

EmployeeCare News

Keeping you informed from EmployeeCare, your employee assistance program, a benefit extended by your organization to all employees and their household members.



Anthony Adams

Counseling? Do We Need It?

By Anthony Adams, Counselor

Throughout my counseling career, people have told me they have put off seeking counseling because of myths, misconceptions, and other reasons.

Have you been hesitant in seeking professional guidance to address a marital, family, or personal matter that distresses you?

Has someone said you appear to be more angry, grumpy, sad, or withdrawn? Maybe they have noticed your alcohol consumption has escalated. Perhaps they have encouraged you to meet with a counselor “to be yourself again.”

If so, take heart, you are not alone. Because if you live long enough; you will face some type of problem. It’s time to seek counseling when:

- You have persistent feelings of emptiness, guilt, anger.
- Your parenting strategies are ineffective.
- You look good on the outside but constantly hurt on the inside.
- Your self-worth is damaged due to your view of a past or current relationship.
- You have constant conflict with a coworker that escalates over time.
- Your sleep, appetite or mood patterns become persistently disturbed.
- You face a worsening problem, issue or personal struggle.
- You are grieving the loss of someone and cannot get your life on track.
- You repeatedly argue without resolution.
- You are in an abusive relationship.
- You have difficulty managing multiple stressors or pressures.



If you are unsure counseling is for you, maybe it will help to view counseling more as consultation. For example, when your car makes pinging sounds and the check engine light comes on, you consult with a mechanic to help resolve the problem. You consult with a dentist when you are in pain and need a tooth extracted.

You consult with your child's teacher when your child is not performing at optimal standards. When you have problems that get you down, don't ignore the symptoms; seek help early. It is good practice to consult with a counselor. Usually the sooner you seek help, the easier it will be. If you ignore that red puddle of fluid in your driveway, it might lead to transmission failure.

Dispelling Myths

Let's dispel some of the myths which keep people from seeking counseling.

Rich, H. & Laks Kravits, H. (2001).

Myth #1: Counseling is only for weak people.

Reality: Many people who are in counseling have normal problems that people face every day. Sometimes the stress from these problems can become overwhelming. Often stress can lead a person to need some assistance from a counselor.

These normal, healthy people are seeing a counselor to work through a problem or figure out why they are not happier with their success. Other common reasons to seek counseling are depression or anxiety.

Myth #2: Someone who doesn't know me can't help me

Reality: The counseling process depends on the counselor being unbiased. Counseling involves a unique relationship with an impartial person who can help you figure out how to reach goals. Most counselors believe you are the expert of your own life. Counselors receive special training to assist their clients facing a wide range of life challenges.

Myth #3: Counselors try to read people's minds.

Reality: Counselors are not psychics. However, through their training, counselors learn to observe and listen to their clients in such a way that they may notice things about their clients that clients did not know themselves.

Myth #4: A counselor can solve all your problems.

Reality: A counselor's job is to help you think through your problems, provide insights, and help you to figure out how best to solve your problems for yourself.

Myth #5: A couples' counselor will take sides.

Reality: A successful couples' counselor will be committed to your relationship rather than siding with one partner. If both partners feel their counselor is not supportive, perhaps another counselor would be a better fit. Each counselor has a different style so do not be afraid to search for the right one.

Myth #6: Everyone will know I'm seeing a counselor

Reality: The only people who will know you are seeing a counselor are the ones you tell. Counselors are bound to confidentiality and will not discuss your issues with others. Every counselor should explain confidentiality to you at the beginning of your session.

Myth #7: She/He is the one who needs counseling; not me!

Reality: We are only able to control our own behaviors and our own reactions. The most powerful way to create change in relationships is focusing on changing our own behaviors.

The reality is change is a constant part of life. Counseling can help you change in positive ways that are consistent with your goals for life and relationships. You may want to talk to a professional about your situation to be sure you're getting the support you need. Even if you have no major problems but feel it might be good to talk to someone, it's better to err on the side of extra help. Or as one person told me; "Anthony, I just need some couch time." There's no weakness in getting help if you need it; it's a smart and responsible way to take care of you.

Coping with Your Child Leaving for College

By Rita Penley, Counselor Intern

As parents, many of you may experience separation anxiety when your child leaves for college. You may not be truly prepared for his or her departure. This can be a difficult time in your life, whether this is your first child or your youngest leaving.

'Helicopter Parents'

Some parents tend to hover over their children finding it difficult to let go. Parents who waited until they were more financially secure to have children tend to have one or two children which may lead to more concentrated focus on the child(ren). The (Class of 2009) students have had cell phones all through their high school years and have never been out of touch with their parents. Many colleges are aware of this and want you to be a partner in your child's education. However, they also agree that learning independence is appropriate for this stage of child development.

Help your Child Adjust to College Life

College is a significant transition to adulthood and independence. Be open to your student's need to keep in contact with you. If he or she frequently calls home or texts, don't be alarmed or discourage your child. Typically students exhibit their independence in spurts. They may need to refuel emotionally by contacting you and all that has been familiar to them. Share your expectations for communication before they leave home. Since each relationship is different, work out a plan that suits your family's needs. Cell phones, texts, and e-mails can keep you in touch constantly. However, this is a learning experience and you do not want to come across as intrusive. Decide on your plan and stick to it unless there is a crisis.

Act as a Coach not a Rescuer

It is healthy to return home on weekends periodically, but students make friends more easily if they spend weekends on campus. If your child is sad about returning to school, has roommate problems or does not seem to be adjusting, suggest that he/she talk to the resident assistant (RA). RAs know how to mediate conflicts and can refer a student to the counseling center on campus. As a parent, if you sense your child needs additional help, suggest the student visit a counselor for support.

Successful Tips

- Discuss with them that additional freedom means increased responsibility. Encourage your student to be active in organizations and sports.
- Remind your child that a roommate may not be your best friend. Be prepared to compromise or switch roommates in certain instances.
- Unfortunately, racism and bigotry can be present on college campuses. A student's ability to remain fair and navigate these issues can be opportunities for new learning.
- Statistics show that 18 to 25 year-olds are the most crime-prone group in America. Be sure your student keeps valuables in a locked room. Individual college crime data is available for your review for more than 6,000 colleges from the U.S. Department of Education under the "Jeanne Clery Act".

Alcohol and Other Drugs

As you visit college campuses with your student, get an idea of how students are behaving. Are they clearly abusing alcohol or drugs? Discussing drug and alcohol use can be difficult, however, you cannot afford NOT to have this conversation. It may be the difference between life and death. Here are some points to consider speaking about:

- Drinking alcohol for those under 21 is illegal. Emphasize that binge drinking can be fatal.
- Alcohol poisoning can be fatal.

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Basic Safety Tips for College Students:

- Travel in groups and use a campus escort service after dark or early in the morning. Refrain from jogging or walking alone. Know where the emergency call boxes are on most campuses.
- Take a cell phone and check for campus alerts. Various campus alert systems include individual text and e-mail messaging, sirens, intercom, and entrance sign emergency alerts.
- Program your student's phone with emergency numbers including police, fire, family, and friends.
- Report strangers or those engaged in illegal activities.

Talk to your college freshman son or daughter about your concerns. It is important not to forbid or preach. Learn how to listen to your child and let your child know you value his/her opinion. As parents you should drink responsibly and avoid passing on tales of drinking exploits when you were their age.

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EmployeeCare

Located: 409 E. Monument St.
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We have satellite offices in Eaton, Springboro, Troy, Greenville and on the Good Samaritan Hospital campus

Hours: 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Monday – Thursday
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