



CONCERN:EAP

Healthy & Resilient You

Healing Expressions:

Laughter is the Best Medicine



Laughter may seem like all fun and games, but it has some serious benefits too. Every time you laugh, whether it's a giggle or a guffaw, your brain is flooded with a cocktail of endorphins and serotonin. The former helps kill pain, and the latter gives you a jolt of happiness — like a one-two tickle to your system.

When you laugh, the heightened activity in your heart, lungs, and circulation also helps to boost your immune system and further lift your mood. And the best part about it is you don't need to go to the doctor to get new laughter prescriptions: you just need to hone your sense of humor.



[CLICK HERE](#) for an earlier CONCERN Healthy & Resilient Workplace newsletter that explains the science of laughter and its benefits in more detail.

Using laughter as your guide, you can actually train your sense of humor to find the good in trying situations, making them easier to navigate. And by building on what you already find funny, and keeping your mind open to new LOL-worthy experiences, you can profoundly contribute to your wellbeing.

Finding and Flexing Your Funny Bone

A sense of humor doesn't just help at parties, it's closely tied to whole life satisfaction and even success at work (and *especially* work parties). Studies have shown that laughter

helps us cope in times of stress, trauma, or grieving. For instance, researchers have found that emergency personnel rely heavily on humor to cope with the upsetting realities of their jobs, and high-performing students manage their pre-college anxieties by converting them into comedy.

Everyone, no matter their circumstances, can use humor to strengthen their resilience and help focus on the good, rather than the not so good. One study out of the University of Western Ontario discovered that people who use coping humor in challenging situations are more likely to see the challenges as positive opportunities for growth and change, rather than negative obstacles. This puts them at an advantage when it comes time to tackle the tough stuff.

This is particularly helpful at work, where your personal success is often measured by how you react and respond to challenges. In fact, in a Robet Half International survey,

91% 

of executives think a sense of humor plays a major role in career advancement,

84% 

of them find employees with a strong sense of humor do better at their jobs

Now, the office isn't a sketch-comedy writers' room (unless yours actually is), so be careful not to overdo it. But when it's appropriate, and you feel comfortable, go ahead and horse around.



Growing a Sense of Humor

Although many think that a sense of humor is something that you're born with and can't develop, you actually can. Like other cultural phenomenon, humor can be learned through immersion.

That's the good news.

The even better news is that you can enhance your sense of humor by tapping into your growth mindset—another great tool from your resilience toolbox. With a growth-mindset engaged, try including some of these behaviors and activities in your regular routine to help you expand your humor horizons.

Expose Yourself...to Humor:

Open yourself to new and old kinds of humor through funny shows, books, stories, YouTube videos, or a visit to your local comedy club. New Yorker cartoons offer a lot of humor in small doses, and comedy podcasts can be the perfect length for your morning commute.

Be Open to New Amusements:

Always look for opportunities to expand your sense of humor to include new jokes, material, and styles. Use your empathy to see what makes others laugh, and see how you might find it funny too.

Play Nice:

Laugh with, not at. That means avoiding sarcastic humor, or laughing at the expense of others — unless they give a sign, like laughing first. But also remember that if you do happen to laugh at something inappropriate, have a sense of humor about it and don't beat yourself up.



CLICK HERE to learn how getting into a growth mindset can be great for success.

Make a Playlist of Laugh Tracks:

Not actual laugh tracks, but tracks that make you laugh. Build a funny playlist on your computer or phone. You can also use content organizing apps like Evernote to consolidate Internet articles that make you smirk, smile, or outright scream with laughter. Plug into your playlist or browse your bookmarks when you need a pick-me-up, or to freshen up your own comedy routine.

Fake It 'Til You Make It:

And if the funnies just aren't coming, try going through the motions. Start chuckling and remember this tip—fake laughing feels more like the real thing when it reaches your eyes—so use your whole face. If you try it with someone else, it can even be contagious.



Training your sense of humor doesn't just help you exercise your laughing muscles, it also goes hand-in-hand with developing your growth mindset and resilience. The more consistently you work on it, the more the whole you benefits. THAT'S THE POWER OF HUMOR.

Looking for more useful information on ways to take care of yourself? Check out the Resilience Hub™.

If you are a first-time user, type in your company name to access the site. www.ConcernResilienceHub.com

This newsletter is intended for informational purposes only, and should not be used to replace professional advice.

If you find your level of stress is impacting your well-being, you can contact us for additional help and support.

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