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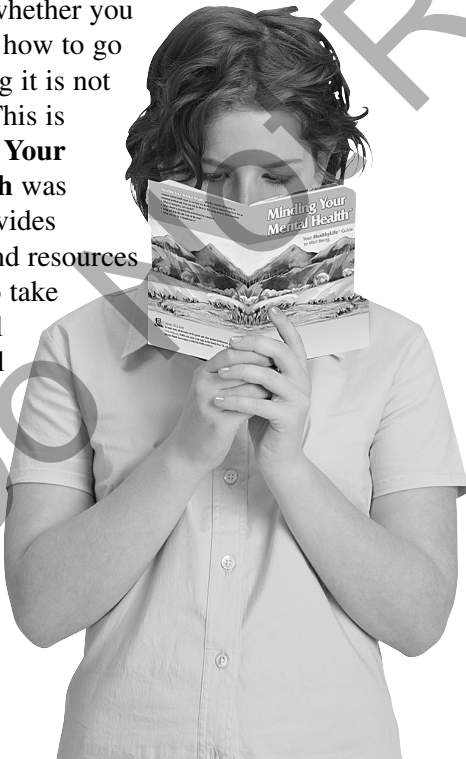
Section I – Mental Health Facts

Introduction

People who are mentally healthy feel good about themselves and comfortable with others. They are also able to deal with the demands, challenges, and changes in everyday life.

Everyone, regardless of age, race, sex, or economic status, is subject to emotional upset. Feeling down, angry, or anxious can be a response to a variety of things. Feelings like these can come and go quite often. When they are disturbing, interfere with daily life, and/or linger for weeks or months, they may signal a problem that requires professional assistance. In fact, during any one-year period, up to 50 million Americans (about 22%) suffer from a mental disorder that interferes with employment, school, and/or daily life.

Determining whether you need help and how to go about receiving it is not always easy. This is why **Minding Your Mental Health** was written. It provides information and resources you can use to take greater control of your mental well-being. Whether you are thinking about seeking help or are already in treatment, this guide will be beneficial.



Mental Health Facts

- About 27% of the people who seek medical help for physical problems have emotional problems.
- The 2 most common reasons people seek mental health treatment are for depression and anxiety.
- Between 8 and 14 million Americans suffer from depression each year.
- 80 to 90% of mental disorders are treatable using medication and other therapies.
- About 2% of college students suffer from an eating disorder.
- Approximately 10% of Americans have phobias.
- About 21% of college students say that sleep difficulties affect their academic performance.
- 22 million Americans suffer from drug dependence or abuse.
- 18.6 million Americans need treatment for a serious alcohol problem.
- Nearly 25% of the elderly who are thought to be senile actually suffer some form of mental illness that can be treated effectively.
- Therapy does not have to take a long time. Almost 50% of the people who enter therapy will complete it in 7 sessions or less.

Burnout

Burnout is a condition of feeling exhausted or worn out. You can get burnout from anything that demands more energy than you can give. Burnout is not a one-time event. It is a gradual process that builds over time.

Symptoms

- Emotional exhaustion
- Fatigue
- Loss of enthusiasm for work, school, family or friends
- Feelings of helplessness
- Poor concentration
- Depression, hopelessness
- Physical problems, such as headaches, backaches, stomachaches
- Emotional outbursts
- Acts of hostility

Causes

- Working long hours or more than one job
- Working in very demanding situations with low job satisfaction and little control
- Studying excessively or taking an excessively large number of classes



- Having relationships that drain you of energy physically and emotionally
- Being overly involved in community or social activities
- Trying to be superman or superwoman - being everything to everyone
- Perfectionism

Traits of Persons Most Likely to Suffer Burnout

- *Idealistic* - They have high aspirations for their life and believe that their special talents, knowledge and education will be enough to change the world in some way.
- *Goal Oriented* - They work very hard, often devoting their lives to a certain cause, career, or relationship.
- *Leaders* - They take on more than their share of work and try to motivate others with their ideals and high expectations.
- *Females* - They may try to fulfill a “superwoman” ideal and get over-stressed from the responsibilities of work, children, and home.

Prevention

The old saying “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” applies to burnout. Use these tips to prevent burnout:

1. Know what burnout is and that it can happen to you if you spread yourself too thin.
2. Be aware of physical signs and symptoms that may precede an episode of burnout. Examples: headaches, body aches, feeling tired all the time, often getting colds, and other common ailments.

