

# FrontLineEmployee

WELLNESS, PRODUCTIVITY AND YOU!

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# MARCH

## IS OPTIMISM MONTH!

Optimism has received attention in recent years, with research attesting to its significant health benefits. One study showed that optimistic people are more likely to live past 85 years old, or 15% longer than non-optimistic people. That makes pessimism as a life orientation nearly as harmful as poorly managed type 2 diabetes!

Fortunately, optimism can be understood, learned, practiced and acquired as a naturally reactive way of viewing the world. You may have an awareness of how optimistic you are (or are not) from feedback you have received from others. Viewing the need to be more optimistic as a health issue can inspire you to take the next steps to improve your disposition.



The key is practicing a few exercises that will shift and slowly reinforce behavior change. For example, experiment with a “gratitude journal” and take note of the company you keep, as negativity can be contagious. You can find more ideas for retraining your thought patterns in books, online resources or by speaking with a Continuum counselor.

There is more to discover about the impact of optimism, but scientists think being optimistic may be accompanied by more goal-setting behaviors, staying on top of one’s health and proactive communication skills that reduce stress and conflict. So why not give it a try? With a little experimentation, you may discover optimism’s fortunes in your own life.

Source: [www.harvard.edu](http://www.harvard.edu) [search: “optimists live longer”]

## FLIP THE SCRIPT to fight negativity

Overcome negative self-talk more effectively by “flipping the script” and transforming the moment of negativity into positive energy.

- 1 Whether you stub your toe or are criticized on the job, be aware of the impulse to engage in negative self-talk. Instead, think “I could make myself feel worse or beat myself up about this, but I refuse. I’ll focus on preventing a similar experience.”
- 2 If you’re being more mindful about what you eat, don’t say, “I can’t have cake.” This is self-limiting and self-punishing. Flip the script and say, “I don’t want cake.” It’s more empowering.
- 3 Be your own best personal coach. After a mistake, rather than say, “I am not good at this,” flip the script, and consider how to do it better. If you don’t know how, say, “If I did know how to do this better, what would I be doing?” Then try that!

# USING THE EAP

## when the problem isn't "yours"

Reach out to Continuum EAP for help with personal problems that aren't directly your problem but still affect you.

Examples include:

- Mental illness that affects a relative.
- A close friend experiencing addiction.
- A loved one or friend you fear is at risk for self-harm following a tragic incident.
- An adult child who is in an unhealthy relationship.

Contact Continuum EAP and our EAP professionals will help you take the next step to address the concerns you are experiencing.

## Couples counseling: FINDING MOTIVATION TO GO

More couples have discussed couples counseling than will ever go. Many checklists online will help you decide whether your relationship could use help, but only a strong enough reason will empower you to make the call.

If you're hesitating, you may have misconceptions about couples counseling.

***One common fear is the therapist will align with your partner and together confront all of your imperfections.***

That won't happen with an experienced professional. Instead, you will be put at ease, and many of your fears will be quickly dismissed. Each of you will discover what you're doing healthfully, along with what you can consider doing differently in your relationship to make it what you want.

The goal is to feel more empowered while you work toward changes you and your partner agree on. With commitment, most couples enjoy a reduction in tension they have grown weary of experiencing each day, along with hope that the changes sought will last.



## COVID-19 coronavirus

Reports of COVID-19 continue to dominate news cycles and social media. Unfortunately, just as cases spread so can misinformation, which may unnecessarily aggravate concerns.

The best advice is to rely on information provided by the agencies responsible for monitoring and responding to issues of this nature, and practice good hygiene and common sense measures like you would with the seasonal flu. Those things include:

- 1 Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- 2 Don't touch your mouth, nose or eyes, especially with unwashed hands.
- 3 Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- 4 If you are sick, stay at home.
- 5 Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing – DON'T cough or sneeze into your hands.
- 6 Frequently clean and disinfect frequently touched objects in your home, car and workplace.
- 7 If you are traveling overseas, make sure to follow CDC guidelines at [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel).

Subscribers to Continuum EAP's online member site, HelpNet, can easily access a variety of reputable resources related to COVID-19. Those who are experiencing increased worry or anxiety are encouraged to reach out to Continuum for individual support.