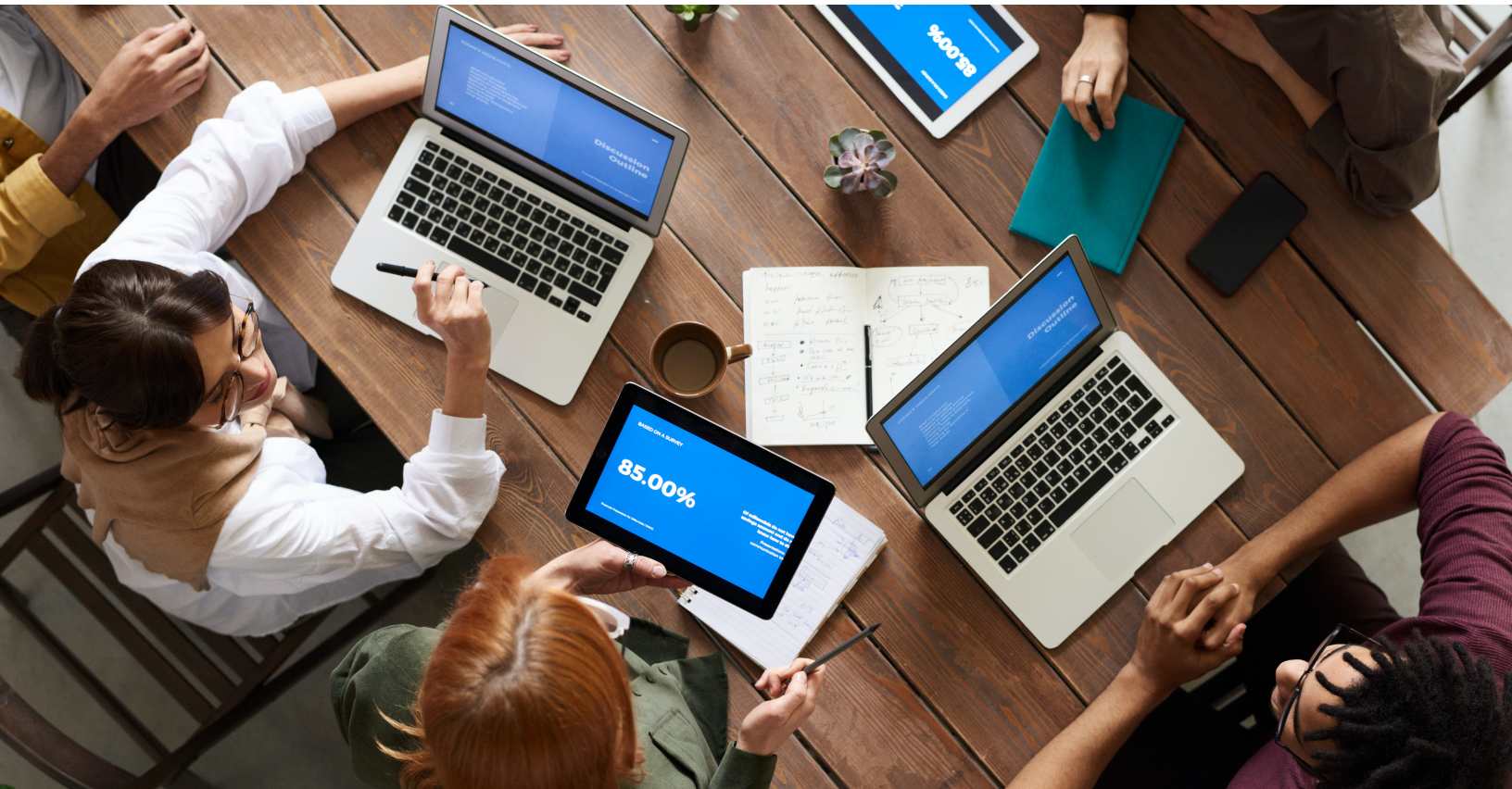




EMPLOYEE ADVISORY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

The New Jersey Civil Service Commission’s Employee Advisory Service (EAS) Newsletter contains useful articles and information for managing various well-being and work-life issues in order to create a healthier, happier, and more productive workplace. EAS is committed to improving the quality of life for all New Jersey Civil Service employees by encouraging a good work-life balance.



