



CENTERSTONE

Wellness Program

## **How to Manage Your Mood**

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Are your moods unpredictable, uncontrollable or consistently disproportionate to a situation? You may be experiencing excessive emotional distress due to unmanaged moods. The many challenges of today's society seem to provoke mood swings for many people, which can debilitate relationships, careers and even physical health.

Mood swings are characterized by a drastic change in emotion from one side of the spectrum to the other. If at one moment you are contentedly going about your daily tasks, and the next moment you're suddenly upset, irritated or hostile, then you may suffer from mood swings.

### **Causes of Mood Swings:**

- Unbalanced lifestyle
- Lack of sleep
- Unhealthy diet
- Chemical imbalance
- Hormonal changes
- Smoking, alcohol or drug use

### **Symptoms of Mood Swings:**

- Unexplained emotions
- Frequent mood changes
- Irritable, anxious
- Sadness, depression
- Lack of motivation
- Increased stress

Studies indicate that women experience mood swings twice as often as men. There are a number of causes for mood swings (that affect both men and women), and when the underlying cause is addressed, mood swings usually dissipate.

Why are some women more prone to mood swings during menopause? The answer, though complicated, has much to do with a woman's chemistry, environment and other factors. In addition to the hormonal causes of mood swings, psychological, behavioral and health related factors can also increase the likelihood of a woman developing mood swings during menopause.

### **Psychological Factors:**

- Past mental illness
- Stress
- Past trauma
- Relationship issues
- Coping with change

### **Behavioral Factors:**

- Smoking
- Alcohol
- Poor diet
- Inadequate exercise
- Stimulant use

### **Health Factors:**

- Diabetes
- Early menopause
- Heart disease
- Sleep disorders
- Cancer
- Lupus
- Thyroid disease

## **Four Steps to Manage Your Mood:**

### **Be Aware**

In order to change or manage your moods, you must first identify the moods you are experiencing. Be aware of negative thought patterns. Try to release emotional tension. You may want to begin by taking inventory of what currently isn't working in your life. Troubling relationships, health concerns or financial struggles could be contributing to your unmanaged moods.

## **Pause and Breathe**

When you feel a mood swing beginning, take a moment to pause, breathe deeply and focus. Center your attention on something in the present such as the sound of your breathing or the feeling of the wind on your skin. By focusing your attention on something sensory you can take your mind away from negative thoughts and feelings. If you feel overpowered during a mood swing and tend to lose rationality, sit down afterward and really think about what happened. Examine the event that changed your mood in relation to your reaction, and come up with a positive way of reacting to the same situation.

## **Improve Your Lifestyle**

Assess your lifestyle and attempt to restore balance in all areas of your life. Ensure that you get enough exercise, sleep and eat a balanced diet. Address unhealthy habits like excessive drinking or high sugar intake. Find productive ways to deal with stress, anger and anxiety. Sometimes the solution to moodiness is as simple as changing diet, exercise or sleep patterns. Others times, moodiness may suggest a more serious problem. Even if your moodiness is due to expected hormonal changes like menopause, there is no need to suffer. Treatment options are available to help you regain emotional stability and serenity.

## **Seek Help**

If your moods are having a big impact on your ability to get through daily life, work or relationships, then you may be experiencing something more serious than the normal ups and downs of everyday life. If this is the case, talk to your physician or seek support through a professional counselor. There are many forms of therapy that can help if out of control mood swings begin to interfere with daily functioning.

Centerstone (615) 460-HELP (4357)

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### **About Centerstone**

Centerstone ([www.centerstone.org](http://www.centerstone.org)), a not-for-profit organization is the nation's largest provider of community-based behavioral healthcare. With a history that spans over fifty years, Centerstone provides a full range of behavioral health and related educational services to more than 69,000 individuals of all ages and their families annually. Children, adolescents, adults, seniors, and families all receive help from a multitude of different programs in more than 120 facilities and 150 partnership locations in Tennessee and Indiana. Centerstone is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) in Tennessee and The Joint Commission in Indiana. For more information about Centerstone, please call toll free at (888) 291-4357.

### **About Susan Gillpatrick, MEd, LPC, CTS**

Susan Gillpatrick, Centerstone Crisis Management Specialist, primarily works in the field with clients in critical incident response situations, and in Centerstone's wellness trainings and presentations. She is also responsible for planning and implementing marketing and growth strategies for Centerstone's Crisis Management Strategies.

In recent years, Ms. Gillpatrick worked for the Shelby County Government Victims Assistance Center in Memphis. There, she co-developed a model program for the state of Tennessee entitled, "Homicide Response." Her work in this area received the 2000 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

Ms. Gillpatrick is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Trauma Specialist, Certified Workplace Conflict Mediator, and Mental Health Service Provider in the state of Tennessee and a National Certified Counselor. She is also a member the American Counseling Association, the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists, the Tennessee Mental Health Counseling Association, and the Middle Tennessee Employee Assistance Professionals Association. She is a frequent presenter at local and national conferences, and has had numerous articles published. She received her Master of Education degree in Human Development Counseling from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University.