

## Intro

Disappointment is an inevitable part of life. In this month's issue of the EAO Supervisor Newsletter, we discuss healthy ways to cope with disappointment and not get stuck.

### Why do we feel disappointment?

Disappointment often comes when our expectations do not match up with reality. This could be as simple as missing a bus due to a broken watch, or as impactful as being passed up for a promotion or losing a relationship with a loved one. Last month, the EAO explored ways that we could re-evaluate our expectations BEFORE experiencing disappointment (link [HERE](#)). However, there will be times that you cannot predict or prepare for disappointment. You can feel disappointments in many realms: your relationships and personal life, your career, events in our communities, and even when reflecting on your own actions. Whether they are small or large, everyone will encounter disappointment at some point in their lives. By **validating our feelings** and **reframing our thinking**, we can move on and learn from disappointment.

### STEP 1: VALIDATE

The first step in coping with disappointment is to validate your feelings. It is tempting to avoid feelings of shame, guilt, frustration, or anger that can come alongside disappointment. However, ignoring and minimizing your emotional reactions can prolong your experience. Instead, think about disappointment like a wave. While it may seem intense at first, "riding" the wave by acknowledging your feelings can help you to experience emotional release and move on from disappointment. Think about journaling, meditation, or talking with a trusted friend to help you validate your emotions.

While you validate your feelings, take the time to reflect on the reactions that you have. If your reaction to disappointment is to think about it over and over, or to think about the worst-case scenario, you may find it difficult to move on from disappointment. If you feel "stuck" when thinking about disappointment, it may be helpful to speak with an objective third party to talk out loud about your experiences. You are not alone- trained counselors at the Employee Assistance Office and LifeMatters are available to speak confidentially about these concerns.

### STEP 2: REFRAME

Once you have validated your emotional response and are able to feel emotional release, it's time to reflect on disappointment and reframe how you think about it.

You might consider thinking about disappointment as a **single step** in your life's journey, rather than a defining moment of your personal story. Looking at the big picture often helps us to cope with disappointment and recognize that it has a limited impact. Practicing gratitude can often help us to understand a disappointing event in a more accurate context.

You might also reframe disappointment as a **learning opportunity**. Disappointments can be useful experiences to highlight areas where our expectations don't match up with reality. For example, if you have the expectation to always be on time to meetings, you leave no room for the instances when life creates a barrier. An alternative might be to expect that unseen circumstances can sometimes realistically cause delays. When you experience disappointment, try connecting to feelings of gratitude

that you have a workplace that understands delays, or gratitude for all the meetings you made on time that show your team that you value promptness.

## **CONCLUSION**

While disappointment can be frustrating or painful to deal with, it can also become a part of our journey towards greater insight and wisdom. By acknowledging our valid feelings and finding new ways to think about disappointment, we can better understand our subconscious expectations and avoid these experiences in the future. Reach out to the EAO or LifeMatters to learn more, or to find support in coping with disappointment.

## **Coping with Disappointment Training**

The EAO and LifeMatters are diving deeper into this topic with an upcoming webinar. This webinar offers steps and strategies to help you manage disappointment in a healthy way. We will explore this topic by:

- Recognizing past disappointments
- Gaining insight into your own expectations and coping style
- Understanding steps and strategies for coping with disappointment effectively

This webinar is offered at no cost to all UW–Madison employees. [Register online](#) to receive the Zoom link.

## **Stress, Depression and PTSD: Common Emotional Reactions, How to Help Yourself and Others, Empathia/LifeMatters**

Support Session – Nov. 15, 2022, 12:00 p.m. CST

### **Description:**

In November we celebrate Veteran’s Day and kick-off the holiday season. While it can be a time of happiness, stress may intensify, depression and even PTSD can be triggered. If you would like to better understand these common emotional reactions and know how to help yourself, friends and family, join us for this webinar/support session.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Identify reasons common emotional reactions can be heightened this time of year.
2. Distinguish between stress, depression and PTSD.
3. Recognize risk factors for mental health struggles and resilience factors that reduce risk.
4. Choose some strategies for helping yourself, your family and friends.
5. Better understand mental health benefits and treatment options.
6. Know when and how to leverage your LifeMatters EAP benefit to help yourself and others.

Please feel free to share the invitation within your organization as you deem appropriate.

Topic: Stress, Depression and PTSD: Common Emotional Reactions, How to Help Yourself and Others

Host: Haleh Pals

Date: Tuesday, November 15, 2022

Time: 12:00 pm, Central Standard Time (Chicago, GMT-06:00)

Session number: 2662 101 3461

Session password: gqG3afiGJ35

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To join the training session  
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1. Go to

<https://prohealthcare.webex.com/prohealthcare/k2/j.php?MTID=t8eca6e80a84fc0a3fb45a0500b9237ef>

2. Enter your name and email address.

3. Enter the session password: gqG3afiGJ35 4. Click "Join Now".

5. Follow the instructions that appear on your screen.

To view in other time zones or languages, please click the link

<https://prohealthcare.webex.com/prohealthcare/k2/j.php?MTID=t55fa0d51808433d6fdffae7fe0496d20>

### **LifeMatters Monthly Promotions and Resources**

Our affiliate partner, LifeMatters, offers promotions, newsletters, webinars and more! Go to [mylifematters.com](http://mylifematters.com) and sign in with Bucky2. Webinars are located under "Quick Links."

This month's promotional content includes:

Flyers:

- Domestic Violence
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Domestic Violence Concerns (for Managers)

Posters:

- PTSD
- Reach Out
- Rest Well