

## Ask ERS?

Dear ERS Advisor,

**I'm not sure how much allowance is an appropriate amount for my 12-year-old son. My son does have chores to do on a weekly basis (taking out the trash and walking our dog) but I'm wondering if I should link his chores to his allowance? I want him to learn good money management and to appreciate the value of a dollar. Can you give me any recommendations?**

**Not-Made-of-Money Dad**

Dear Not-Made-of-Money,

This is a tough question as allowances are handled VERY differently within each family. Experts cannot seem to agree on the best approach. This is a personal choice and ultimately you must decide what works best, however, if you wish to teach your son about the relationship between work and earning money, then linking his allowance to his chores might be a good option. But be aware that some argue that if you're a member of the family, you should help out **regardless** of whether or not you get an allowance. Either way, there's no denying that an allowance provides your child the opportunity to learn the basics of money management.

How much to give is another matter! Assuming that your son isn't obliged to pay for his own living expenses such as rent, clothes, school items and food, then it's likely his only **expenses** are for entertainment purposes or trendy items. Decide how much you can afford to consistently give on a weekly basis. Some parents use the ratio of \$1.00 per year of age. Allow him some freedom to see firsthand how hard it is to budget his own spending money but encourage him to "pay himself first" by saving part of his allowance for something he can splurge on later. This will also teach him the benefits of delayed gratification – a valuable lesson that many adults have yet to learn. "If I don't go to the movies **every** week, I'll soon be able to afford that Wii gaming system!"

In time, your son will appreciate the efforts of his labors and enjoy some of his own financial freedom. Good luck!

ERS Advisor

**Interested in submitting a question?  
Send an e-mail to [aharkleroad@ers-eap.com](mailto:aharkleroad@ers-eap.com)**

## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

*National Institute of Mental Health*

It's natural to be afraid when you're in danger. It's natural to be upset when something bad happens to you or someone you know. But if you feel afraid and upset weeks or months later, it's time to talk with your doctor. You might have post-traumatic stress disorder.

### **What is post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD?**

PTSD is a real illness. You can get PTSD after living through or seeing a dangerous event, such as war, a hurricane, or bad accident. PTSD makes you feel stressed and afraid after the danger is over. It affects your life and the people around you.

If you have PTSD, you can get treatment and feel better.

### **Who gets PTSD?**

PTSD can happen to anyone at any age. Children get PTSD too.

You don't have to be physically hurt to get PTSD. You can get it after you see other people, such as a friend or family member, get hurt.

### **What causes PTSD?**

Living through or seeing something that's upsetting and dangerous can cause PTSD. This can include:

- Being a victim of or seeing violence
- The death or serious illness of a loved one
- War or combat
- Car accidents and plane crashes
- Hurricanes, tornadoes, and fires
- Violent crimes, like a robbery or shooting.

There are many other things that can cause PTSD. Talk to your doctor if you are troubled by something that happened to you or someone you care about.

### **How do I know if I have PTSD?**

Your doctor can help you find out. Call your doctor if you

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## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder *Continued from page 1*

have any of these problems:

- Bad dreams
- Flashbacks, or feeling like the scary event is happening again
- Scary thoughts you can't control
- Staying away from places and things that remind you of what happened
- Feeling worried, guilty, or sad
- Feeling alone
- Trouble sleeping
- Feeling on edge
- Angry outbursts
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or others.

### Children who have PTSD may show other types of problems. These can include:

- Behaving like they did when they were younger
- Being unable to talk
- Complaining of stomach problems or headaches a lot
- Refusing to go places or play with friends.

### When does PTSD start?

PTSD starts at different times for different people. Signs of PTSD may start soon after a frightening event and then continue. Other people develop new or more severe signs months or even years later.

### How can I get better?

PTSD can be treated. A doctor or mental health professional who has experience in treating people with PTSD

## Quarterly Quote

*"There's only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self."* – Aldous Huxley

can help you. Treatment may include "talk" therapy, medication, or both.

Treatment might take 6 to 12 weeks. For some people, it takes longer. Treatment is not the same for everyone. What works for you might not work for someone else.

Drinking alcohol or using other drugs will not help PTSD go away and may even make it worse.

### How PTSD Can Happen: Janet's Story

Janet was in a car crash last year. The crash was frightening, and a man in another car died. Janet thought she was lucky. She lived through it and she wasn't badly hurt.

Janet felt fine for a while, but things changed. She started to have nightmares every night. And when she was awake, she could see the crash happening over and over in her mind. She felt tense every time she rode in a car, and tried to avoid it as much as she could. Janet started yelling at her husband over little things. And sometimes she just felt numb inside.

