

# Employee Assistance Program

## Nurturing Your Relationships

Just as a garden needs sunshine, good soil, and water to grow, a healthy relationship needs to be cared for and fostered in a similar manner.

Relationships often weather life's hardships, struggles, and day-to-day responsibilities, but it is easy to forget to laugh, talk and make time for romance. To tend to your relationship, consider the following:

- **Make time.** Days are busy and stressful, and often you might feel pulled in so many directions that you don't realize how little positive attention you give to your relationships. Positive attention goes beyond discussing work, bills or who will shuttle the kids to school. Instead, it means making time to purposefully focus on each other in a positive manner. Try setting aside some time consistently each day or each week to spend some alone time together, even if it is only for 15 minutes a day or an hour each week.
- **Communicate.** Of all the factors that influence a relationship's growth, the most important is communication. Good communication isn't easy. It requires concentration and energy. Decide to listen and then be willing to be quiet, to maintain eye contact, to be open, and to learn to give feedback by paraphrasing, which is the technique of restating what another person has told you.
- **Be assertive.** Asking for what you want or need is a critical component of a healthy, growing relationship. Respectfully communicating your opinions, values, and feelings is as important as being open-minded and tolerant of your partner's opinions and desires.
- **Strengthen your connection.** Simply spending time together doesn't always nurture a connection. Find out what you need to feel connected to your significant other, and vice versa. There are a variety of ways that couples connect, whether through talking about feelings, participating in activities together, or simply through the power of touch.
- **Try something new.** Take turns picking a new activity and have fun! Try to find activities that are new to both of you, like dance lessons, pottery or rowing. Shared experiences not only create lasting memories, they also allow a couple to discover new territories and challenges while having some fun along the way.
- **Treat others the way you want to be treated.** If you want your significant other to be more romantic or considerate, be sure you are giving what you want to receive. Sometimes it is easier to focus on what we are not getting rather than what we are not giving.
- **Small things count.** Romance is the intentional act of being thoughtful and loving. It doesn't need to involve money or time away. Instead, it could mean a few special words written on the bathroom mirror or the offer of a massage to ease the strain of a stressful day.

For additional information regarding this topic, contact your Employee Assistance Program via the web or toll free number listed below.

 EAPHelplink.com

 Company Code: USGCares

 844.243.4440

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