

# EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Your resource for help with daily challenges and difficult situations.

## LIVING HEALTHY- MIND AND BODY

Your mind and body are powerful allies. How you think can affect how you feel, and how you feel can affect your thinking. An example of this mind-body connection is how your body responds to stress. Constant worry and stress can cause tense muscles, headaches, stomach problems, high blood pressure, or other serious problems.<sup>1,2</sup> EAP offers many benefits that can help improve your mind and body wellness.

### How do your thoughts and feelings affect your health?

Research shows that what your brain produces depends in part on your thoughts, feelings, and expectations. If you're sick but you have hope and a positive attitude and you believe that you'll get better, your brain is likely to produce chemicals that will boost your body's healing power.<sup>3</sup>

Negative thoughts and emotions can keep your brain from producing some of the chemicals that help your body heal. Some illnesses are beyond your control, so you shouldn't blame yourself for getting sick or feeling down about a health problem.

### How does stress affect you?

When you're stressed or anxious, your body reacts as if it is under attack. Your body releases hormones that speed up your heart rate and breathing, increase blood pressure, and make your muscles tense. When you are able to relax your mind and body, your body stops producing the hormones that create stress, and you return to a state of calm, both physically and mentally.

1. Sadock BJ, et al. (2015). Psychosomatic medicine. In Kaplan and Sadock's Synopsis of Psychiatry, 11th ed., pp. 465–503. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins.
2. Freeman L (2009). Physiologic pathways of mind-body communication. In L Freeman, ed., Mosby's Complementary and Alternative Medicine: A Research-Based Approach, 3rd ed., pp. 1–29. St. Louis: Mosby Elsevier.
3. Rasmussen HN, et al. (2009). Optimism and physical health: A meta-analytic review. Annals of Behavioral Medicine, 37(3): 239–256.

