

## How do I access EAP Services?

To request a confidential in-person, phone, video or e-counselling appointment, scan the QR code phone or visit our website.

NZ [0800 327 669](tel:0800327669)

[eapservices.co.nz](http://eapservices.co.nz)

AU [1800 726 474](tel:1800726474)

Intl [+64 9 353 0906](tel:+6493530906)



2018 eFlyer No.28

**ONE in FIVE** New Zealand adults will experience a mental illness in any one year. Therefore, it is important to develop an awareness and understanding of mental health issues, signs and symptoms to look out for, and strategies that will help us to better look after our mental health.

## STRATEGIES FOR LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

What we are aiming for is to feel good most of the time, be able to function well and to have strong social connections. When we have high levels of wellbeing, we also:

- Are more engaged and productive at work and home
- Have better physical health
- Have stronger relationships
- Have more sense of purpose

### Modifying stressors

Stress or stressed. They're two words that most of us use pretty regularly, possibly even daily.

We often use the word as a point of reference for how we are feeling or describing how our day is going. Stress can be a positive thing and we can thrive on the extra pressure, but for many this isn't really the case. When stress and the added pressure become too much, it becomes overwhelming and often leading to much greater issues.

We can choose to focus on the things that we can do something about, or we can add stress in our lives by worrying over things we have no control over. There is always something we can do, even if it is only managing our own feelings and reactions – which is admittedly easier said than done. It could be as simple as taking a couple of breaths before reacting.

### Changing our self-talk

The way we think about ourselves, other people and our place in the world has enormous influence on our wellbeing. It influences our emotional state and our behaviour. Consequently, by changing the way we think, we can positively influence our mood and how we respond to situations. Developing and practicing strategies that helps us challenge the mostly negative self-talk that goes on in our heads is critical to enhancing wellbeing.

### Developing a strong social network

Research shows that social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and can act as a buffer against mental illness. A primary social network (close family and/or friends) of less than three predicts the probability of common mental health problems in the future. Since the evidence also indicates that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to feeling well, then the idea of connecting with people is key.



### Relaxation

Relaxation and breathing control play a major part in reducing stress, and teaching us to be more present. Being in a state of mindfulness (being attentive to, and non-judgemental about, what is taking place in the moment) has been shown to be beneficial to wellbeing. It is also linked to self-regulation behaviours – being aware of our feelings and being able to regulate them.

### Supporting colleagues with Mental Health issues

Look out for your friends, family, work colleagues and if you see them in a distressed you can always ask something along the lines of "I notice you haven't been yourself lately, is everything okay?" If and when you do this, remember to:

- Resist making any judgement or conclusions about what is going on
- Encourage them to seek Professional independent support through EAP Services Programme

EAP professionals can help with techniques and tools to help you start or continue your journey to better mental health. If you see something in this eFlyer that you'd like to achieve and want some help, scan the QR code, phone or visit [eapservices.co.nz](http://eapservices.co.nz)



### Living a healthy lifestyle



As we all know, physical health has a huge impact on mental health, and vice versa. Try to remember the basics.

**Adequate sleep.** For most of us this is around 8 hours per night. Sleep is critical to good mental health, and we need to address any changes in our sleeping before they become habits. It is good to set up a relaxing bedtime routine an hour before bed – turn off technology and use this time to wind down and relax the body.

**Balanced diet.** Focusing on eating well – a balanced diet including fruit and vegetables and limiting sugary foods, caffeine and alcohol, especially before bed.

**Exercise.** Research has demonstrated that exercise is as beneficial to managing depression as medication. It also has a positive impact on anxiety and stress. Regular exercise increases levels of serotonin, a neurotransmitter involved in mood, sleep and appetite. Low levels are linked with depression. Exercise also increases endorphins – mood lifting chemicals in the brain. Aim to have some regular exercise you enjoy.

## WORD SEARCH PUZZLE



BELIEVE	TALKING	AMAZING
ATTITUDE	ACTIVE	HAPPY
KINDNESS	LISTEN	CREATE
EAP SERVICES	JOY	DREAM
WELLNESS	AWESOME	NOURISH
EMPOWER	COMMUNICATION	MOTIVATE
SMILE	LAUGHTER	LEARN
POSITIVE	<del>HOPE</del>	HUG
APPRECIATION	COURAGE	INSPIRE

# Assertive Communication... Getting the Balance Right

Assertive communication means standing up for your own or the rights of others in a positive and calm manner, without being aggressive or passively accepting the behaviour/thoughts of others.

People are often afraid that if they assert themselves, others will perceive their behaviour as aggressive. There is however a difference between assertive and aggressive communication. Whilst aggressive people tend to attack or ignore the opinions of others and focus on a favourable outcome for themselves, assertive people communicate their views whilst still being respectful towards others.

### You are being assertive when you:

- Honestly and openly communicate your feelings, thoughts and ideas
- Speak openly using a conversational tone
- Are clear and direct in getting your point across
- Make good eye contact, and adopt an open, relaxed posture
- Value yourself, and try not to hurt or marginalize anyone
- Achieve goals without estranging yourself from others, and everyone feels heard and respected ('I'm okay, you're okay')

Assertive communication can benefit your personal and work relationships. By behaving assertively, you can also improve your self-confidence and self-esteem, create win-win situations, improve your decision-making skills, earn respect from others, and create honest relationships. Learning to behave assertively can improve with practice.



Peanuts aren't technically nuts - they're legumes



According to Merriam-Webster, a nut is only a nut if it's "a hard-shelled dry fruit or seed with a separable rind or shell and interior kernel." That means walnuts, almonds, cashews, and pistachios aren't nuts either. They're seeds.

### How do I access EAP Services?

Appointments are available 7:30am – 7:30pm, Monday to Friday. In addition, many of EAP Services locations offer extended hours, including weekend support.

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