

Human Behavior Associates

Treating People Right

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Laughter is good medicine

Benefits of Humor and Laughter

Humor is infectious, the sound of roaring laughter is more contagious than any cough, snuffle or sneeze. Laughter also triggers healthy physical changes in the body. Humor and laughter strengthen your immune system, boost your energy, diminish pain, and protect you from the damaging effects of stress. Best of all it is fun, free and easy to use.

Laughter, is a powerful antidote to stress, pain, and conflict. Nothing works faster to bring your

mind and body back into balance than a good laugh. Humor lightens your burdens, inspires hopes, connects you to others, and keeps you grounded and focused.

Laughing with others is better than laughing alone. Shared laughter is an effective tool for keeping relationships fresh and exciting. Sharing laughter and play adds joy, vitality, and resilience. Humor is a powerful and effective way to heal resentments, disagreements, and hurts. Laugh-

ter can unite people during difficult times. Using humor and laughter in relationships allows you to:

- Be more spontaneous
- Let go of defensiveness
- Release inhibitions
- Express your true feelings

Mutual laughter and play are an essential component of strong, and healthy relationships with co-workers, family members, and friends. Anyone can join the laughter movement. The timid

Special points of interest:

- Benefits of Humor and Laughter
- Maintaining New Years resolutions
- Social Anxiety Disorder

Maintaining New Year Resolutions

New Years resolutions can be overwhelming, when your list of resolutions are as long as your holiday shopping list. It is important to remember that the New Year isn't meant to serve as a cata-

lyst for sweeping character changes. It is a time for people to reflect on their past year's behavior and promise to make positive lifestyle changes.

Setting small, achievable goals throughout the year,

instead of a singular, overwhelming goal on January 1st can help you reach your desired change. Remember it is not the extent of the change that matters, but rather the act of recogniz-



Work on your sense of humor and laugh.

Continued Benefits of Humor and Laughter

may start with a few shy giggles. The courageous may jump in with deep belly laughter. A sense of humor is not required. All we have to do is believe, let go, clap our hands and laughter will live again. Laughter is feeling deeply which allows us to live fully.

Laughter is good for your health. Laughter relaxes

the whole body. A good hearty laugh relieves physical tension and stress, leaving your muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes after. Laughter also boosts your immune system. Laughter has been found to decrease stress hormones and increase immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, improving your resis-

tance to disease. Laughter also triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals. Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain. Laughter can improve the function of blood vessels and increase blood flow. Laughter makes you feel

Continued New Year's Resolutions



“One small step at a time”

ing that lifestyle change is important and working toward it, one step at a time. Making your resolutions realistic, guarantees you a better chance that you will keep them throughout the year, along with incorporating healthy behavior into your everyday life.

Start small, make resolutions that you think you can keep. If for example you would like to eat healthier, try replacing dessert with something else you enjoy, like fruit or yogurt, instead of focusing on your diet as a form of punishment.

Change one behavior at a time, unhealthy behaviors develop over the course of time.

Talk about it, share your experiences with family and friends. Having someone to share your struggles and successes with makes the road to a healthier lifestyle that much easier and less intimidating.

Don't beat yourself up, and remember that perfection is not realistic. Minor set backs when reaching your goals are completely normal and o.k. Don't give up completely because you ate a brownie and broke your diet, or skipped the gym for a week because you were busy. Everyone has ups and downs, therefore, resolve to recover from your mistakes and get back on track.

Ask for support. Accepting

help from those who care about you and willing to listen strengthens your ability to manage stress caused by your resolution. If you feel overwhelmed or unable to meet your goals on your own, you may want to consider seeking professional advice. Professionals can offer strategies to adjust your goals so that they are achievable, as well as change unhealthy behaviors and address emotional issues. Contact your employee assistance program (EAP) in order to obtain a referral for a counselor in your area by calling 800-937-7700.

Continued Benefits of Humor and Laughter

good. The good feeling that you get when you laugh remains with you even after the laughter subsides. Humor helps you keep a positive, optimistic outlook through difficult situations, disappointments, and loss.

Here are some ways to incorporate humor and laughter into your life.

Smile, smiling is the be-

ginning of laughter. Practice makes perfect.

Count your blessings, the simple act of considering the good things in your life will distance you from negative thoughts that are a barrier to humor and laughter.

Spend time with fun and playful people, these are people who laugh easily

both at themselves and at life's absurdities.

Bring humor into conversations, ask people "What is the funniest thing that happened to you today? Or in your life?"

Smile! Happy New Year!

Social Anxiety Disorder

Millions of Americans suffer from social phobia, also known as social anxiety disorder. As with many psychological conditions, the diagnosis is made when feelings and symptoms that are normal become amplified to the extent that they affect one's daily life.

People who suffer from social phobia have an abnormal fear of being judged by others, which leads to a constant sense of embarrassment. A survey conducted in 2005 suggests that 12% of people will experience social anxiety at some point in their lives. This disorder commonly starts during teen years and for some, may persist for many years or even a lifetime.

While the cause is not completely understood, there seems to be both a genetic predisposition as well as an environmental component. Social phobia sometimes runs in families but no one knows why some people experience it and others are not affected.

Social anxiety disorder can be treated with counseling and/or medications. Some of the medicines that are used to treat problems such as depression are also helpful for social phobia.

Symptoms of social anxiety disorder:

- Anxiety, self consciousness and embarrassment from being around other people.

- Excessive worry about upcoming events where interaction will be expected

- Avoidance of places or events where people gather

- Difficulty making friends and maintaining friendships.

Some physical symptoms may include:

- Excessive sweating
- Difficulty speaking or catching one's breath
- A sensation of flushing
- Trembling or uncontrollable shaking
- Nausea

If you or a family member have experienced these symptoms, you may want to contact your family

health professional or your EAP program can refer you to a counselor who can assist you or your family member with these issues. Access your employees assistance program by calling our toll free number 800-937-7700.