

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

STRENGTHENING FAMILY AND MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

Strong family and marital relationships contribute to good mental and physical health.

Every important relationship requires time and attention, and our families are no exception. Strong family and marital bonds are emotionally satisfying and even contribute to good mental and physical health. Ways to strengthen your important relationships include:



- **Showing appreciation.** Everyone likes to be appreciated, but it's easy to take a spouse or family member for granted. If it's been awhile since you last expressed appreciation, now is the time to start. It can be as simple as a thank-you, a compliment, or noticing and acknowledging what your partner or family member does for you.
- **Improving communication.** Open and honest communication about the little things and the big things is vital for healthy relationships. It's the key to building trust and respect and to better understand others' viewpoints. You can improve communication with your partner, children, or other family members by being available and a good listener. Conversation often happens over meals, and families that regularly eat together tend to have closer bonds.
- **Maintaining healthy boundaries.** Everyone needs privacy and a degree of autonomy. Healthy boundaries are maintained when family members respect each other's limits. For parents, that means keeping certain things private and resolving conflicts between themselves without involving the children.
- **Dealing effectively with conflict and disagreements.** Conflict is inevitable in any family. Successfully working through conflicts and disagreements involves empathy and good communications skills. Focus on the problem at hand without bringing up old issues; listen carefully to each person's point of view, and look for common ground. If arguments get too heated, call a time out for people to collect themselves.

Making time for family activities and creating a positive environment in the home are well worth the time and energy. Family memories are built around time spent together, and help each member feel loved and valued.