



ATTITUDE *Aptitude*

An Emotional Health Booklet

Live Well With Purpose

Emotional well-being is an important part of your overall health. People who are emotionally healthy are in control of their thoughts, feelings and behaviors. They are able to cope with life's challenges, keep problems in perspective, bounce back from setbacks, have positive self-awareness and maintain good relationships. Try the following tips to increase your emotional well-being:



Know Thyself

Take time to notice what makes you happy, sad, frustrated or angry. Try to identify the underlying reason behind every negative emotion and address it directly.



Connect With Others

Schedule a lunch date, call a friend, or go on a walk and meet a new neighbor. We all need positive connection with other people to stay healthy.



Manage Stress

Anxiety, fear and feelings of doubt can all lead to stress. Learn different ways to relax and cope with pressures and worries, like deep breathing, meditation and exercise.



Strive for Balance

You have control over your life, so strive for a healthy balance between activity and rest. Make time for the things you enjoy and focus on the positive things that make you feel happy and satisfied.



Discover Your Purpose

Decide what is most important in your life, like your family, your hobbies, volunteering or staying active. Choose to spend your time doing what is most meaningful to you.



Stay Positive

Try to focus on the good things in your life. Take the time to forgive yourself for making mistakes, and do the same for others. By embracing forgiveness, you can also embrace peace, hope and joy.



Mood-Boosting Foods

It's been said time and time again over the ages, and it's worth saying again – you are what you eat. The right foods can boost your mood, play an important role in improving mental clarity and can even influence your overall outlook on life. Being intentional with your shopping list can help you manage stress, sleep better and physically feel better by adding these “mood boosting” foods to your diet.

Almond milk (or other alternative milk) –

This substitute for dairy milk is easy to digest and full of healthy fat needed for optimal cell health and nutrient absorption.

Protein powder – You can use plant-based protein to help keep your body full, helping to eliminate sugar cravings and promote muscle health.

Hemp and chia seeds – These are both excellent sources of plant proteins and fiber that can promote healthy digestion.

Leafy greens – Full of essential vitamins and minerals, the family of dark green, leafy vegetables (kale, spinach, etc.) deliver vital nutrients like vitamin A, vitamin C, antioxidants, fiber, folate, vitamin K, magnesium, calcium, iron and potassium that our bodies need to maintain optimal health.

Ripe banana – The body needs specific nutrients to properly make and use serotonin, including vitamin B6. Bananas are an especially rich source of this vitamin. In addition, eating potassium-rich foods like bananas may help reduce symptoms of stress and anxiety.

Ask The Experts



How is developing resilience related to emotional health?

Building resilience is the process of adapting well to change, even in the face of adversity, tragedy or significant sources of stress. Not only does this acceptance help keep you healthier and safer, but being able to adapt to change fosters an environment where you learn to take a breath, slow down and experience the beauty of life in its entirety.

Resilience isn't just a personal characteristic that some are born with—it can also be learned. How you perceive your new circumstances is vital to being able to adapt to them, and only you have control over your perceptions. Being courageous, regulating your emotions and staying connected to others can also significantly bolster your personal resilience.

Resilience is essentially about getting the most out of your life, as independently as possible, in as positive and productive a manner as possible. Resilience is not about letting your emotions control you, but you controlling them.

— **Larry Dawes**, Gerontological Social Services Specialist, Eskaton Support Center

How does offering forgiveness contribute to emotional well-being?

Imagine a world without forgiveness - a world where, instead of three, there is only one strike and you're out. This would be similar to a prison sentence: no way to make amends, no way to try again, no more chances—only failure without hope of redemption. Holding the keys to our prison would be those whom we've hurt or emotionally injured, intentionally or unintentionally.

Studies have shown that being unable to forgive and holding onto unresolved issues produces resentment and bitterness. Not only do these qualities adversely affect emotional well-being, but they can also contribute to a decline in physical health. Therefore, if being unforgiving

truly destructs and depletes, then forgiveness must certainly give life and edify.

Think of a time when you caused someone pain and sought their forgiveness. What a welcomed relief it must have been when forgiveness was granted! You were given an opportunity to do right—another chance to be a life-giver. May we all find hope and freedom as we both seek and grant forgiveness in abundance.

— **Chaplain Patty DeShaw**, Eskaton Chaplain, Eskaton Care Center Greenhaven

How does providing service to others contribute to personal emotional health?

Service means helpful activity, or doing something for another's well-being. Mysteriously, service can boomerang back to heighten our own personal emotional health and wellness. The reward of gratitude from those benefitting from our acts of service can be nonexistent, implicit or heartily expressed. Regardless of the quality of feedback received, the one who gives service can experience satisfaction and joy from observing the fruits of their labor. For example, the tutor can see his student gain competence and confidence; the board member can see the organization improving; the gift-giver can see the smile of someone who feels affirmed, appreciated or encouraged.

"Even small acts of kindness done in great love make our offering something beautiful for God," said Mother Theresa of Calcutta. Each act of service starts a wave, helping to erode the shores of division, fear and hate. What invitation do you hear during this time of aging, fires, COVID-19, economic stress and racial unrest? Your act of service might do you a world of good!