Burnout, *Continued*

3. Reduce long work or study hours if possible. The more you work and the less rest you get, the more likely you are to burn out. Prioritize your work load.
4. Take regular 5-10 minute relaxation breaks. Work or study done after a break can be more efficient. (See examples of relaxation exercises in “Stress - Self-Help” on pages 91 and 92.)
5. Mentally remove yourself from your job, school, or other high stress situations. Step back and take a look from an outsider’s point of view. Imagine how others might handle your tasks.
6. Schedule a vacation at least once a year when you can take time to relax and do the things that you enjoy. Also, take daily breaks from your work or study for lunch outside of work, a walk, a crossword puzzle, etc.
7. Discuss with your supervisor any on-the-job problems that could be leading to burnout.
8. Get enough sleep and exercise.
9. Attempt to do well, but don’t try to be perfect.

Questions to Ask

Do you suffer from more physical illnesses lately, such as headaches, colds, body aches and pains, stomach and other intestinal problems?

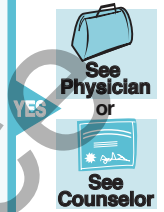


NO

Flowchart continued in next column

During the past six months, have you had any of these symptoms?

- Felt tired and worn out most of the time
- Been unable to carry out your normal daily activities
- Felt depressed a good deal of the time
- Enjoyed life less and less



NO

Do you have any of the following problems?

- You seem to be working harder and harder with no real accomplishment or satisfaction.
- You forget appointments and deadlines easily.
- You feel disoriented at the end of your workday.



NO

Do you have any of these problems?

- Increased frustration or anger on the job or in class
- A short temper
- Disappointment in others lately
- Increased difficulty in relating to others at work, school, home, and elsewhere
- You have begun to isolate yourself from others.



NO



See Self-Help on next page

Burnout, *Continued*

Self-Help

- Use your vacation time or take a leave of absence from work or school if you can. Renew yourself with time away from the stress.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Re-assess goals. Think about your career goals and life priorities. Evaluate them for where you are at this stage of your life. If you need help in assessing your goals, take a course in time management and/or goal setting.
- Prioritize your time. Think through and evaluate all the aspects of your current life. Focus on the things you need to deal with at this point in time. Deal with other things at a later date or when you can better handle them.
- Exercise. Do some form of aerobic exercise (running, walking, bicycling, swimming) 30 minutes a day, 3 times a week. It will reduce stress and help with burnout symptoms.
- Set up a healthy daily routine. Don't bolt out of the house and rush to work or class. Start off at a more leisurely pace. This will help set a more relaxed tone for the entire day. Get up an hour earlier, have a relaxed breakfast, read the paper before leaving for work or class.
- Eat regular meals at regular times every day. Choose healthy foods.
- Learn and practice relaxation skills. (See "Stress - Self-Help" on pages 91 and 92.)
- Realize that you can't be everything to everyone. Delegate tasks at work and at home to lessen your load. Learn to say "no."
- Spend time away from situations that cause you stress.

- Make and take time for leisure activities that you enjoy. Do these on a daily, or at least, on a weekly basis.



- Discuss feelings and problems you are having with your family, friends and co-workers. Talking helps to ease feelings of isolation and frustration that feed burnout. If things don't get better, seek professional help.

What You Can Do for a Friend or Relative

- Tell them you care about their health and well-being and worry that they could be having a problem with burnout. Suggest they get help.
- Be supportive. Don't underestimate the effects of stress/burnout. They can be very debilitating, both physically and emotionally.
- Educate yourself. Read all you can on stress and burnout symptoms. Try to discuss these with your friend/relative. Helping them become aware of the symptoms may prevent them from suffering serious damage to their health.
- Help them relax. Try to get your friend or relative to participate in relaxing activities, such as an exercise program or a hobby they might enjoy, either on their own or with you.
- Offer to help them in daily living tasks, such as home chores or taking care of their children, so they can get some rest. But don't do more than you can handle.

Codependency

“Codependency” is used to describe the person who becomes the “caretaker” of an addicted or troubled individual. The individual can be addicted to alcohol, drugs, or gambling. Or, he or she can be troubled by a physical or emotional illness. Codependents can be this individual’s partner, lover, child, parent, brother, sister, co-worker, or friend. Codependents do these things:



Most codependents don't realize they have a problem.

