

# NEELY EAP

March 2021

## NEWS LETTER

GET THE MOST FROM YOUR  
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



### WELCOME

We are so pleased to be your employee assistance provider. Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are a first-line response to providing prevention and short-term problem resolution services. We provide short-term counseling services, seminars, legal services, and financial advice, all FREE of charge to you. Each month our newsletter will be packed full of wellness information and updates about upcoming seminars and webinars.

#### March's SEMINAR

Please join us for our live seminar: **401K: Are you ready for retirement?**

[Register Below](#)

March 11<sup>th</sup>@ 3pm

[Click Here: Registration](#)

#### UPCOMING QUARTERLY WEBINAR

Cultivating Confidence in  
Female Leaders

Available March 18<sup>th</sup>

# Pets: Not just companions, but better for overall health

By LaRae Sleeter

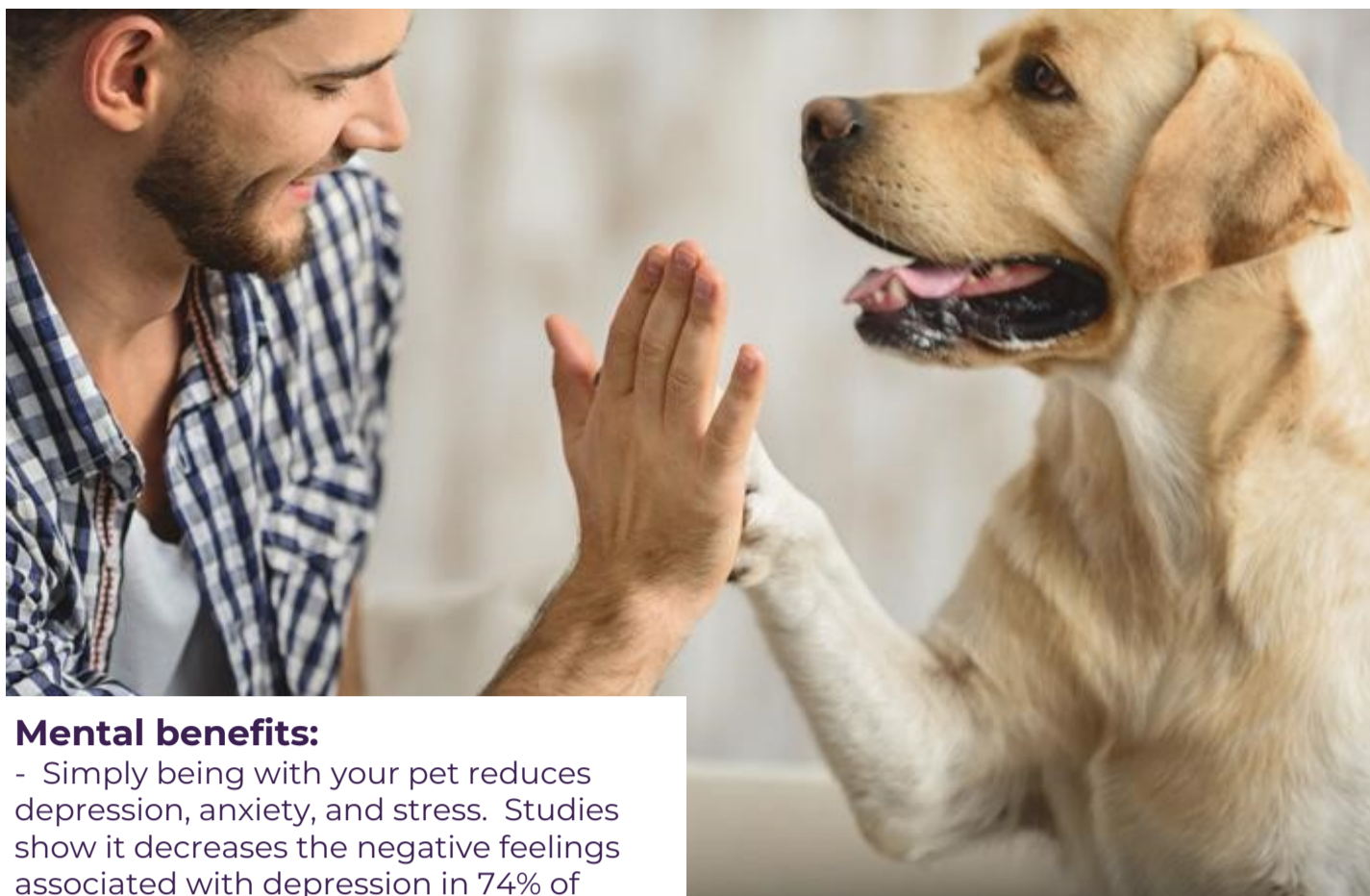
**W**ith approximately 85 million pet owners in America, it is not surprising that people love their pets. But did you know that owning a pet is more than fun? Studies show pets are good for our physical, social, and mental well-being.

