EMBRACING OPTIMISM

Presented by Cigna
Employee Assistance Program
• Explore what influences a person to be more optimistic or pessimistic
• Understand self-defeating thoughts and how to respond to them
• Learn about mindfulness and how it relates to optimism
• Develop strategies to embrace optimism
• Know the benefits of your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
Optimism is a hopeful, positive outlook on the future, yourself, and the world around you. It is a key part of resilience, the inner strength that helps you get through tough times.

(Healthwise, 2019)
THE OUTLOOK CONTINUUM

Optimist

• Can control direction of life
• Address issues proactively
• See setbacks as temporary

Pessimist

• Helpless to control life
• May give up more easily
• View setbacks as global
NATURE OR NURTURE?

Optimism / Pessimism
• Brain activity differs
• Possible genetic basis
• Early experiences play a part
• Can be altered

(Good Therapy, 2019; UCLA, 2011; WebMD, 2020)
KEEPING IT REAL!

Realistic optimism

- Recognizing that life comes with uncertainty and change
- Confidence that you have the resources to cope and adjust
- Belief that you have control over your life

(Moore, 2020)
DID YOU KNOW?

Optimism can help you...

- Better manage stress
- Be more resilient
- Improve your physical health

(Nicolson et al, 2020; Moore, 2020; Rozanski et al, 2019; Butler, 2020; Hassett et al, 2019)

Optimism can be contagious!
A key to being more optimistic is to recognize and modify a tendency toward negative thoughts or irrational beliefs.
PUT A SPIN ON IT!

- Review the evidence
- Put things in perspective
- Hold off on hasty judgments
- Give yourself credit
- Replace negative thoughts
Event: Someone cuts you off in traffic

Thought: You think…. 

Feeling: You feel…. 

Substitute thought: A new way to think about it is…. 

New feeling: Now you feel…. 
A mindful approach can help you…

• Be more able to “see the gift”
• Build ability to live with imperfection
• Learn to embrace the moment

“Paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally, to the unfolding of experience moment to moment.”

(Goodreads, n.d.)
• Practice observing vs. judging
• Try leaning into distress
• Name your emotions
• Imagine yourself as your own friend

Commit to some form of regular mindful meditation practice to reap the most benefits.
PUT IT INTO PRACTICE!

Challenge yourself to…

• Focus on what’s going well
• Find the benefits
• Imagine a bright future
• Find your positive people
• Take care of yourself
• Believe in yourself

Try a smile! Smiling, even if you don’t feel happy, triggers your brain to release positive neurochemicals.

(Murphy, 2018)
“A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity;

An optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.”

(Quote Investigator, n.d.)
• Face-to-face sessions
• Confidential
• Prepaid
• Unlimited telephonic consultation
• Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
• Household benefit
• Work/life support such as elder care, child care and pet care
• Convenience services
• Financial services
• Legal services

BENEFITS OF THE EAP

Benefits vary by employer. Please check with your HR for your specific EAP benefits.
REFERENCES


All Cigna products and services are provided exclusively by or through operating subsidiaries of Cigna Corporation, including Cigna Health and Life Insurance Company, Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, Cigna Behavioral Health, Inc., and HMO or service company subsidiaries of Cigna Health Corporation. The Cigna name, logo, and other Cigna marks are owned by Cigna Intellectual Property, Inc. All models are used for illustrative purposes only.