- “Enable” or allow the person to continue his or her self-destructive or troubled behavior
- “Rescue” the person who has gotten into trouble from things, such as an arrest, accident, being absent or late for work
- Make excuses for the person’s behavior
- Deny that the person has a problem

Typical Roles That Codependents Play

- *Rescuer* – saves the person from unpleasant situations, i.e., putting an alcoholic to bed after he/she passes out
- *Caretaker* – takes care of all household and financial chores which hold the family together
- *Joiner* – rationalizes that the person’s behavior is normal by simply allowing it to take place or by taking part in the same behavior as the addicted or troubled individual
- *Hero* – becomes the “super person” to preserve the family image
- *Complainer* – blames the person and makes him or her the scapegoat for all problems

- *Adjuster* – withdraws from the family and acts like he/she doesn’t care

Most codependents do not realize they have a co-dependent problem. They focus more energy on another’s actions and needs than on their own. They think they are actually helping the troubled person, but they are not.

Questions to Ask

Do you do three or more of the following?

- Think more about another person’s behavior and problems than about your own life
- Feel anxious about the addicted or troubled person’s behavior and constantly check on them to try to catch them in their bad behavior
- Worry that if you stop trying to control the other person, that he or she will fall apart
- Blame yourself for this person’s problems
- Cover up or “rescue” this person when they are caught in a lie or other embarrassing situation related to their addiction or other problem
- Deny that this person has a “real” problem with drugs, alcohol, etc. and become angry and/or defensive when others suggest there is an addiction or other substance abuse problem



YES

See Counselor

NO



Use Self-Help

See Self-Help on next page

Codependency, *Continued*

You may not be truly codependent, but you should become aware of how your behavior may be enabling an addicted or troubled individual.

Self-Help

Most codependents are not in touch with their codependency and may need help to see it. The following self-help tips are general suggestions. For many people, these are not easy to do without the help of a counselor.

- Read books on codependency. You can find these in the library and bookstores. You may find you identify with what you read and gain understanding.
- Focus on these three C's:
 - You did not **C**ause the other person's problem.
 - You can't **C**ontrol the other person.
 - You can't **C**ure the problem.
- Don't lie, make excuses, or cover up for the abuser's drinking, drug, or other problem. Admit to yourself that this way of living is not normal and that the abuser or troubled person has a problem that needs professional help.
- Refuse to come to the person's aid. Every time you bail the abuser out of trouble, you reinforce their helplessness and your hopelessness.
- If you or your children are being physically, verbally, or sexually abused, do not allow it to continue. Seek the help of shelters for victims of domestic violence.

- Know that there are many support groups which help codependents. Examples are self-help groups for family and friends of substance abusers, such as Al-Anon, Alateen, and Children of Alcoholics Foundation (COAF). Other self-help and support groups are offered through community health education programs.
- Continue your normal family routines, i.e., include the drinker when he/she is sober.
- Focus on your own feelings, desires, and needs. Begin to do what is good for your own well-being.
- Allow children to express their feelings. Show them how by expressing your own.
- Set limits on what you will and won't do. Be firm and stick to these limits.
- Engage in new experiences and interests. Find diversion from your loved one's problem.
- Take responsibility for yourself and others in the family to live a better life whether your loved one recovers or not.

What You Can Do for a Friend or Relative

Persons who are codependent may not realize they have a problem, deny they have a problem, and/or refuse to get help. If you think someone you know is codependent, the following tips can help you help them:

- Let them know that you are concerned for their well-being and health.
- Encourage them to seek professional help and/or join a support group.

Depression

Depression is more than just the blues or the blahs. It makes a person less able to manage life. It affects a person's mood, mind, body, and behaviors. Depression can be as much an illness as diabetes, etc.



Depression is a state of sadness and despair.