Upcoming Webinar:

Effective Workplace Communication

About this webinar:

This practical presentation will provide an overview of commonly accepted “rules of thumb” to consider for communication at work. The topics to be covered will include the importance of timing, common courtesy, and maintaining professionalism.

Date: March 15, 2022
Time: 2:00-3:00 PM

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

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Listening to Clarify, Probe, and Reframe

Listening to Clarify

One of the most difficult tasks you will have is to be sure the words you hear have the same meaning for you as they have for the other person speaking. Often, people hear the same words but get a different meaning. This is because everything people hear is affected by their own personal knowledge and backgrounds. When everyone is speaking the same language, they are often tempted to assume that they know what the other person really means.



Listening to clarify helps you to check that assumption and verify the meaning intended by the other person speaking. This is often true with words that express generalized concepts. Words and phrases like “irresponsible,” “communication problems,” or “personality difficulties” are good examples of words that are easily misunderstood. If there is the least doubt in your mind, you need to ask questions for clarification.

These questions should be open-ended and carry lead-ins such as:

- “I’m not sure what you mean by...”
- “Could you please clarify for me...?”
- “Please explain to me what you mean by...”
- “Would you please say a little more about...?”

“The biggest communication problem is we do not listen to understand. We listen to reply.” -Stephen R. Covey!

Listening to Probe for More Information

Early in the communication, the other person often mentions an incident or issue that may seem clear at the time. However, as the discussion continues you may need further clarification. Similarly, if there appear to be hidden deeper emotions, you may want to ask for more information.



At such times, it is appropriate for you to ask such questions or make such statements as:

- “Would you please tell me more about...?”
- “I sense that there is more about...”
- “I sense that there is more that you need to say.”
- “I hear some strong feeling in your words. Do you want to tell us more about that?”
- “Could you please explain a little more about the significance of this event?”

As a general rule in probing for information, it is better never to ask “why” questions.

These questions are often threatening and raise defenses, because they confront the other person’s judgment and motives.

It is also very important to use questions carefully.

Interrupting by asking frequent questions, especially in the initial stages of the conversation, can distract the other person and deflect them from the story they need to tell. Generally, both clarifying questions and probing questions should be held until the other person has completed what they want to say.



Listening to Reframe.

When both you and the other person are satisfied that all the issues have been discussed, it is helpful to bring the discussion into focus by summarizing the problems. The summary may involve reframing the key problems in the form of “interests versus positions.”

Reframing is an excellent way to transition into problem solving. At this point, the focus of the discussion changes dramatically from what has happened in the past to what both parties would like in the future.

The purpose of reframing is to:

- Accurately identify the interests and needs of both you and the other person
- Break down and prioritize problems into small, manageable parts

Use lead-ins that will frame the issue as a joint problem.

“How can we...?”

“What can be done to...?”

“What time frame is acceptable to...?”

Problems should be framed as interests or needs. Use an open-ended question that requires both you and the other person to search for solutions to your joint problem. Here is an example: “What can be done to meet ‘X’ need for you and ‘Y’ need for me?”



Using this technique moves the conversation toward identifying solutions that meet both of your needs.

This type of collaborative negotiation allows the needs of both of you to be met without sacrificing your relationship.

March is National Nutrition Month



Grab the Fork By the Handle: Choose Good Food!

Eat more fruits and vegetables

March is National Nutrition Month, and having a healthy diet and exercising are components of a healthy lifestyle. A recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed when, where, and how adults and children in the United States have a healthy diet).¹ People who do not eat enough fruits and vegetables can take small steps to meet the recommended daily amount, such as adding more fruits to your usual breakfast or more vegetables to your meals. Having a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help reduce the risk of many of the main causes of illness and death, add important nutrients to your diet, and help control your weight.