— **Lynn Nelson**, Eskaton Village Roseville Patio Home Resident

Six Habits to Increase Your Emotional I.Q.

Empathy is the ability to step into the shoes of another person in order to better understand their feelings and perspective. Did you know that empathy is a habit we can cultivate to help improve the quality of our own lives?



Be curious about other people



Practice active listening



Challenge prejudices and discover commonalities



Spend time helping others



Step into someone else's shoes



Practice compassion meditation

Move to Improve Your Mood



Movement has many benefits — not only for your physical health, but also your mental health and well-being. Exercising stimulates the production of chemicals in your brain like serotonin that actually improve your mood and can reduce feelings of anxiety, stress and depression. Try these exercises to improve your mental health:

- 1. WALK** – Taking a stroll is the simplest, most accessible and most affordable exercise of all. Try going on a short 10-minute walk in nature to help encourage positive thoughts and improve mental alertness.
- 2. YOGA** – The superpower of yoga comes from the deep focus and attention spent on breathing. Yoga helps connect your body and mind. It can also train you to incorporate deep breathing into your day.
- 3. SWIM** – Accessible and low-impact, swimming can be a simple way to achieve mental clarity. Try a 10-minute swim to experience a mental boost for the day.
- 4. DANCE** – Associated with feelings of happiness, increased self-esteem and reduced stress, dancing is an easy way to achieve more rhythm in your life. Try learning a new dance with your partner or friend.
- 5. BIKE** – The resiliency required in biking has been shown to actually grow the brain and reduce feelings of depression and anxiety. Try to incorporate a 30-minute bike ride either inside or outside today!



A Labor of Love

A YOUNG GIRL OF 15 CLAMBERS OUT OF AN OIL TRUCK AND ONTO THE WINGS OF AN AIRPLANE, SWIFTLY FILLING ITS TANKS WITH GAS AND OIL BEFORE IT ROARS DOWN THE RUNWAY, A YOUNG RECRUIT BEHIND THE CONTROLS.

Her older sister sits in the cab, hollering at her sibling to hurry. Both young women have left high school to work at the airfield, so that they (and the rest of their family) can eat that night.

For most young people today, such a scenario is almost unthinkable, but for O'Connor Woods resident Joyce Schramek, this was her reality. Born

in 1926 in the state of West Virginia, the seventh child of ten, Joyce grew up in the middle of the Great Depression, her childhood spent working alongside her parents and siblings in order that the family might survive. Even though the work was hard, often starting before dawn and ending with the sunset, Joyce just smiles at the recollection. "When you have to work to eat, you learn to enjoy it," she quips.

Just before Christmas in 1941, the world radically changed when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and the nation was thrust into the middle of World War II. With most of the men heading off to serve their country, it fell to the daughters, sisters and wives left behind

“I would like to do it all over again, with all the hardships. I loved it.”

to find work and feed their families. At just 15 years old, Joyce was one of these young women, giving up her high school education to spend her days working with her sister, gassing up the planes at Eagle Field. “My sister, she drove the truck and I’d hop up on the wings of the plane and fill them up. It’s so sad we have to have a war to put everyone to work.”

In 1942, his oldest sons now grown and off fighting in World War II, Joyce’s father headed north in hopes of finding better work, ultimately landing at the shipyards in Richmond, California. Three of his daughters would eventually join him on the job, the two oldest finding positions as welders, while younger Joyce found employment as a burner. Since girls under the age of 18 weren’t permitted to work in the shipyards, Joyce was forced to lie about her age, going from 16 to “19” overnight. Dressing daily in head-to-toe protective gear like leather aprons, elbow-length gloves and steel-toed boots, Joyce spent her teenage years with an acetylene torch in her hand, piecing together the metal work of the “Liberty” ships, large freighters that carried supplies and ammunition to the fighting men across the sea.

If anything can be learned from this incredibly hard-working woman, it’s that the love of a united family and a willingness to prosper can take you far, if you have the resolve. “If I could be with my family, I would do it all over again,” she insists. “All the hard work, every bit of it. I really enjoy this life.”

To read Joyce’s full story, visit:
eskaton.org/age-beautiful



Emotional Health Quiz

1. Social and emotional experiences change with age.
2. Negativity generally increases with age.
3. Investments in meaningful relationships increase with age.
4. People who count on support of friends and family during times of need have a stronger sense of meaning.
5. One’s social life has nothing to do with one’s mental health.
6. Socially-active older adults are less likely to experience changes in cognitive health.
7. Emotional well-being is tied to physical health factors, such as blood pressure.
8. Close relationships are less likely to develop with age.
9. Older adults describe negative situations in their lives less negatively.
10. Experiencing positive emotions while socializing is linked to improved cognitive function.

	True	False
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Contributed by and adapted by Virtual Park Bench volunteers, Jonathan Mak and Dan Guo.

Answer Key: 1.T 2.F 3.T 4.T 5.F 6.T 7.T 8.F 9.T 10.T



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