

Self-Care Enhancement and Enrichment

I want to welcome everybody for the webinar today. My name is Allison and I've been with Magellan for many years as a manager. I'm a licensed clinical social worker. Certified professional for assessments. The objectives for today's webinar are to recognize the importance of self-care. Describe how to find happiness and purpose in life. And to develop techniques to achieve and improve mindset and mood. It is so vital for self-care with all of the things that are going on in the world. There is a power in positive thinking. Positive emotions are linked with better health, longer life, greater well-being and good social networks. On the other hand, chronic anger, worry and hostility increase the risk of developing heart disease and other physical ailments. Many studies have shown that positive emotions frequently accompanied by unfortunate circumstances, as I mentioned above. For example, one study observed nuns who were, for the most part, leading a lifestyle. The nuns that expressed positive emotions more frequently in their daily journals, happen to outlive many of the nuns who clearly did not. Another study of high school yearbook photos of women to show the ultimate expression of happiness, another words, a smile, to indicate how satisfied they would be 20 years later. When surveyed, those who were photographed with genuine smiles, are more likely to find themselves in midlife, married with families and an involved and richer social life. Next, we're going to explore some of the roots to happiness. There are a few. I'm just going to go over each of these. Number one is feeling good. That is seeking out situations that bring you pleasure. Helping you to feel more confident. Helping you to like yourself more. Feeling good about your accomplishments and life, in general. Positive emotions, such as peace, gratitude, satisfaction, pleasure, inspiration. Hope, curiosity and lots of life enhancing things. A dose of that creates upward spiral emotionally. The second thing is engaging fully. These are things that interest you and you are passionate about. When you are truly engaged in a situation. You can experience the state of flow where time seems to stop. We lose our sense of self and we concentrate intensely on the present moment. Third, doing good. This is searching for meaning outside of yourself. Whether it's helping others, volunteering, or doing kind acts. Even something as simple as holding a door open for someone or complementing someone come up puts life into perspective. It could be a religion, a cause or overriding sense of something that we belong. Savoring pleasure is focusing your attention on pleasure as it occurs and joining in with the experience. It's also related to being mindful. That is what is happening at the present moment. If intruding thoughts occur, acknowledge them and accept them without judgment and then let them go. Finally, self compassion. Which means, consoling the self if needed. Taking the time to nurture yourself and building the motivation to try again. Give yourself and your mind a break. If you find yourself talking negatively about yourself, think of someone that you really care about. What would you say to them? Would you say those same things that you say to yourself to them or about them? Next, we're going to look at using care strengths as a way to find purpose and meaning. Understanding our care or strength is a great way to find meaning and purpose. Over 20 years ago, a social scientist discovered 24 care strengths that we all have. According to the values and actions Institute, character strength are the positive part to your personality that impact how you think, feel and behave. The 24 care strengths are listed on this slide. You can see there are a lot of them. Creativity is one. Perspective. Honesty. Social intelligence. Leadership. Self-regulation. Appreciation of beauty and excellence. Gratitude. Humor. And spirituality, among others. Looking at the list, do you think you have an idea of what your top care strengths are? You might have some ideas. You Dawn't have to try to guess. In a few moments, I'm going to tell you how you can take a free survey, to determine your top care