Causes

- Brain chemical imbalances
- Life changes, such as going away to college, the ending of a relationship, retirement, loss of a job or death of a loved one. (See “Grief/Bereavement” on page 52.)
- Concern about one’s grades and/or workload
- Worrying about money
- Medical illness, surgery, or disability
- Abuse of alcohol, drugs, and some medications
- Lack of natural, unfiltered sunlight between late fall and spring in some sensitive people. This is called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).
- Holiday “blues”
- Low self-esteem

Symptoms

- Ongoing feelings of sadness, helplessness, hopelessness, guilt, or worthlessness. Crying.
- Loss of interest in activities that used to bring pleasure, including sex
- Fatigue. Loss of energy or enthusiasm.
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Anger, anxiety, or irritability
- Physical symptoms, such as headaches or digestive problems that don’t respond to treatment and don’t let up
- Changes in eating and sleeping patterns

Whatever the cause, depression can be treated. Treatment includes medication, psychotherapy, and other therapies specific to the cause of the depression, such as exposure to bright light (similar to sunlight) for depression that results from SAD.

Questions to Ask

Have you just attempted suicide, are you making plans for suicide or do you have repeated thoughts of suicide or death?

YES



NO

Have you noticed a loss of interest or pleasure in almost all activities most of the day, nearly every day for at least two weeks?

YES



NO

Flowchart continued on next page

Depression, *Continued*

Have you been in a depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day and have you had any of these problems for at least two weeks?

- Feeling hopeless, worthless, guilty, slowed down, or restless
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Problems concentrating, thinking, remembering, or making decisions
- Feeling tired all the time. Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Headaches or other aches and pains
- Digestive or sexual problems
- Feeling worried or anxious
- Thoughts of death or suicide

YES



NO

Has depression interfered with daily activities for more than two weeks? Have you withdrawn from normal activities during this time?

YES



NO

Has the depression occurred with any of the following?

- Recent delivery of a baby
- A medical problem
- Taking over-the-counter or prescription medicine
- Abusing alcohol or drugs

YES



NO

Are you depressed now and do any of the following apply?

- You have been depressed before and not gotten treatment.
- You have been treated for depression in the past and it has returned.
- You have taken medication for depression in the past.
- You have a family history of depression in a close relative.

YES



NO

Does the depression come with dark, cloudy weather or winter months and does lift when spring comes?

YES



NO

During holiday times, do you withdraw from family and friends or dwell on past holidays to the point that it interferes with your present life?

YES



NO



Flowchart continued in next column

See Self-Help on next page

Depression, *Continued*

Self-Help

- Take medications as prescribed. Get your doctor's advice before you take over-the-counter herbs, such as St. John's Wort, especially if you take other medications.
- Don't use illegal drugs. Limit alcohol. These can cause or worsen depression. Drugs and alcohol can also make medicines for depression less effective. Harmful side effects can happen when alcohol and/or drugs are mixed with medicine.
- Eat healthy foods. Eat at regular times.
- Exercise regularly.
- Try not to isolate yourself. Be with people you trust and feel safe with, even though you feel down.
- Do something you enjoy.
- Relax. Listen to upbeat music. Read a good book. Take a warm bath or shower. Do relaxation exercises.
- Talk to a friend, relative, co-worker or anyone who will let you express the tensions and frustrations you are feeling.
- Keep an emergency number handy (e.g., crisis hotline, trusted friend's number, etc.) in case you feel desperate.
- If suicidal thoughts are present, remove any weapons, pills, etc. that could be used for suicide and get medical help.



*Be with positive people.
They'll lift your morale.*

What You Can Do for a Friend or Relative

- The most important thing you can do is to get your friend or relative to seek professional treatment. Their illness, especially if it is severe and has persisted for a long time, will not go away on its own. Try to give positive feedback to the person about seeking help.
- Help them get treatment. You may need to make the initial appointment with a professional. You may need to take them to the appointment.
- Be observant. Do not ignore suicide references. These should be reported to the person's therapist or physician immediately.
- Know their medication. You should alert their physician about any side effects that you notice when they take medication.
- Be supportive. Depression requires the patience, understanding, love and encouragement of the person's loved ones and friends.
- Talk to them. Encourage the depressed person to talk about their feelings. Helping them see that they have succeeded at something or are "worthwhile" in other matters can help give them the confidence they need to continue with treatment.
- Encourage the person to go out and do things with you or with others, such as to see a movie or attend a social event. Do things the depressed person enjoyed in the past.
- Seek support from organizations and self-help groups that deal with depression. (See "National Resources" on pages 13 to 16.)

