your questions to Jeffrey_Becker@mcpsmd.org

Improve Emotional Intelligence to MANAGE YOUR WORK STRESS



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE is recognizing and using emotions in positive and productive ways. A worker can maintain self-control and confidence using emotional intelligence, even in an increasingly stressful job environment. It is just as or more important than intellectual ability. It is about effective communication with others. It soothes wounded feelings and drains off stress. Here are the essential skills you need for practicing emotional intelligence:

- ◆ **Awareness of personal stressors and responses to those stressors.**
- ◆ **Mindfulness of your internal emotional environment and its effects on communicating with others, motivation, and meeting personal needs.**
- ◆ **Use of nonverbal cues and body language—often more influential than the words. Eye contact, facial expressions, posture, touch, and other signals can create or inhibit trust, interest, and connectedness. Sending, reading, and responding to nonverbal cues are major components in setting the tone of the workplace.**
- ◆ **The ability to use humor to diffuse stress and strengthen work relationships. The humor should never be at the expense of an individual.**
- ◆ **The ability to resolve conflict constructively. Stay focused in the present, disregarding old resentments and disagreements. Sometimes the best solution is to agree to disagree.**
- ◆ **The ability to resist trying to control the uncontrollable, especially the behavior of others. Focus on what you can control—managing yourself.**

Adapted from the article “Stress in the Workplace,” by Fawne Hanson. For more information, go to <https://adrenalfatiguesolution.com/stress-in-the-workplace/>. Printed with permission.

DEPRESSION Screening Day

On Thursday, October 4, the MCPS Employee Assistance Program (EAP) will be conducting screenings for depression, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The screenings take less than 30 minutes and are available for all MCPS employees and their family members. Screenings are free and confidential. This is an opportunity to learn more about depression, anxiety and other mood disorders, complete a brief screening questionnaire, and speak one-on-one with a mental health professional. If appropriate, referrals will be made for a complete evaluation.

Call the EAP at 240-314-1040 if you have questions and to schedule an appointment. Appointments are available from 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. at the EAP offices, 45 W. Gude Drive, Suite 1300, Rockville.

HYBRID EAP is Coming

CHANGES ARE COMING TO THE EAP—a great addition to the services we offer now. The “hybrid EAP” is a combination of services provided by both internal personnel (MCPS staff) and contracted personnel. We expect the contract will be awarded sometime this fall, so look for more details to come once that happens.

Questions?

Call us at 240-314-1040 or send us an e-mail at eap@mcpsmd.org.



A Healthy Outlook!

To help employees with troubling issues before they become overwhelming.



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

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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 e-mail is not necessarily confidential.

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