Janet's husband asked her to see her doctor, who told her she might have PTSD. Janet's doctor put her in touch with a doctor trained to help people with PTSD. Soon Janet was being treated. It helped her to feel less tense and scared, and it helped her to sleep. It also helped her to share her feelings with the doctor. It wasn't easy, but after a couple of months Janet began to feel better.

### Facts About PTSD

- PTSD can affect anyone at any age.
- Millions of Americans get PTSD every year.
- Many war veterans have had PTSD.
- Women tend to get PTSD more often than men.
- PTSD can be treated. You can feel better.

### Don't Hurt Yourself

- You are not alone. Get help if you are thinking about hurting yourself.
- Call the Employee Assistance Program for support.
- Call your doctor.
- Call 911 if you need help right away.
- Talk to a trained counselor at the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255); TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (4889)

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-a-real-illness/complete-publication.shtml>

# The Employee/Member Assistance Program

Employee Resource Systems, Inc. provides *confidential* counseling, information and resources to the employees and family members of our client companies. This is a free benefit that is designed to help people who are dealing with personal problems which may be affecting their jobs or their personal relationships. Employee Resource Systems, Inc. is a nationwide provider of Employee/Member Assistance Programming as well as managed mental health care services for our client companies.

## *Why do we have an EAP/MAP?*

The origins of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)—Members Assistance Program (MAP) for unions—began in the early 1940's. At that time, several organizations like Eastman Kodak, du Pont, and Caterpillar, realized that they could make dramatic, positive changes in the lives of employees who were struggling with alcohol problems by providing support around these personal issues. Today, EAP's still address work issues in addition to a much wider array of problems. They also focus upon enhancing job performance by collaborating with Human Resources as well as managers and supervisors, to address performance problems *before* disciplinary action must be taken. By acting quickly to address these issues, companies have found that problems such as low morale, high turnover, and poor performance have been significantly reduced.

## *Who can access the EAP?*

Any employee/member of our client companies may access our services, as well as any family member of an employee. The EAP/MAP defines "family" as anyone whose problem impacts the employee/member in a negative way, including in- and out-of-state parents, children and significant others of the same or opposite sex.

## *What kinds of problems can the EAP/MAP address?*

While the EAP/MAP does not intervene with personnel issues such as salaries, job assignments or other work-related issues, we do help people with a wide variety of life problems including:

- alcohol & drug abuse
- stress
- anxiety
- depression
- marital, family, and relationship conflict
- child & adolescent behavioral problems
- domestic violence
- child & elder care
- financial & legal concerns
- educational & career-related problems

## *What happens when I call?*

You will be asked for demographic information so that we can open up a case. Our EAP/MAP counselors will also assess whether or not you are in crisis and need emergency services, or if you can schedule an appointment for an in-person assessment. The EAP/MAP is limited to a certain number of sessions which may not be enough to resolve many complex issues like addiction or serious relationship conflict. In these cases, we will refer the client to the appropriate long-term treatment option. Our EAP/MAP sessions are commonly used for assessment and evaluation to determine what the next step should be. In some cases, phone support is all that's needed and in other cases, referral and linkage to longer-term treatment may be necessary. Many clients feel that the support provided by the EAP is all that's needed and do not receive any referrals beyond the EAP.

All contact with the EAP/MAP is confidential. The EAP/MAP counselor will not speak with a supervisor, co-worker or family member without permission from the person using the program. Confidentiality is broken only when a threat-to-safety exists (i.e., suicidal/homicidal risk, stalking, or child/elder abuse.)

Callers can receive supportive counseling at anytime –day or night- by calling **(800) 292-2780** Central Time. Our intake services are available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Calls are always answered directly by clinical professionals who provide immediate service, even after standard business hours. The 800 hotline number can be used anywhere in the United States. Calling the EAP can be the first step toward resolution of your personal difficulties.

# ERS *Press*

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*An Employee Assistance Program*

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## *just the* **FACTS.**

- On December 1, 2008 the journal, *Neurology* published a study stating that, “Pregnant women who take the epilepsy drug Valproate may be more likely to have a child with autism than those who don’t take the seizure-controlling drug.”
- On Health.com, they note that sleep deprivation can cause a variety of health problems. In fact “a number of studies have linked poor sleep with a higher risk of diabetes, but researchers are still sorting out if one can cause the other or they’re linked for some other reason.”
- The American Association for Cancer Research recently published results from a study stating, “Given the strong relationship between endogenous estrogen levels and breast cancer risk, migraine sufferers may experience a reduced risk of breast cancer.” After surveying 3,500 postmenopausal women, researchers observed that women who had migraines had a 30% reduction in risk of breast cancer.

**Feeling stressed and overwhelmed? Losing your temper easily? Try calling the Employee/Member Assistance Program (EAP/MAP) for free and confidential help. 1-800-292-2780**

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