

# DIY

## Do It Yourself:

## Tips for adopting a positive mindset



### What is EAP Counseling?

Short-term, solution based counseling that helps develop coping skills for issues such as parenting issues, relationship struggles, grief, trauma, substance abuse, depression, anxiety or stress.

### What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)?

CBT helps you become aware of negative thinking so you can view challenging situations more clearly and respond to them in a more effective way. CBT is a tool that can help anyone learn how to better manage stressful life situations.



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There is no denying that 2020 was a tough year for even the most optimistic to stay positive. The new year provides an opportunity to examine our mindset since it plays a significant role in how we respond to challenging situations.

Are we born with optimism or do we develop it? How do you respond to the “glass-half-full vs. half-empty” metaphor? A 2005 paper by researchers Sonjaa Lyubomirsky, Kennon M. Sheldon and David Schkade found that our happiness is shaped 50% by genetics, 10% by our environment and 40% by the choices we make. This is good news! You have a lot of control over your mindset. Research shows that having an optimistic outlook can help you attain happiness. If your genetic disposition leans more negative or pessimistic, how can you train your mind to become more positive?

**Avoid negative self-talk:** Self-talk is the inner voice that helps you process what is going on around you. It can be helpful in reminding you of your goals and keeping

you on track. However, If your thoughts are excessively negative that voice can be more harmful than helpful. So, what are some things you can do to improve your inner dialog?

*\* Talk to yourself like you would a friend or loved one.* When your inner voice says something like “You are not good enough” ask yourself if you would say those words out loud to your spouse, child or friend. If the answer is “no,” then think of what words you would choose if you wanted to share a concern and replace your inner thought with that phrasing instead.

*\* Replace your negative thoughts with something more encouraging.* Sometimes when we catch ourselves in a negative mindset it can be hard to stop. Think of more neutral and eventually positive language. “I can’t stand this” becomes “this is challenging.” “I always make mistakes” becomes “I do many things well.” The more often you challenge negative self-talk the less often you’ll need to do so.

**Don’t dwell on the past and learn to focus on the positive.** Having an optimistic mindset does not mean you ignore



life’s stressors. It’s important to remember it isn’t events themselves that make us unhappy but how we react to set-backs that differentiate the optimist from the pessimist. How can you stay on a positive, optimistic track when life throws you a curveball?

*\*Practice Reframing:* When negative situations occur reframe them by focusing on the positives or what you can learn from the situation.

*\*Focus on the solution, not the problem.* As tempting as it is to dwell on disappointments, you need to let go of reflective thoughts like, “I should have done...” or “I could have been...” Instead, look to the future and consider what opportunities may arise after the dust has settled.

**Ask for help.** Learning to change our mindset is not easy but it is achievable. Consider using your EAP benefits to connect with a counselor to help you along the way.