## Physical benefits:

- Exercise doesn't require a dog, playing with any pet is a great way to move and burn calories.
- Lower your blood pressure and heart rate simply by petting or sitting with your pet.

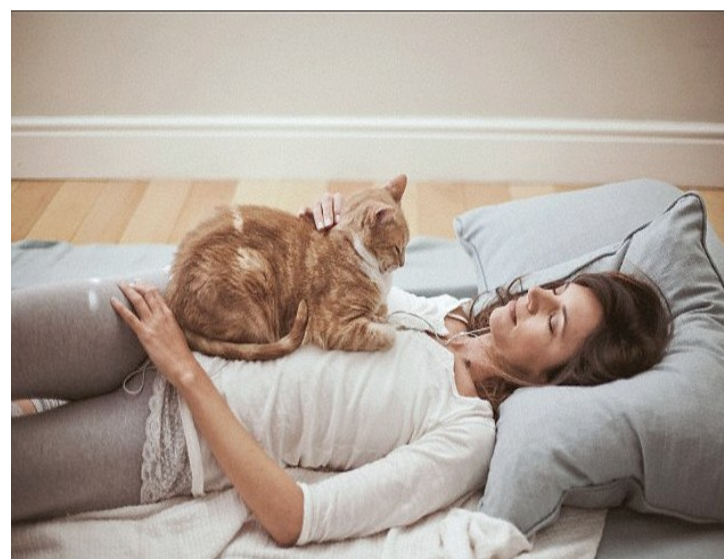
## Social benefits:

- Pets aid in making friends and creating social connections. A trip to the dog park, walking a pet, or even a visit to the vet allows us to interact with other pet owners.
- Pets in the work environment, even if working from home, have been shown to increase productivity, create trust among co-workers, and build work cohesion.



## Mental benefits:

- Simply being with your pet reduces depression, anxiety, and stress. Studies show it decreases the negative feelings associated with depression in 74% of adults. Similar benefits are seen in children with depression, autism spectrum disorders, and ADHD.
- Just seeing a picture or thinking about your pet causes an increase in **oxytocin** and **dopamine**, the feel-good chemicals in our brains. Interacting with our pets raises the levels of those chemicals and makes us feel better.
- Pets add purpose, meaning, and routine to our lives that improve the quality of our day.
- Pets provide companionship to those living alone, especially the elderly.
- Pets are great listeners, providing unconditional love and support.



## Coping with the loss of your pet

Most people consider their pets part of their family, so the death of a pet is traumatic. However, there are many things you can do to cope with this grief.

- Acknowledge the loss of your pet. As tempting as it is to shove those difficult emotions aside, don't do it. Let the pain out. It may take weeks or even months to adjust to your new normal.
- Embrace the memories. Create a way to memorialize your pet. This can be a scrapbook, a memory box, or a funeral service. Whatever method you choose, make it significant to you.
- If you have remaining pets, be there to support them in their grief. Dogs, cats, and horses will search for missing pets and grieve their absence. Maintaining routines is good for them and will help in your healing as well.
- Seek and accept support from others. Friends and family can be great at this. You can also locate an online community for pet loss support. If needed, seek professional help.
- Don't replace your pet too quickly. Resist the urge to run out and replace the pet immediately. Heal first, and you will know when the time is right to add a new pet to your life.