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is how you feel about yourself. How people experience their self-esteem can vary over time and be dependent on certain life events, such as a job loss, relationship breakup, or poor grades, which can temporarily lower one's self-esteem. It affects everything you do:

- How you select a major, career or job
- How you choose and relate to friends
- How you relate to your children
- How you give and receive love
- How successful you are at reaching your goals
- How well you perform in school

Generally, one of three categories describes how people evaluate themselves:

- High self-esteemers are people who see themselves as self-assured with plenty of confidence about their worth as people.
- Middle self-esteemers are people who reflect qualities of both high and low self-esteem.
- Low self-esteemers are people who feel self-hate and who doubt their own value. They are fearful and feel alienated.

People with HIGH Self-Esteem are generally:

- Not defeated by mistakes or failures
- Eager to express themselves
- Comfortable in a leadership or active role
- Able to handle criticism and learn from it
- Unlimited in their development
- Ready to take appropriate risks
- Positive about life

- Healthy in their habits
- Comfortable laughing at themselves
- Not afraid of new things
- Trusting and hopeful
- Involved with others
- Able to experience their feelings fully
- Aware of personal strengths and weaknesses
- Content with their lives
- Not inclined to be boastful
- Able to ask for help when it's needed

People with LOW Self-Esteem are generally:

- Convinced of their worthlessness
- Full of feelings of insignificance
- Unsure of their abilities
- Likely to stick with the easy and familiar
- Uncomfortable with praise
- Fearful and unsure about the future
- Perfectionists to extremes
- Paralyzed by fear
- Blind to new opportunities
- Negative thinkers, overly concerned about the opinion of others. Not capable of handling criticism or rejection
- Defensive
- Procrastinators
- Defeated easily
- Uncomfortable in social situations
- Manipulative
- Inclined to blame others

Self-Esteem, *Continued*

Many people lack positive self-esteem because of negative feelings they picked up in childhood from parents or peers. Self-esteem can be damaged if you continue to believe the negative messages received early in life regardless of the reality of these messages. It doesn't matter if you were attractive, well-behaved, said all the right things, got good grades and were sweeter than your sister. All that matters is what you thought about yourself at those times. If you had negative thoughts about yourself, your self-esteem as an adult is probably suffering. If you had positive thoughts, your self-esteem is probably stronger.

Self-esteem can also be damaged if you act against your own sense of values, such as honesty and integrity. You may judge yourself too harshly for certain behaviors that go against these values.

Questions to Ask

Are you making plans for suicide or are you having thoughts of suicide or death?

NO

YES



Get
Emergency
Care

Do you abuse alcohol and/or drugs to feel better about yourself?

NO

YES



See
Physician
or



See
Counselor

Are you staying in a situation where you are physically or emotionally abused? OR Are you abusing someone else physically or emotionally to make yourself feel superior?

NO

YES



See
Physician
or



See
Counselor

Have you done something which has made you feel poorly about yourself for an extended period of time and has this left you feeling depressed and/or guilty?

NO

YES



See
Counselor

Is your lack of self-esteem keeping you from going forward in life, i.e., going after a better job, developing a satisfying relationship, being a good parent, etc.?

NO

YES



See
Counselor



Use
Self-Help

Self-Help

Ways to Improve Self-Esteem

■ Identify:

- Wants and needs that are important to you
- The people you feel intimidated by. Learn to be assertive with them.
- The situations you have the hardest time with. Ask for help, if you need it.
- Things in your life where you can feel successful and make plans to work toward them.

■ Nurture yourself. Treat yourself in the same way that a patient, loving and encouraging parent would. (*Note:* Get outside help from family, friends or a counselor for these tips if you need to.) For example:

- When you fail at something, say: "That's okay. I'll do better next time."
- Praise yourself every day for something.
- When you're feeling blue, say "It's okay. I will be alright."

Flowchart continued in next column

Self-Esteem, *Continued*

- Let yourself cry when you feel like it.
 - If your day was rough, relax in the evening or as soon as you can.
 - Accept compliments from others with pride.
 - Accept “mistakes” you’ve made without condemning yourself.
 - When you try something new and don’t catch on right away, give yourself credit for trying.
 - When you succeed, say it was because you worked hard.
 - Reward yourself sometimes for no particular reason at all.
- Other ways to nurture yourself:
- Eat healthy.
 - Get at least 7 hours of sleep each night.
 - Learn how to take care of your health.
 - Contact someone you care about.
 - Keep in touch with people who care about you.
 - List ten things you do well.
 - Learn something new.
 - Look at old photos that bring back good memories.
 - Let someone do you a favor.
 - Re-read a favorite book.
 - Meditate.
 - Give yourself a present.
 - Volunteer some time to a good cause.
 - Do something hard to do that you can accomplish.
- Make affirmations. Affirmations are statements which reinforce positive thinking patterns. People behave in ways that fit their belief systems about themselves. If an individual believes he is a poor student or salesman, he will act in ways to prove it.

