



ValueOptions shares the grief of our clients, their employees and their families who have been affected by the tragic events of September 11. We understand and are sensitive to their losses and their need for support during this painful period. It is our business to understand, assist, and support.

Information about coping with loss, grief, post-traumatic stress and other topics is available on our Achieve Solutions Web site, for which we are waiving all charges. To access this information, please visit www.valueoptions.com and click on the *In the Spotlight* section. We join all Americans in their prayers for our country.

Client News

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From the windows of ValueOptions' corporate headquarters in Falls Church, Virginia, on Tuesday, September 11, 2001, employees could see smoke rising over the Pentagon as it burned after being struck by a hijacked, California-bound jetliner.

Like everyone else in America, many of us

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For most of us, the holiday season is a joyful one, but for many, holidays are a time of considerable stress. There are warning signs and ways that you can help your employees meet and even defeat the holiday blues.



Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is the most common and most expensive diagnosis among certain age groups of children, particularly boys, in ValueOptions' accounts. Learn about the program we've put together to help parents of these troubled children cope with life, work and stress.

If you have comments or suggestions, we'd love to hear from you. Just send us an email at news-info@valueoptions.com.

were gathered around radios, trying to get information on the damage already done to the World Trade Centers in New York City.

But around the country, our experts on critical incidents, on trauma and traumatic stress, were conferring, reaching out to their colleagues in the field to prepare for what would certainly be one of the most comprehensive jobs in the history of the company and the country.

Indeed, within an hour of the attacks on the World Trade Centers, ValueOptions personnel were providing telephonic counseling to organizations with employees stationed in those buildings and the Pentagon.

Our call centers received requests for help from all around the country, from across the spectrum of businesses we serve.

Since that time, hundreds of critical incident services and personal counseling sessions have been delivered or scheduled. In addition,

- A special toll-free number was established for our clients in the airline industry and we have established around-the-clock onsite resources at key hubs and worked to identify additional resources through unions and associations.
- Achieve Solutions, our online EAP service, has been made temporarily available to all customers free of charge. Employees can access the site, without a login or password, at www.valueoptions.com.
- We are working with the senior management of our customer organizations to help them develop a strategy for responding to the tragic events.
- Multiple sources of information have been identified, and toll-free numbers for national agencies and contact information for local support resources have been shared with customers.
- Articles and tipsheets related to the process of grief, loss and recovery following a traumatic incident have been distributed to customers, media outlets, and the federal government. These are available to the community at large at www.valueoptions.com.

ValueOptions is committed to ensuring that the emotional needs of the nation are met, regardless of an organization's or an individual's affiliation with our organization. For noncustomers, we have handled debriefings when the organization who would normally provide this service was affected by the New York City evacuation. We provided 14 clinicians to an organization to support customer service staff who were getting calls about missing loved ones.

We are also encouraging employees to take action to aid those most affected by the tragedies. We have allowed leave for blood donations and are providing a company match of all monetary donations made to the Red Cross. Employees have been provided tipsheets and articles to share with religious groups, schools and other community groups.



ADHD: Your Child and You

ValueOptions Works with Parents to Improve Treatment

Many of us have had experience with a so-called problem child, the boy (boys are two to four times more likely to be the problem child) who is so impulsive that he has difficulties succeeding in school, in making friends, and is almost impossible to be with.

But what about the parents of such children? What if you're the one who lives with them, goes over their homework with them, has been the focus of their difficulties since day one?



Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or ADHD, is the single most common and most costly diagnosis in children under 11 in all of ValueOptions' programs. In our employer and health plan programs, ADHD is the most common diagnosis in adolescents and young adults (12-20) in our public sector clients, and the second most common in that age group in our commercial accounts. Estimated to

A D H D is the *SINGLE* most COMMON and most *COSTLY* diagnosis in children 0-11.

affect three to five percent of the population, that makes for a lot of unhappy children—and a lot of distracted adults who may be spending more time worrying over their child than focusing on their jobs.

To address this pressing concern, ValueOptions has created a prevention program to help parents of ADHD children reduce their risk of developing stress-related disorders related to their parenting duties. The program is also aimed at reducing the risk of children with ADHD developing other conditions as a result of suffering through ADHD, which can include a host of difficulties ranging from depression to serious substance abuse.

ADHD: Your Child and You is an education program developed to reduce the costs involved with this disorder—financial costs to parents, their health plans, and their employers, but most importantly, the emotional costs faced by parents and children living with the disorder. The program was



designed to teach parents (who may have suffered from ADHD themselves, or lived with a sibling who did) appropriate skills to use not only with their ADHD but also their non-affected children, and to equip parents with coping mechanisms and insight. The program is not a magic bullet. Rather, it is one of a number of means parents can employ to ensure that they approach their ADHD child appropriately



and get the care they may need themselves.

The program is voluntary, and begins at diagnosis. When a child is diagnosed, ValueOptions sends parents a flyer inviting them to participate. Should they decide to do so, parents are then asked to take two verbal assessment tests administered by a skilled preventive behavioral health coordinator. The first is a parent stress indicator; the second a home ADHD rating scale, which gives the parent and the coordinator a baseline measure of the difficulties the family faces.

