

Embracing Optimism: Benefits for Mind and Body

Presented by CIGNA
Employee Assistance
Program



Seminar Goals

- Understand the connection between our thoughts and how we feel both emotionally and physically
- Define and understand what makes us optimists or pessimists
- Learn to identify negative thoughts that lead to negative feelings
- Develop strategies to positively explain setbacks



Why Be an Optimist?

- Lower incidence of depression
- Greater personal achievement
- Improved physical health
- Improved ability to manage pain
- More pleasant state of being
- Ability to influence others' optimism



Defining Optimism and Pessimism

- Ways we explain bad – or good – events in our lives
- Enduring and internal trait of people
- Learned in childhood and adolescence
- Stems from your view of your place in the world
- Can be learned or unlearned



Negative Thoughts and Traditional Beliefs

- Holding pre-conceived notions
- Thinking in absolute terms
- Making a mountain out of molehill /molehill out of mountain
- Playing the blame game
- Being a negative magnet
- Drawing emotional conclusions
- Living under a dark cloud



Fighting Back Against Negative Thoughts

- Consider the evidence
- Find other explanations
- Give yourself credit
- Don't make hasty judgments
- Surround yourself with positive people
- Use your imagination
- Smile until you mean it
- Be realistic



Practicing Optimism

■ Event: Someone cuts you off in traffic.

■ Thought: You think

■ Feeling: You feel

■ Substitute Thought: You now think

■ New Feeling: You now feel



**Flexible optimism...
not blind optimism.**



Benefits of Optimism

- Family
- Financial
- Health
- Career
- Social