It is better to affirm positive beliefs than it is to oppose negative ones, just as it is wiser to turn on the light in a dark room instead of trying to remove the darkness.

How to Make Affirmations

- Make affirmations simple.
- Make them personal. Use the words “I,” “Me” and “My.”
- Be positive. Avoid negative words like “can’t,” “don’t,” and “won’t.”
- Use the present tense as if “it” is already happening. For example, instead of saying, “I will” say “I am.”
- Make affirmations ongoing and progressive. For example, “Each day, I feel more...”
- Make affirmations that you can attain. Make them as specific as possible.
- Try to reinforce positive behaviors rather than stopping negative behaviors.
- Be brief or you won’t remember it.
- Use feeling words.
- Continue making affirmations even if you don’t fully believe them at first. This can change over time.

On page 83 is a list of sample affirmations you can use. Select a few affirmations and use them daily for twenty-one days. You’ll be amazed at your progress.

Self-Esteem, *Continued*

Sample Affirmations

1. I do something to treat myself well every day.
I am worthwhile.
2. I am like other people. I'm not perfect.
3. I am striving to improve myself in some way every day and I accept and enjoy who I am today.
4. I approve of myself and I accept how I feel, think and act.
5. I give myself the leeway to make mistakes and learn from them.
6. I am asserting myself by standing up for my values and wishes.
7. I am approaching new situations with confidence.
8. I expect successes and mistakes and I accept and learn from each situation.

Overcome Negative Self-Esteem

Learn how to control negative thoughts that are self-defeating. One way to do this is to question a self-defeating belief about an event when it leads to feelings of low self-esteem. Use the ABCDE model that follows. It identifies how beliefs influence self-esteem and work or school performance. Once identified, beliefs that are undesirable can be disputed or changed. When this happens, higher self-esteem and improved work performance can be the result.

How to Use the ABCDE Model

Activating the Event. What event made you feel unworthy, self-doubting or guilty?

Example:

You were overlooked for a promotion or received a poor grade.

Your Example:

Beliefs. What thoughts did you have about the event?

Examples:

1. It's my fault for not being smarter.
2. I'm wasting my time here.
3. I'm never going to amount to much.

Your Examples:

Consequences. How did you feel because of your beliefs?

Examples:

Blue, passive, angry, self-abusive, negative towards others and yourself.

Your Examples:

Self-Esteem, *Continued*

Dispute. Challenge the negative thoughts you identified in the “beliefs” section on the previous page. Start with a phrase like “That’s not right.” and add a positive statement.

Example:

That’s not right. This happens to lots of people at one time or another. I’ll take my time to plan and do some self-improvement activities. If I feel negatively about myself now, it may affect my work. I’m not a failure as a person. Failure is only an event. It’s not a person.

Your Examples:

Effect. How do you feel now that you have challenged your negative thoughts?

Example:

Relaxed and positive. I’ve made good use of rational thinking to improve my mood.

Your Examples:

What You Can Do for a Friend or Relative

- **Involve them.** Try to get your friend or relative involved with others. This will help them see that they can make a positive contribution to events, people, etc.



Include friends or relatives in group outings.

- **Give them positive feedback.** Tell your friend or relative about his or her strengths, accomplishments and assets. This will not only remind them, but let them know that you think enough of them to remember all these things.
- **Express your care and concern.** Let your friend or relative know how much you value them and their place in your life. This will give them a greater sense of belonging.
- **Encourage them.** Try to get your friend or relative to learn something new. Tell them how good they’re likely to be at it.
- **Laugh with them, not at them.** Help your friend or relative to laugh at their and your mistakes by trying to find some humor (when appropriate) in their life.
- **Listen to them.** Allow your friend or relative to express themselves by giving him or her your complete attention while they are speaking to you. This will let them know that their opinions matter to you and that they are important enough to be paid attention to.