strengths. You might wonder why these matter. It's because character strengths can be nurtured and developed to improve emotional well-being, or to find meaning and purpose in life. Researchers have not found a limit to how much meaning we need. That means, even if you believe you have quite a bit of purpose or meaning in your life, you can expand upon what you have. Or, if you feel you are lacking, you have a plethora of choices. Here are a few simple steps to get started. One is to find your source. You can start by taking this free survey to uncover your top five signature strengths. Those that are most unique to you. One of the five areas you would like to tap into or expand upon, and then ask which of the five is most intriguing to you. And which of the five do you will the motivation to pursue right now, today? The second part is taking action. Consider one way you can take action with your chosen area. What will your experiment be today? For example, if you chose health, you might start by taking a walk today. The helpful tip is to look at your number one care or strength and then ask yourself, how might this strength help me take action towards greater meaning. Then look at your number two strength and ask the same question. Do this with your top five strengths. If you keep an open mind, you will be surprised at the ideas that emerge. I encourage you to use the resources to help you build upon your strengths. To help you find purpose and meaning in life. Next, we're going to talk about gratitude. It's also a way to achieve an improved mindset and mood. It's expressing the appreciation for the good that you have in your life. This pioneer in positive psychology, said the strategy to cope with successes in life and people who are grateful, tend to be happier. People with gratitude report fewer symptoms of illness, more optimism, decrease of anxiety and depression and greater goal attainment. Practicing gratitude lights up the brain reward center. One of the most powerful ways to rewire your brain for more joy and less stress, is to focus on gratitude. Mindful.org lists ways to become more grateful. One is to keep a gratitude journal. You can establish a practice in which you remind yourself of the gifts, grace, benefits and good things that you enjoy. The beauty of having a gratitude journal is that it can be as simple or as complex as you would like it to be. You could start by committing to writing down three things you are great 04 each day. And later begin to expand more depth and breath. That is a guideline. For some people it's writing down one thing. Other people may write more than three. It's whatever works for you. Then, what you want to do is ask yourself these three questions. Meditate on your relationships you have with parents, friends, siblings, work associates, children and partners. Ask, what did I receive from and then fill in the blank. What have I been given to, and fill in the blank. And what troubling difficulties have I caused? Three, let others know you appreciate them. Research has found that expressing gratitude strengthens relationships. Next time you find someone you appreciate, be sure to let them know. Number four. Commit to practicing gratitude. Right it down. It can be as simple as I commit to count my blessings every day. Post it somewhere where you will be reminded every day. Number five, grateful emotions are things like smiling and expressing gratitude. You will trigger the emotion of gratitude more often. Number six. Find gratefulness in the small things. Also remember to be grateful for big events like graduating from school and getting married. It can often be difficult to feel grateful for the small things we do every day. Reminding yourself that eating a meal, for example, is, in itself powerful. Being grateful for having a meal and taking away hunger, is a reason to be grateful. Number seven. Use social media to spread gratitude. Social media can be negative at times. Using it to share year gratitude can help create a more positive online experience. Try spreading good, unique and uplifting ways to inspire one another. Number eight. Come to your senses. Through our senses, which is the ability to touch, see, smell, taste, hear, we gain an appreciation of what it means to be human and what an incredible miracle it is to be alive. Training our minds to practice gratitude more often is powerful. We are mindful of ourselves, each other and our environment.

We widen our circle of appreciation. Now, I'm going to walk you through a gratitude practice, if you want to call it a meditation or thinking exercise. It's called, savor the moment. Before we start, what I'd like everyone to do is write your mood right now. On a scale of 0 to 10. 10 being the best mood ever and zero distraught. Write a number down between zero and 10. This will only take a few minutes. The first step to think about is savor the good. On days where gratitude feels difficult to find, it's important to tune into your senses. This meditation invites you to cultivate thankfulness by slowing down and noticing what you can see, hear, touch, smell and taste. There doesn't have to be anything special going on. We will practice gratitude. Maybe it's as simple to be grateful for your morning coffee or a good book. Appreciate the little things. It really is about noticing even the smallest things that we do that we may not even be aware of, at times. One, use your breath to anchor yourself in the present moment. What I would like you to do is sit back, take a deep breath. Full complete breath and slowly let it out. Do that three times. Again, take a deep breath in. Hold it. And slowly breathe out. One more time, take a deep, complete breath. And really focus on your breath as you bring your shoulders down and orient your attention towards gratitude. Next, bring to mind the site that you are grateful for. Move through your senses and find one thing to start with that you appreciate that comes to you from the world of site. It could be a color, a shadow, a shape, a movement or a symbol. What do you see right now? And can you feel grateful. For whatever that is. Next, shift to a sense that you appreciate. As you continue to work with your senses, take time to tune into an aroma. What do you notice? What about the glorious or interesting thing that is making you smile. It can be something familiar or something that brings comfort. Or a blessing. Or something you never saw before. It can keep you with curiosity. Moving on, tune into any sounds that are around you. Allow the world to recede into the background. While breathing in, shift your attention to your ears and the world of sound. How many sounds can you notice. Can you feel grateful to what you are experiencing. What can you notice about the sounds? Are they far away? Are they close? Perhaps, you can play a piece of music that brings you joy with gratitude that's available, or it's the sound of children laughing or the sound of loved ones. The sound of the beating of your own heart. Whatever it is. Next, we are going to move into touch. If there's someone near you that can hug you or you can hug yourself, notice how this makes you feel filled with gratitude. Perhaps you have a beautiful plant or a pet you can stroke and cuddle or something else that feels warm to the touch. Light your senses. There is so much to be appreciative of. Take that gratitude in and that emotion. Now, you can take a moment to look around the room. Look down, look up and side to side. Appreciate how much effort must have gone into anything you own or do. Someone can see this and many people worked on the details and design. What care went into the packaging to deliver items safely. What do you feel when you let yourself be great full for all the talent that went into making your life a little easier. As we come to the end of the practice, one last grateful tip. Why not offer your thanks to each person who does anything at all for you today. Even if it's their job to help you. When you are great full. When you let your heart open up, notice how being grateful. I'm so grateful you tuned into this gratitude practice. Now, what I'd like you to do is write this and rate your mood from 0 to 10 and 10 being the best mood ever. Please raise your hand if your score went up.