Parents who enroll receive a short, interactive workbook to utilize during treatment. Topics include:

- General information about ADHD
- Typical problems experienced in parenting kids with ADHD and some strategies to address these
- Helping with school adjustment and homework
- Stress management for parents
- Useful resources for more information and assistance

For further information on how ValueOptions might assist you in creating such a program for your employees or members, contact your account executive.



Seasonal Depression Can Affect Health and Productivity: *What You Can Do to Help the Workforce*

For some people, the holiday season is pure, unadulterated joy. For most of us, however, holidays come gift-wrapped in a variety of stressors—extra need for child care during school vacations; conflict in blended families; feelings of loneliness or inadequacy; and let's not forget financial stress.

And that's just the beginning. It's estimated that up to 10 percent of the population suffers from holiday depression to one degree or another. This is due to a number of factors: Stores are crowded, lines are longer, parking places are scarce, and you often feel that you need to be in three places at once. Old family resentments often resurface at holiday gatherings, especially if alcohol is consumed.

For many people, the holidays coincide with a frantic time at work, when many may also take on part-time work to help out

Tips for Coping with Holiday Stress

- *Set realistic expectations. Everything doesn't have to be perfect.*
- *Don't be overly critical — of yourself or others — if things don't go as planned.*
- *Manage your time wisely. Let others know what you can and cannot do.*
- *Don't expect the holidays to solve your personal or family problems.*
- *Create a master "To Do" list. Decide what you can cut out or scale down.*
- *Watch what you eat and drink, get enough sleep, and make time to exercise.*
- *Shop within your budget and plan in advance when, how, and where you will shop. Don't try to do it all. Delegate tasks to other family members.*
- *Focus on what the true meaning of the holiday is — for you.*
- *Carefully choose the events you will attend so that they will bring the most to your celebration.*
- *If you are separated from family and friends, or have suffered the loss of a loved one, acknowledge your feelings of grief and loss and allow yourself to express these normal feelings.*

with holiday expenses, and when major projects have to be completed before the year's end. For owners of retail businesses, the holiday shopping season accounts for a large part of the company's annual sales. No wonder many people feel like they're juggling too many balls in the air.

If you have recently lost a loved one because of death or divorce, you may be longing for happier times, remembering past holidays when you were together. Or you may



resent seeing so many others who have someone special in their lives — whether it is their family, close friends, or a significant other — to share the season with.

For most of us, these stresses are manageable. For a significant number of people, however, holidays can provoke so much stress that it can affect work productivity, home life, and even provoke suicidal thoughts and actions.

Experts say that the major cause of holiday stress is unrealistic expectations. Too often we measure our expectations against what we have seen

on television or in the movies, or by what others demand of us.

We stress ourselves out because we believe the myth that everything has to be perfect.

We also over-commit, promising to do more than we can accomplish in the amount of time available. We want to do it all, but seldom stop to consider the consequences to our health and well-being. Too much of a good thing, such as going to parties and visiting relatives, can

be stressful. Not getting enough sleep, drinking too much alcohol, and overeating can also aggravate stress. With a little planning, however, a little delegation, some realistic expectations, and a focus on the true meaning of this special time, employees can not only survive the holidays, but also enjoy them.

There are several “markers” or warning signs that can predict significant stress (see box) and represent a call to action for loved ones or for managers and co-workers to help.



ValueOptions can assist our clients in a variety of ways to help employees head off these stresses. From workshops designed and conducted by ValueOptions specialists and communications for posting on bulletin boards or intranet sites to actual intranet-based trainings and self-evaluations for stress, we have a full range of services on coping with stress anticipated before the holidays and avoiding the holiday blues.

Some individuals, however, may require referral to an outside provider for treatment of issues causing “the blues” if these symptoms only mask a deeper seated problem that just happens to surface around the holidays. ValueOptions MHSA services allow for individuals or family members to access our care managers for assessments to determine

Warning Signs of Stress

- Sleep disturbance (insomnia, sleeping fitfully)
- Clenched jaw/grinding teeth
- Digestive upsets
- Agitated behavior (i.e. Twiddling your fingers, playing with your hair)
- Increased heart rate
- General restlessness
- Sense of muscle tension in your body or actual muscle twitching
- Non-cardiac chest pains
- Dizziness, nervousness
- Hyperventilating
- Sweaty palms
- Stumbling over words
- High blood pressure (may not show outwardly)
- Lack of energy or general fatigue—loss of pleasure in normally pleasurable activities



treatment considerations beyond the brief counseling model of the EAP. All assessments can be conducted by phone or in person, as the care manager may refer the individual to a local mental health professional as appropriate.

ValueOptions counselors assess the presenting problem to determine its exact nature. The counselor will also assess the degree of severity, and what, if any, treatment is necessary. The assessment will focus on the presenting problem as identified by the individual as well as any other disruptions that may be contributing to the person's distress. The assessment services conducted by ValueOptions are offered on a confidential and timely basis, and each individual will be offered an appointment as soon as possible, but not to exceed 3 days from the initial request.

In the case of an emergency however, individuals, family members, or workplace staff may call the either the EAP or the MH/SA services staff on a 24-hour basis, seven days a week and can be immediately referred to the most appropriate service for the situation.

Contact your ValueOptions account executive to discover how we can help client members alleviate holiday stress.

