

FALL



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# Your EAP news

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) | 1-800-999-7222 | [anthemEAP.com](http://anthemEAP.com)

## Finding backup child care

Chances are, if you're a working parent, you've had to scramble to find last-minute care for your child. Whether it's an unexpected snow day, a sick child or a day off for your regular sitter, life can be less stressful when you have a backup plan in place.

So how do you find your backup? Here are a few pointers:

**Start with your workplace.** Ask if you can use your own sick days if your kids are ill. Also, find out if working from home is an option on days when you don't have child care.

**Ask your day care — or find a backup day care center.** If your usual day care is closed, maybe one of the staff would be willing to help. Or search other day care centers in your area. Some places may accept drop-ins — but you might have to preregister, and you may have to prepay, too. You can also check to see if there's a sick child day care in your area. These centers are typically designed for children who have a minor illness.

**Contact a babysitter agency.** If you need help on short notice, an agency may be able to help. Be sure to check out agencies before you need one, and ask about their policies, including background checks and education.

**Reach out to family and friends.** Do you have a retired family member who enjoys spending time with your children? Do you know a friend who stays home with their child? Ask if they'd be your backup.

Whichever backup you choose, be sure to do your homework, make an on-site visit and ask about the quality of care. Take your child with you when you visit so they can meet their backup. And be sure to have a backup for your backup, too! Then you know you'll all be covered, no matter what.

Source: Workplace Options, "The Best Laid Plans: Finding Backup Care" (Reviewed 2018). Raleigh, NC.



## Lecturas recomendadas para esta temporada

Tu programa Employee Assistance Program (EAP) también ofrece información útil en español. Para leer los artículos que enviamos este trimestre, visita [anthemEAP.com](http://anthemEAP.com) y selecciona español. Encontrarás la lista de temas tratados en esta edición en la sección "Noticias para Usted."

## Fighting depression around the holidays

The holidays are typically a time for joy, togetherness and giving. But for many, this season may also bring an overwhelming feeling of depression. While some people are busy with parties and gift-giving, others can feel a deep sense of sadness, loneliness and anxiety.

How can you fight holiday depression? The first step is to know if you have it. Ask yourself if you feel tired for no reason. Are you eating or sleeping more or less than you normally do? Do you have trouble focusing, or have you stopped enjoying the little things in life? Do you just feel sad? Any or all of these signs could mean you're depressed.\*

## Take steps to avoid or overcome holiday blues

If you know that the holiday season might get you down — or if you already have these feelings — here are some steps to help change the situation:

### Make holiday plans.

Goals give you something to focus on and less time to focus on the negative. So make plans with friends and fill up that calendar. Treat yourself to an “all about me” day. Sign up to volunteer. Schedule a few hours to drive around to look at decorations, and schedule time for walks, shopping and other outings.



### Create your own traditions.

Whether you're alone or with loved ones, you can add something special to your holiday by creating a tradition. Find a new recipe to try. Explore a new place to stop and reflect on the year ahead. Or find the perfect holiday movie to mark the season.

### Regroup and reorganize.

If you're depressed, try to pinpoint those things that make you feel that way. Is it loneliness? Change? Stress? Goals you didn't reach? Think through the reasons why and tackle them head-on.

### Think about you.

During the season of giving, it's easy to overlook what makes you happy. So make your own holiday list — and gift yourself some self-care.

### Use your resources.

Many companies have support programs that can help you through issues like holiday depression. Your EAP team can guide you.

\* Schedule a checkup with your doctor to talk about any signs of depression.

Source: Workplace Options, "Fighting Depression Around the Holidays" (Reviewed 2017). Raleigh, NC.

