

The Continuum Edge

RESOURCES FOR EVERYONE

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DO ULTRAPROCESSED FOODS CONTRIBUTE TO DEPRESSION?

You may get drowsy after eating burgers, fries or pizza at lunchtime. It's annoying, but eating ultraprocessed food often can also contribute to health problems like diabetes and possibly depression. A recent study discovered that among 32,000 participants, those who ate ultraprocessed food the most often, including artificial sweeteners, had the highest rates of depression.

Do you frequently consume ultraprocessed foods? If you suffer from depression, is your diet a contributing factor or making it worse? If you're being treated for depression, is your diet undermining wellness? Talk to your doctor about a diet that supports your health or meet with a Continuum EAP wellness coach to learn more. You might be surprised to discover that some foods labeled as "healthy" are actually ultraprocessed and unhealthy.

Study: jamanetwork.com (search "ultraprocessed foods depression")

Scan this QR code to view a few examples of ultraprocessed foods and some healthier alternatives.

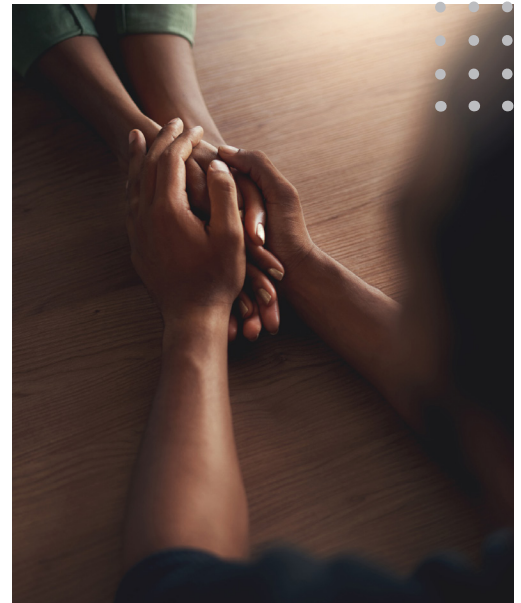


TRY DECLUTTERING TO HELP MANAGE STRESS

Spend 15 minutes decluttering a small space within your living area as a stress management technique. Decluttering gives you a win, but there is more to it. Your brain sends a signal that there can be order and control at a time when you're not feeling much of it. This positive state of mind has ripple effects from the feeling of accomplishment. A small release of dopamine occurs when you declutter, and cortisol, the stress hormone, lessens. This then elevates your mood. Some studies have demonstrated improved sleep quality, too. So, the next time life feels chaotic, take a few minutes to declutter and get the calm, control and renewed energy back into your day. *To learn more, visit extension.usu.edu and search "declutter mental benefits."*

GAM-NON: HELP FOR LOVED ONES

Family and friends of compulsive gamblers can feel overwhelmed and powerless to help. Initial focus is naturally on tactics for managing the gambler's behavior, but the path to mental stability for loved ones is self-care. This means protecting oneself physically and emotionally, placing a priority on one's well-being, and setting boundaries. This is the purpose of "Gam-Anon," a 12-step self-help group modeled after Alanon (for loved ones of problem drinkers). When loved ones set boundaries, understand skills of healthy detachment, and prioritize their own well-being, then compulsive gamblers often then recognize the true impact of their behavior, become motivated to seek help, and ultimately accept it. If you are affected by another person's gambling, talk to a Continuum EAP professional to discover more about this group or for one-on-one support.



HOW TO MASTER COMPOSURE UNDER FIRE



Negative interactions at work sometimes happen, so why not develop the art and skill of preventing them from throwing you off your game and derailing your mood? You'll stay productive and maintain a better sense of well-being. Call it "staying composed under fire" or "workplace emotional resilience." It takes practice, but you should start by understanding these four principles:

1. The key to staying in control is realizing that your reaction is a choice. It may feel like pure reflex, but with practice you'll see how this can flip.
2. Be aware by identifying emotions like frustration, anger or stress that appear in response to everyday interactions.
3. Practice pausing before reacting. This gives you a mini-time gap to respond more thoughtfully rather than impulsively.
4. Try this reframing technique — when you witness negativity on the job, don't personalize it. Instead, see it as a reflection of the other person's stress or struggles and focus on solutions, not drama.



YOUR JOB FINANCES YOUR JOURNEY

You need your job for income, but it's also a tool for achieving your life's dreams. Consider this perspective to manage stress: "Your job finances your journey." This mindset makes workplace challenges easier to handle and helps you find more purpose and motivation

in daily tasks. Staying focused on what truly matters — your personal journey — also brings other benefits, like better work-life balance. By creating emotional distance between work and personal life, you can worry less and enjoy your time off more.