



experiencing hope from humor

As healthy humor becomes a part of our lives, we can start to experience a wonderful closeness and connection to others that most of us long for. This connection can in turn contribute to our overall feelings of hope and peace in a sometimes very troubled world.

If healthy humor isn't a part of your life, or if it is something which is actually hurting you, you may want to call an Employee Assistance staff person to help you begin to see what changes could be made.

Help is available

Aspirus Employee Assistance Services has counselors available to help you and your family. You can call the confidential helpline 24 hours a day at:

800.236.4457
TDD# 715.845.4928

Remember,
Aspirus Employee
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Humor



when it hurts . . . how it helps



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humor as part of good health

Humor can be a wonderful gift in our lives. A good joke and the laughter that accompanies it can lift our spirits, quiet our sadness and produce relaxation. When we laugh we are living in the moment. Healthy humor helps relieve tension and assists our bodies as well as our emotions in the healing process. Healthy humor can help create feelings of happiness and acceptance.

using humor to control others

Humor, however, can also have its down side. It can be used to control others and maintain an upper hand in relationships. As long as the jokes keep rolling, it's hard for anyone to be taken seriously. And like many other forms of control, what looks weak (like "joking around") can really be very powerful.

using humor to avoid feelings

Besides using humor to control people and situations, humor can be used to avoid intimacy and the direct expression of feelings. By repeatedly blocking feelings with humor, we never fully experience others or our true selves. We can begin to live a life of emotional isolation and loneliness.

humor as a form of caretaking

Healthy humor can brighten a mood and oil the wheels of social interaction. If we habitually use humor to try to take care of others, however, we are once again avoiding our own self care.

It might be well for us to remember, too, that in our society, we have a great deal of cultural pressure to maintain an upbeat attitude as often as possible.

Keeping a smile on our faces even when we're hurting can drain us of vital, creative life-energy.

hostile humor

Jokes that specifically humiliate or ridicule others, such as racist, sexist, sexually offensive or those targeted toward any minority population, are very often a form of hostility and/or show low self-esteem. In various subcultures within our society, to exchange insults with another is an accepted but hurtful game.



when humor shames

If we are in relationships where humor is used to ridicule or shame others, we can begin to change that. We can make a decision to stop diminishing others or allowing others to diminish us. We can begin to practice living a life that respects all people by giving up "putting down."