The recent CDC study shows that adults consume most of their fruits during breakfast and as a snack, and eat less than the recommended amounts.¹ People who do not consume enough fruit may try to add more to their breakfast or their snacks, such as a small apple or banana. On the other hand, children tend to eat fruits throughout the day. Children who aren't meeting their daily required portions could add more fruit to their breakfast, lunch, or snacks.

Adults and children tend to eat most of their vegetables at dinnertime. However, people who do not eat enough vegetables could try adding them to their salad at lunchtime or to their sandwich (e.g., slices of tomatoes or small carrots), or they could mix them with what they eat at dinner (e.g. add broccoli to the noodles).

Are you consuming enough fruits and vegetables daily?

The amount of fruits and vegetables you should eat varies by age, sex, and activity level. Click on the links below to find out how much fruit (<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>) and vegetables you need to consume every day.

You can also check the latest edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These recommendations were created to provide a better understanding of food and nutrition, so that you can make informed decisions about healthy foods and drinks. They also give you the flexibility to choose healthier foods that are right for you and your family. The 2020–2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans is available at <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov>.

The Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity of the CDC supports the people of the United States in their attempt to have good health by working in the following environments:

- Educational centers for child care providers—CDC works in each state to help education and child care providers meet national nutrition standards.
- Schools—CDC partners with collaborators nationwide to increase the number of salad buffets donated to schools by the private sector.
- Work sites—CDC offers help on how to adopt and implement healthy food-service guides at work sites.
- Food retail stores in the community—Full-service grocery stores, farmers markets, and other retailers that sell healthier foods and beverages, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products, are not found in all neighborhoods. CDC collaborates with states and communities to increase healthier food options in these community retail environments.

Reference

1. Moore, L.V., Hamner, H.C., Kim, S.A., & Dalenius, K. (2016, October). Common ways Americans are incorporating fruits and vegetables into their diet: Intake patterns by meal, source and form—National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2007–2010. *Public Health Nutrition*, 19(14), 2535–2539. doi: 10.1017/S1368980016000586

4 Facts about Women's Mental Health



Your mental health plays a large part in our overall health and well-being. Unfortunately, sometimes we have issues with our mental health. It's important to recognize these issues so we can seek help when we need it.

Why Women's Mental Health?

For several reasons, women and men are affected differently by mental health conditions. Some conditions are more common in men and some are more common among women. Some conditions are equally common among women as men. Since we are women's healthcare providers, we're going to discuss five key facts about women's mental health.

1. 1 in 5 American Women Have a Mental Health Condition

Mental health conditions are not uncommon in the US. According to the US Office on Women's Health, more than 1 in 5 women in the United States experienced a mental health condition. It's important for people who struggle with mental health issues to know they are not alone. Knowing that many other people, including some you know, have difficulty with mental health takes the stigma away, making it more likely for people to seek treatment when they need it.

2. Some Mental Health Conditions Affect More Women than Men

Certain mental health conditions affect different populations in different ways. That's because each group of people experiences different risk factors for developing a mental illness.

Women are more likely to suffer from the following types of mental health issues:

Major Depressive Disorder

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), major depression is one of the most common mental disorders in the United States. The Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA), major depressive disorder affects more than 16.1 million American adults. Research indicates that major depressive episodes are more common among adult females than adult males.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

Another common women's mental health issue is anxiety. According to ADAA, GAD affects 6.8 adults in the US. Women are twice as likely to be affected by GAD as men and it is also common for women to have both depression and anxiety.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

PTSD affects 7.7 million adults in the US. Women are more likely to be affected by men, in part because PTSD is often triggered by traumatic experiences that are more common in women.

Eating Disorders

Women and girls are much more likely to struggle with an eating disorder like anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating disorder than men and boys. Eating disorders are not solely a women's mental health issue, but they overwhelmingly affect women and girls. The ADAA reports that men and boys make up only 5-15% of people with anorexia or bulimia.

3. *There are Disorders that Only Affect Females*

While people of different genders can struggle with most mental disorders, there are some conditions that can only affect biologically female individuals. These disorders are specific to females due to hormones and the ability to carry and give birth to children.

There are three common disorders of this kind:

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD):

Similar to PMS but is more serious. Symptoms are severe irritability, depression, or anxiety in the week or two before a menstrual period begins.