I see lots of people's hands raised. As soon as you shared your level, we thank you for that. Excellent. That was amazing.

If your score went up, that's wonderful. You've done something really good for yourself today. If it didn't, Dawn't be alarmed. It's not meant to be a one time quick set. You want to practice daily, if you can. It only takes a few minutes to do. I think everybody will get a lot out

of that . Feeling that sense of gratitude. I'm going to or , if anybody has any questions. You can ask or I'll turn it back to Melanie .

I will remind everybody that we have a few minutes to answer questions. I want to let you know about the program you have available. You can go to the website. We have a lot of different companies on this session today. Just want to let you know that your program is specific to you. You Dawn't want to go through HR. Or if you Dawn't know your toll-free number or the link to get to the website, ask your HR department . It's part of your benefits. It's something prepaid by your employer, it's free for you to use. The beautiful thing is we realize that everyone in life goes through times. Sometimes we are suffering and struggling and sometimes we are thriving. We may do those all at one time for different areas in our life. We are here to help you if you are struggling or suffering or thriving to get better at any of those. Sometimes we want to be better at something. Improve a relationship. That's what this program is for. Available to you 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you Dawn't know your toll-free number or your website, please reach out to your HR department . That's where you will get the specific information. Lots of companies on the phone today so we Dawn't have your specific information available . I will pull up a take away. Allison, I'm curious . Some of these are coming out saying what did you learn today? What did you learn that you will take away with you ? If you can put your answer in the poll question that I just put up and we will read some of those.

There is a lot of responses coming in. Be good to yourself, focus on gratitude. Learning about the gratitude journal. Look for more blessings in life . Self appreciation. That is so important, also. A lot of looking for the blessings. Have a better attitude, absolutely. Slow down to find gratefulness in the small things. Be good to yourself. There is a lot of self-care comments going on. That's so important.

Even things like saying telling someone thank you or I appreciate you. That's a great practice .

Putting things into perspective . When we get caught up there's a lot of things going on in our life and we are stressed in our life. Sometimes it's hard to focus on that perspective. Focus on gratitude and it brings you back to appreciate the good in your life.

Thank you everyone for answering that. It does seem to solidify what we do when we write it down and share. Even if we just write it down for our self . Taking that step forward . Thank you for doing that. Someone mentioned, not sure about your HR department. If you Dawn't have a human resources department, go to your supervisor or manager and asked them how you access the benefit. Allison, I think we have time for one or two questions if you have a moment ? I will pull it up here.

One of the questions was about the three questions with the gratitude to journal. Just to go over those again. It was to meditate on the relationships you have in your life, whether it's parents or friends or siblings. The questions to ask is what have I received from whoever that person is. What have I given to that person and what troubles and difficulty have I caused ? Reflect on that. Go through the three questions. The other one. One of those studies mentioned that the woman who had the smile 20 years later will vary from family. Does that mean that is critical to happiness? That does not . That was a result of a study . It's finding what's important to you. What can make you more fulfilled and more happy. Marriage is not the only route to happiness. We just ask Lord some of those on the other side. Feeling good, viewing good and being in service to yourself and others. What I always try to tell people, one kind act can go further than you think. It makes you feel good and its connection to other people.

It does look like we run out of time. Some of the questions that people have asked, some of the questions are this is not the best platform to get an answer. That's why we want you to

call your HR member. That's the resource to go to asked those questions. Some people are mentioning they are working less hours. Very difficult to slow down. Those things are what the program can help you with. I encourage you to call him. If you are not comfortable calling in, use that member web portal. That's a great resource. Chat with people on their. Get the benefit information. Is a great place to go to find assistance. We want to thank everyone for joining today. This will end our presentation.