## Being grateful is good for you

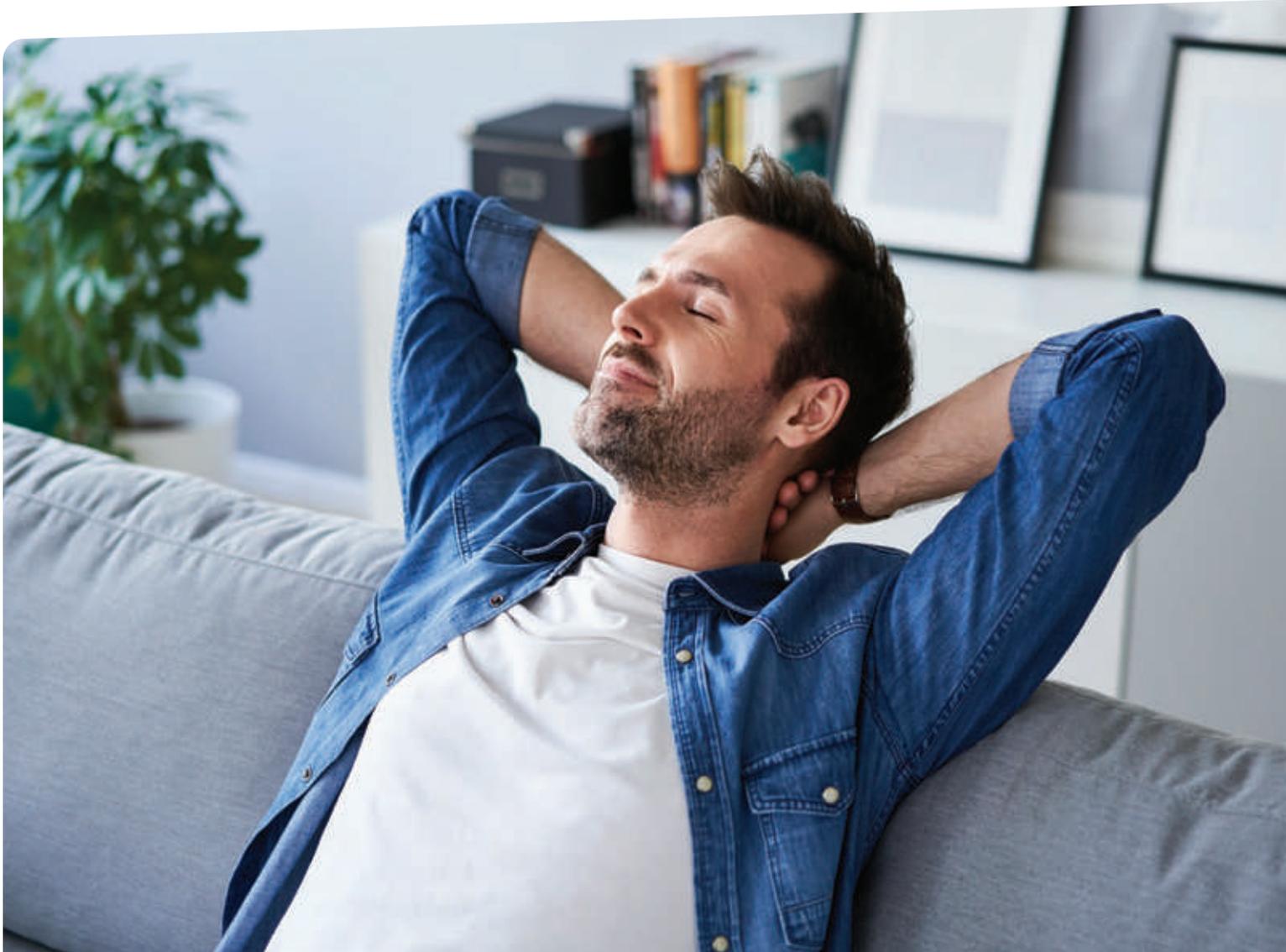
You've probably heard the phrase "count your blessings" — but did you know doing that can make you feel better overall? Research shows that gratitude may be linked with better mental and physical health and being more happy and satisfied with life.

Gratitude "happens" when you understand and recognize that the good experiences you have in life — small or large — can be seen and accepted as gifts. It's the opposite of taking things for granted. There are a number of things you can do that can raise your sense of gratitude. They take just a few minutes a day and can have a life-changing effect.

### 5 exercises in gratitude

1. **Begin each day with 2 minutes of gratitude.** Find a quiet space, close your eyes if possible, and think about the things and people in your life you're grateful for. Remind yourself that they are gifts because none of this is owed to you.
2. **Create a short affirmation about the gifts you received.** Say positive thoughts to yourself every day to remind yourself that life could've turned out differently.
3. **Use a daily gratitude journal.** Make it special by using it just for this purpose. Every day, write down at least 5 things you're grateful for.
4. **If you have children, make it a practice to talk about gratitude every day.** Help them to create and use their own gratitude journal. Doing this is a wonderful teaching tool, as you help your children learn how to bounce back from difficult times.
5. **Face challenges with gratitude.** Tell yourself that you may have tough times — but you've been gifted with the power to take them on!

Sources: Allen, S. (2018). "The Science of Gratitude." Conshohocken, PA: John Templeton Foundation. Defense Centers of Excellence, National Center for Telehealth & Technology, "After Deployment: Understanding Gratitude" (2010): [afterdeployment.org](https://afterdeployment.org).





## Changing negative thoughts about yourself to good ones

Do you feel bad about the job you do? Do you tell yourself you aren't fit enough, fast enough or smart enough? It's easy to cut yourself down — but when you do this, it can really take a toll on your self-esteem.

So how can you start seeing yourself as the wonderful person you are? Follow this simple exercise:

1. Carry a small pad of paper with you as you go about your daily routine for several days, and jot down negative thoughts about yourself when you notice them.
2. Ask yourself these questions about each negative thought you have: Is this message really true? Would a person say this to another person? If not, why am I saying it to myself? What do I get out of thinking this thought? If it makes me feel bad about myself, why not stop thinking it?
3. Write down positive statements you can use to replace the negative ones. For example:

### Negative thought

I am not worth anything.  
I have never accomplished anything.  
I always make mistakes.  
I don't deserve a good life.  
I am stupid.

### Positive thought

I am a valuable person.  
I have accomplished many things.  
I do many things well.  
I deserve to be happy and healthy.  
I am smart.

4. Use these techniques consistently for 4 to 6 weeks, and you should notice that you don't think negative thoughts about yourself as much.
5. Repeat as needed — and don't give up! Stay positive about yourself, and you'll feel more positive every day!

Source: U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), "Changing Negative Thoughts About Yourself to Positive Ones." In "Building Self-esteem: A Self-Help Guide" (accessed January 2018): [samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov).



Important: This document is intended for general information only. It does not provide the reader with specific direction, advice, or recommendations. You may wish to contact an appropriate professional for questions concerning your particular situation. Schedule a checkup with your doctor to discuss any stress you may be experiencing. Always consult with your doctor before beginning any exercise program or meal plan.

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