Postpartum Depression:

Postpartum depression goes beyond the “baby blues” most women experience in the days after giving birth. Symptoms include feeling hopeless, empty, and sad.

Perimenopausal Depression:

As women transition to menopause (a period called perimenopause), their risk of depression increases. The declining levels of estrogen during this time may bring on depression. Guidelines for diagnosing and treating this type of depression are very new.



4. *Women Are More Likely to Seek Help for Certain Conditions*

According to Psychology Today, one in four women will seek treatment at some point, compared to only one in ten men. There are theories as to why this is true, but research isn't clear. Generally, it is thought that women are more comfortable addressing their emotions than men. But, again, there is not enough research to confirm it. On the other hand, women are less likely than men to disclose problems with alcohol abuse to a healthcare provider according to the American Psychiatric Association.

Talk to Your OB/GYN

If you are having issues with your mental health and want to talk to a trusted medical provider, your OB/GYN can help. While most women associate their OB/GYN with reproductive care, they can help in other areas, including women's mental health. They can also provide you with resources to find more help.

Contact EAS toll free at 1-866-327-9133 or email us at EAS_Help@csc.nj.gov.

Habits to Improve Mental Health for Women

By: Women's Care Staff

Good mental health doesn't necessarily mean being happy all the time. Women with good mental health can experience happiness and sadness, anger, and excitement, all in healthy ways. When you have good habits to improve mental health, it means your mind can perform all its functions appropriately.

You can do things such as:

- Learn new information
- Build strong relationships with other people
- Adapt quickly to change
- Experience a range of emotions in a healthy way
- Work and contribute productively

A variety of factors can affect your mental function and health. These factors can be as simple as being sleep-deprived or hungry or as complex as eating disorders and major depression. Depending on your state of mental health, you can increase your wellbeing with healthy habits. If you're concerned about the current state of your mental health, then seek the support of experienced healthcare professionals.

How to Achieve Better Mental Health

Good habits to improve mental health will look different for every woman. For instance, some women relax by taking a quiet bath while others release stress through physical activity.

To help maintain good mental health, you can:

- Exercise regularly.
- Practice mindfulness (living in the moment).
- Get eight hours of sleep each night.
- Express gratitude for things and people in your life.
- Say positive things about yourself and others.
- Make new friends and connections.
- Participate in activities you enjoy.

However, if you face a condition such as depression or an anxiety disorder, these healthy habits alone may not be enough to improve your mental health.

Women's Mental Health Issues

Women often face different mental health challenges than men. Women have higher rates of anxiety and depression, which can be related to physical health factors. Changes in hormones can lead to postpartum depression, depression during menopause or premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD).

How women experience mental health conditions can also be different. While some men may act out in anger due to depression, women are more likely to experience fatigue, sadness, and lack of motivation.

Each year, around 29 million American women experience mental health conditions. It's important to remember that you are not alone. You can find support through friends, family, your community, and your healthcare provider.

"EACH TIME
A WOMAN
STANDS UP
FOR HERSELF,
SHE STANDS
UP FOR ALL
WOMEN."

- Maya Angelou



Treatment for Women’s Mental Health Conditions

If you think you or someone you love is facing mental health challenges, you should seek help and support.

Your healthcare providers can connect you with the resources that can help you learn new habits to improve mental health. You can also talk to a number of trusted health providers, including:

- Your primary care physician
- Your OB/GYN
- A psychiatrist
- A licensed counselor

If you have thoughts about harming yourself, please call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255 any time of day or night. These trained professionals provide the support you need for no cost.

Source: Habits to Improve Mental Health for Women. Women’s Care. Retrieved February 22, 2022. <https://womenscarefl.com/health-library-item/habits-to-improve-mental-health-for-women>

Connect with EAS!



Support - Empowerment - Growth Employee Advisory Service

How Can We Help You?

Toll free number:
1-866-327-9133

Email:
EAS_Help@csc.nj.gov

Website:
www.csc.nj.gov/csc/employees/programs/advisory/eas.html

24 hours a day 7 days a week
(Emergency Mental Health Services)

