

Your Employee and Family Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Four ways to increase happiness on and off the job

According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, 20 per cent of Canadians will experience mental illness in their lifetime and all Canadians can expect to be indirectly affected by mental illness through a friend, family member or colleague. At the same time, studies based on Statistics Canada's community health survey suggest that 90 per cent of Canadians are either satisfied or very satisfied with their lives. These statistics reflect the resiliency of the nation and can serve as inspiration to increase happiness in all areas of your life.

Did you know that you can take a proactive approach to increase happiness and resiliency through positive psychology? This field of science recognizes the power of a healthy sense of control over all areas of your life, including work and private life. Not only is this sense of control valued for its effect on your well-being, its absence is associated with poor performance, depression and anxiety. But how do you achieve that all-so-important sense of control?

- **Focus on your strengths** – If you're constantly beating yourself up over your shortcomings, it's hard to be happy. Turn this around by focusing on what you're good at.
- **Manage or remove stress** – Do you have strategies in place to cope with stress? Whether you need a few moments to catch your breath, the occasional massage, regular exercise or a completely new environment, recognizing what's causing stress and taking steps to alleviate it can make you happier both mentally and physically.
- **Banish the pessimist and adopt a more optimistic view** – Pessimism is negative. If you're constantly expecting negative outcomes, how do you think that will affect your happiness? In contrast, optimism is positive. How do you think your happiness will be affected if you expect good things?
- **Become more flexible** – No matter how talented you are, how well you prepared for something and how optimistic you may be, life happens and it doesn't always go as planned. Do you want to brood about it or can you adapt? Which choice do you think will make you a happier, more resilient person?

Boosting your self-esteem, managing stress, becoming more optimistic and being flexible are four steps that you can take to increase your happiness and resiliency on and off the job. Take advantage of positive psychology and make your life more fulfilling – now!

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