

## Great Relationships Begin with You

### Upcoming Online Seminars

9/1/21 – Effective Communication: Attitude is Everything

10/1/21 – Understanding SAD: It's More Than Just the Blues

11/1/21 – Coping with the Holiday: Tips for a Successful Season

To watch these online seminars, log in to [www.supportlinc.com](http://www.supportlinc.com) and click on the 'Monthly Feature' tile or use the 'What's on Your Mind?' search tool.

Whether you have been cooped up with family or roommates, by yourself in isolation or on the frontlines with your team heroically serving others, one of the pandemic's many impacts has been the ways it has reshaped relationships.

Strong, healthy relationships play an important role in your overall wellbeing. There are many approaches you can use to deepen your connections to others.

#### Your Partner/Significant Other

One of the best investments of your time and attention is with your life partner. Carve out some time each day to be fully present together by putting down your phones and turning off the television. Schedule a weekly or monthly "date" where you can set aside other distractions and have fun together, even if just for an hour.

#### As a Parent

Choose at least one night a week to eat dinner together, even if that means delaying mealtime until everyone's activities are over. Coming together as

a family gives you visibility to the ebbs and flows of schoolwork, friendships and their extracurricular activities. Regularly schedule one-on-one time with your children as well. Ask thoughtful, open-ended questions that begin with "how did you...?" or "what do you think about...?". Listen intently, acknowledge their feelings and empathize. Rather than jumping right to advice, first ask how they intend to approach a situation.

#### With Extended Family

Organize video calls or phone calls to stay in touch with extended family. Watching a movie or playing games remotely helps make your time together memorable. Make happy birthday videos. Send out a family update letter or email. Reach out for personal time to check in with your parents, siblings and other family members.

#### For Your Friends

Good friends can help relieve stress, provide comfort and prevent loneliness. Showing your appreciation can be as easy as sending a thoughtful

thank you note. Order their favorite dessert to be dropped off at their doorstep. Offer to do a grocery run or bring them dinner sometime.

#### Among Co-workers

Schedule a lunch date, in person if you are back at the office or as a video call with a remote colleague. Leave an encouraging note on someone's desk or locker or send an uplifting (or funny!) message online. Regularly ask how others are doing and offer a safe, supportive space for them to share freely.

Being there for others boosts your outlook, adds purpose to your days and ultimately, builds your own resilience in the face of life's challenges.

To access services available through SupportLinc, call 1-800-475-3EAP (3327) or visit [www.supportlinc.com](http://www.supportlinc.com)

### The Meditation Toolkit

Meditation can have a positive impact on emotional and physical health. Reduce your stress while boosting your self-confidence, empathy, compassion and patience by practicing mindful meditation every day.

For resources, practices and tips, visit [www.meditate.tools](http://www.meditate.tools) today.

## Breaking the Worry Cycle

It's natural to worry about your household budget, an upcoming doctor's appointment, an important presentation at work or even your child's future – anxieties and doubts are a normal part of life. It can become a frustrating cycle, however, when worrisome thoughts become constant and intrusive.

The worry cycle can begin with a small "what if" thought. You begin focusing on that concern and even if you know it's unlikely or irrational, you start mentally predicting possible scenarios to find solutions. The longer you think about the worrisome idea, the harder it becomes to view things from a realistic perspective, one that isn't influenced by your fears.

Fortunately, there are tools available to break the worry cycle, so you can better cope.

#### Develop a Realistic Sense of Control

Recognize what you can control and what you can't. Use a mindfulness exercise to help you practice observing things without reacting with concern or anxiety. Ask yourself, "Is this a problem I can solve, or do I need to change the way I feel about the situation?" Once you identify what changes are within your power, you can plan small steps to start working toward them.

#### Schedule Time to Worry

As strange as it may sound, it truly does help to spend a specific amount of time every day focusing on your worries and fears. Set a timer for 15 minutes and then give yourself the opportunity to confront the things outside of your control that are causing you to feel anxious. You can even write these concerns down if you find that helpful. During the final minute, try a meditation breathing technique to move into feeling a sense of calm. Concentrate on deep breaths that fill the lungs rather than shallow ones that only fill the chest. As time expires, acknowledge that you need to get back to everyday life and pay attention to other things. With practice, you can contain the worry cycle to just a few minutes a day.

Learning to refocus your thoughts can help boost your emotional wellbeing. Try one of these simple tips to give you more time and energy to devote to being present and enjoying the world around you.