## Sources:

<https://habri.org/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/animal-attachment/201702/7-self-care-essentials-while-grieving-the-death-pet> <https://tcanimalservices.org/animalservices/resources/living-with-pets/pets-and-mental-health>



In the last 365 days, there have been a number of catastrophic events; COVID-19, winter storms, and personal circumstances unique to each and every one of us. To say it has been an unprecedented year, may feel like an understatement. As life continues to bring new and unforeseen challenges, it can feel like we hold little control. It can be difficult to find that internal fire that wills us forward. Finding our resilience in trying times can sometimes feel distant and elusive. Resilience, however, is within all of us. It is an amazing skill that allows us to get back up when life knocks us down.

If you feel you need some help sharpening your resilience skills, here are some researched based strategies to help build your resilience in times of adversity.

## Finding Your Resilience in the Face of Catastrophe

By Brittney Lopez

### Stop Catastrophizing the Catastrophe

When catastrophe strikes it can feel easy to believe the worst possible outcome will become true. When you resign yourself to believing the worst possible outcome, it will become your reality. You set yourself up for unnecessary stress and anxiety. This negatively impacts your resilience.

One way to break this pattern may be carrying a small object: when you feel yourself getting swept up in worry catastrophizing, touch this object. Allow yourself to stop catastrophizing and remember the best possible outcome is just as likely to happen as the worst possible outcome. Continuous worry will not serve you and only fosters more worry. By allowing yourself to face your negativity head-on, it stops being so overwhelming. Resilience is not about having zero negative thoughts. Resilience is about acknowledging that negative thoughts come and go, and you have the capacity to overcome them.

### Identifying What is in Your Control

In times of catastrophe, so much can feel out of your control. It can begin to feel like you do not have control of anything in your life. For those who find comfort in control, it can lead to increased stress and feelings of hopelessness. Succumbing to the mindset that everything is out of your control and helpless dismisses the power of your resilience.

Even when there are so many things out of your control, there are always things you have the power to control. Engaging and taking ownership of what you can control, no matter how small, allows you to assert your agency. The feeling of agency is an internal resource that feeds your resilience. It can help create a two-sided list, one column being in your control and what is not. Challenge yourself to see the things that you can control. Then assert that control. Remember, your time is best spent working on the side of control, rather than sitting and worrying about the side you cannot.



### Practice Mental Flexibility and Acceptance

In a catastrophe it can be difficult to plan in such uncertainty. In such times, it is helpful to practice cognitive flexibility as remaining tied to previously set expectations may lead to further stress or disappointment. Thus, wearing on your capacity to practice resilience.

It is beneficial to accept the reality of the situation, even when the reality is scary or painful. Resilience thrives when **acceptance** is practiced. Acceptance will aid in your ability to handle high-stress situations. A common first instinct is to engage in avoidance and denial. Though it may bring short-term relief, it ultimately stands in the way of your growth. When you find yourself tied to old expectations or in the throes of denial and struggling to practice acceptance, ask yourself, "How am I going to reach my goals if I am not aware of where I'm starting?"

### Sources:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/science-choice/202005/the-8-key-elements-resilience>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/click-here-happiness/201803/resilience-101-how-be-more-resilient-person>



## WHAT CAN MY EAP DO FOR ME?



At Neely EAP, we understand the challenge of balancing work and life stresses while staying mentally healthy. That's why we've partnered with your employer to offer you the following services, free of charge:

- 24/7 Hotline, Access to Confidential Services
- Short-Term Counseling - **Couch Time Check-In** (preventive annual counseling session)
- Legal and Financial Assistance
- Wellness Trainings
- Secure the Wheel (taxi fare reimbursement)
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing
- And more. Call 1-866-828-2077 or log in online at [www.neelycounseling.com](http://www.neelycounseling.com), **select My Account**