



Volume 26, Issue 3

Balance

A newsletter to help employees maintain a healthy work-life balance



Balance is a newsletter produced by your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that spotlights relevant issues related to personal and professional wellness. The EAP is a confidential and free resource, available to you to help manage life's various challenges. If any of the topics below resonant with you, consider contacting your EAP for more information, including referrals for local EAP counselors.

COUNSELING MYTHS DEBUNKED

Have you ever decided against giving therapy a try because you were concerned about any of the following?

1. The therapist will examine every detail about my past.

Fact: Professional counselors help you decide what you want to accomplish in counseling, and your past may or may not be relevant in achieving these goals.

2. Only those with severe mental illness seek professional counseling.

Fact: Most psychotherapy clients are not mentally ill. They are seeking solutions for life's challenges.

3. The professional counselor will judge or criticize me.

Fact: Professional counselors are trained to be objective and supportive. Their role is to provide an atmosphere conducive to helping you reach your goals.

4. Seeing a professional counselor means I've failed to handle my own issues.

Fact: Seeking professional counseling shows a brave willingness to address problems and work toward a healthier, more balanced life.

5. Therapy takes a long time.

Fact: Therapy can vary in length, often leading to positive changes in only a few sessions. In fact, the EAP is designed to address issues using a short-term, solution-orientated model.

MENTALLY PREPARE FOR A BETTER DAY

Often, our mood or emotional state is dictated by what's happening around us at any given moment, and we react to each situation as it occurs. However, we have the power to make choices about how we feel and respond. Taking time before you start your day is the perfect opportunity to set intentions and establish a positive frame of mind. Try the following steps to see if this practice improves your day.

1. Spend 15 minutes in mindful meditation to clear your mind and visualize positive expectations and outcomes for the day.
2. Use deep breathing exercises which can improve focus and concentration. This has a calming effect and helps the visualized messages sink in.
3. Listen to motivational podcasts or audiobooks. These can help shift your focus from negative thoughts to positive ones and help increase motivation.
4. Create your own playlist of uplifting songs. Upbeat music releases neurotransmitters like dopamine, which can lift your mood.
5. Reflect on gratitude—what are you thankful for? This practice has numerous payoffs, one being a shift to a more optimistic perspective where challenges are approached as opportunities. This is called having a "growth mindset."
6. Finally, be intentional about your approach to the day and what you hope to accomplish and how you want to feel throughout the day.



Acentra HEALTH

IS THE EAP FOR ME? “IT’S NOT ME, IT’S MY COWORKERS”

If you're feeling stressed by interactions with coworkers or customers, the EAP can be a valuable resource. Many employees seek help from the EAP for this very reason, making it one of the most common concerns addressed. The EAP professional will guide you to focus on one or all three broad strategies that fit nearly all difficult employee situations:

1. Maintain professionalism – staying calm, respond professionally, and keep the focus on the work situation.
2. Set boundaries -- define and communicate your limits regarding unacceptable behavior and assertively reinforce them.
3. Seek the right kind of manager/organizational support, if needed.

The goal is to help you create positive relationships among all those with whom you interact, and the EAP is the best source of help to make that happen.

MANAGING FINANCIAL STRESS

Money worries can be a major source of stress and can trigger or worsen mental health conditions for some people. Are you experiencing any of these signs that your financial situation could be impacting you?

- Arguing with the people closest to you about money
- Difficulty sleeping
- Feeling angry, fearful or experiencing mood swings
- Experiencing tiredness, aches and pains
- Withdrawing from others
- Feeling guilty when you spend money
- Delaying health care you need due to the cost

While these are normal reactions to being under financial stress, it's important to come up with a plan to help address any negative impacts.

Through your EAP you have access to a free consultation with a Money Coach to help you formulate a plan to address financial concerns.

Some quick tips for taking control of your financial situations: find out how much money you take in and how much you spend; keep credit card use under control and if possible, pay your full balance every month; and protect your personal information to reduce the risk of identity theft and unauthorized charges.

A CLOSER LOOK AT RESILIENCE: PRACTICE SELF-COMPASSION

Building resilience is a popular wellness topic. Almost anything that helps you develop physical and emotional strength, and the ability to face adversity and overcome it, can be lumped into this life skill. One resilience-building skill you may have overlooked or never heard mentioned is practicing self-compassion. Self-compassion is not just avoiding being self-critical or treating yourself with kindness and understanding like you would a friend. Its purpose is more far reaching.

People who practice self-compassion are less overwhelmed by negative emotions when faced with adverse events. They develop more positive, reflex responses. This mindset helps to maintain a balanced perspective, keep your cool, and easily troubleshoot problems. Positive self-talk habits are patterns of reacting to what we see and hear around us. Self-compassion is created when you avoid berating yourself when mistakes happen and speak to yourself kindly. It's key to acknowledge that everyone makes mistakes and realizing daily life frustrations are inescapable surprises we all face. Keep practicing self-compassion to build this new habit of personal resilience if it doesn't come naturally.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHILDREN WHEN PARENTS FIGHT

If you find yourself arguing with a spouse, partner, or significant other, follow these practices to reduce potentially harmful effects on kids:

1. Avoid personal attacks by focusing on the issues and avoiding insults or name-calling.
2. When disagreements are heated, strive for a calm and respectful tone.
3. Choose a private place and time to discuss sensitive issues.
4. Demonstrate healthy ways of resolving conflicts (active listening, compromise, negotiating).
5. Apologize and make amends—model the importance of ending on a good note after a conflict.
6. Offer reassurance that a conflict does not mean the household is unstable or children aren't loved.

Tip: After a conflict, review these tips. You'll acquire greater ability to manage heated discussions in healthier ways.

Learn more: talkingparents.com/parenting-resources/fighting-in-front-of-kids

HE SWORE HE'D STOP DRINKING

If you are living with a partner affected by an alcohol use disorder, you may consider seeking support and guidance. As you focus on the substance user's behavior, a downward spiral of your own health may begin, including neglect of your physical, emotional, and mental health needs. Neglecting self-care can lead to burnout, resentment, and a decline in overall well-being, making it tougher to intervene.

Successful recovery of a substance use disorder often begins with the nonaddicted partner's awareness and determination to stop this downward cycle. A qualified professional or the EAP can explain how, offer resources, and help you get your sanity back.

Employee Assistance Program

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a complimentary service available to you through your employer. The EAP provides counseling sessions at no cost to you, as well as offering a wide variety of services to enhance overall wellbeing and support healthy work/life balance. The program is completely confidential and available to you, your household family members, and dependents.

Access the EAP anytime for free, confidential support from a master's-level counselor or visit the website tools and information designed to address life's pressing concerns.

 **Phone:** 1.800.999.1077

 **Website:** www.EAPHelplink.com

 **Company Code:** U11

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