

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

RESPONDING TO

LIFE'S CHALLENGES



At one time or another, we all face challenges in our personal lives and careers. Perhaps your challenge is raising a rebellious teenager, caring for an aging parent, living with a spouse who drinks too much, or dealing with a thorny problem at work. How we choose to respond in these situations can make the difference between a positive outcome and a negative one, between calm acceptance and frustration.

If our immediate response to a challenge is to feel sorry for ourselves, complain that life is unfair, look for someone to blame, or become paralyzed by indecision, we are less likely to solve problems in a productive way.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS ON RESPONDING SUCCESSFULLY TO LIFE'S CHALLENGES, BIG AND SMALL:

- **Think before you react, and get as much information as possible.** This sounds simple, but when we hear something that stirs up strong emotions, it's easy to react in the heat of the moment without knowing all the facts.
- **Take action after you weigh your options.** You'll build confidence in yourself and feel empowered once you decide on a course of action and move forward.
- **Accept that there are things (and people) you can't always influence or change.** The only person you truly have control over is yourself. And as M. Scott Peck famously wrote in his book "The Road Less Traveled," once we know that life is difficult and accept this fact, paradoxically life becomes less difficult.
- **Stop judging yourself and others, and focus on your strengths.** Everyone has different skills and abilities, and everyone carries some burden. Give others the benefit of the doubt, and forgive your own shortcomings too.
- **Remember that life is a cycle and challenges will always come and go.** Many of us resist change, and don't like being out of our comfort zone. But at the same time that challenges can make us feel scared, stressed, or uncomfortable, they often present a unique opportunity to grow and learn more about ourselves.



CALHR

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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