

a healthy balance

Did you know your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) could help?

New parent stress

Instead of having one of those cute, clean babies, you have a crying, endlessly dirty one. You're hopelessly in love with your child, but will you ever have the energy to enjoy him or her? Being prepared for new-parent stresses can lessen their impact and enhance the joy a new baby brings to a family.

Learning life as a parent

As new parents, you may feel overwhelmed by your new responsibility. Concerns about your child's health and well-being follow you throughout the day and may also be keeping you up at night.

New mothers may be unprepared for the personal and work-related changes motherhood brings. You may feel an added burden if you have a fussy or colicky baby, and your body's post-pregnancy appearance can also be distressing.

Today's new fathers take a more active role in childcare than their fathers did. The richness of this new experience can leave you exhausted, overwhelmed and numb. In addition, while you enjoy watching your wife care for the child, you may feel jealous of their closeness.

Relearning life as a couple

As a new parent, intimacy may be at an all-time low. As your life is lived in snatches between feedings and diaper changes, even talking about anything besides the baby seems impossible. Some couples find a new "normal" sex life soon after the baby is born. But if you're like many couples, trying to find the energy, the time and a non-crying infant becomes mission impossible.

There are a few things you can do. And it may take some planning. Consider getting a relative or friend to babysit for a regularly scheduled "date night," for example. These suggestions may also help:

- Rest during baby's naps
- Accomplish only one thing per day
- Give each other gifts of alone time
- Remember the "non-parent" things you love about yourself
- Don't expect too much of yourself or spouse
- If you're a single parent, develop a network of friends and family to help out

When to seek help

A sense of humor and time will heal much of this. But if you're experiencing a troubling change in your relationship with your spouse, severe depression or continued anger toward your spouse or baby, then it's time to seek professional help.

Helping new parents through these stresses is just one of the ways your EAP can help its members. For more information, call your confidential EAP any day, any time, for free assistance, resources or a referral to help resolve your concerns.

problem

solved