PATHWAYS
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The **Employee** Newsletter of the BOCES Employee Assistance Program

Practicing Detachment from Alcohol Issues

Ask for counseling help and support if you are concerned about a loved one's alcohol use this holiday season. Start with your EAP or other qualified expert and discuss the art of "detachment." Detachment is about stopping the preoccupation with the drinker's behavior—tracking what they are doing and where they are going, threatening, pleading, manipulating, and all the while growing resentful or even physically ill. Detachment is the "off switch" to enabling. It is a teachable skill, and with guidance you can discover how to use support groups to learn how to manage the alcoholic relationship in a new way. Learning to detach with awareness typically accelerates the alcoholic's awareness and willingness to accept treatment which enabling has helped to prevent.

Inflation Stopper Apps for Your Phone

Technology apps can help you beat inflation and then some! For example, you scan the barcode of a product while in the store to discover where it can be purchased more cheaply. Other apps allow you to identify products that can later be scanned for a rebate to a PayPal account. Many others like these exist. To find them, search "money saving apps" on your smartphone. Find the category labeled "Shopping." Highly rated money-back apps include ones like ShopSavvy and Ibotta, but check consumer feedback to make an informed choice.

Prioritize Productivity above Politics

Tension and conflict can adversely affect workplace productivity, which is why political discussions are typically avoided. They do arise, however, and when they do, the challenge is remaining civil to prevent a hostile work environment where someone can feel intimidated, harassed, ostracized, or even punished for their political views. Tips: 1) Avoid inflammatory language, personal insults, and sweeping generalizations. 2) Agree to disagree. 3) Don't "rage" over politics. 4) Ask others nearby if they mind you talking politics. If they do, take the discussion to a more private area.

Should You Screen Your Teen for Depression and Anxiety?

Moodiness is normal in teenagers. Even healthy teens will have emotional ups and downs. But depression and anxiety disorders are not simply mood swings. Left untreated, they can influence long-term health and social problems. With suicide being the second leading cause of death for young people 10-19,* the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends all teens get screened for anxiety and depression. It's not difficult, and a doctor can do it. Ask if it's not part of a routine office visit. The goal is earlier treatment and better outcomes, if or when spotted.
(*Natl Vital Stat Rep. 2021;70(9):1-114)

Learn more: Rollcall.com [Search "panel recommends adolescent screening"]

Stop Stress, Right Now

Anticipating the Holidays with a Self-Care Plan

Try creating a "holiday self-care plan" this year if you are facing isolation, an overwhelming list of "to-dos," coping with grief, or facing past hurts. Don't let the season just nudge you along with uncertainties, big to-do lists, and anxiety. Self-care means deciding how you will maintain health and wellness. Decide what holiday events you will (or will not) attend, be assertive about asking for help and support, stick to a budget, and decide you won't feel guilty for not hosting the big party this year. Add emotional wellness decisions, too. For example, try letting go of lingering resentment from an argument you had last year with your brother-in-law. Discover relief from no longer replaying the exchange in your mind. For real impact, schedule treats or pampering experiences for yourself during the season. Their real value is serving as fun experiences you can look forward to when stressed. If grieving the loss of a loved one, decide how you will remember your loved one during the holidays. Give yourself the opportunity and permission to feel loss. Ask for support you need, and don't resist feelings of expressing sorrow because you fear "ruining" the holidays for others. With a holiday self-care plan, you can anticipate less stress during the season. In time, you may be sharing your planning secrets with others who need them as you discover more positivity in the seasons to come.

Wake Up More Refreshed

Are you groggy when you first wake up or, even worse, feel like you haven't slept at all? This is the experience of nearly 70% of people in a recent United Kingdom study. There is little reason to believe the same does not apply throughout the Western hemisphere. *Here's the fix*: Make earlier sleep time a priority. Try going to bed earlier for a week, and wake up early enough to have a routine including something pleasurable—taking your time, taking a walk, fixing a leisurely breakfast, or whatever else fits for you. The key: Make it enjoyable. In theory, your brain will adapt to this structure, and you will awaken more refreshed. As a result, you should begin to experience more satisfying days.

Source: www.henryford.com/services/sleep-disorders

Are You a Bully, but Don't Know It?

It's a myth bullying in the workplace is always obvious. Bullying may be invisible to bystanders or impossible to label as such with only one stand-alone incident in the absence of its context. This is what makes mistreatment of others insidious. And it's what makes a complete "bullying behaviors checklist" difficult to construct. Do you practice bullying behaviors? Rather than a checklist, examine two questions: Do you desire or seek to control or influence your coworker's behavior motivated by your own desires, needs, or self-serving motives? If not, are these motives hidden behind what you often label as "helping" (i.e., helping someone grow or know their place; helping someone not get too ambitious, "helping them not getting burned," or "learning the politics of this place"? Still need a list of bullying behaviors? Find one below.

https://positivepsychology.com/workplace-bullying/#examples

Consume News with Awareness

The COVID-19 pandemic and war in Ukraine have offered plenty of fear and uncertainty. Has the anxiety interfered with your ability to sleep or be productive? Have you been too focused on the latest frightening news? It's hard to avoid the news, but you can lessen its impact. Tips: 1) Be aware news is sold and used to sell products, services, and clicks; 2) News is designed to agitate the reader to click or flip pages; 3) It is natural to focus on bad or frightening news because it directly affects the human "fight-flight or freeze" trigger response. With this awareness and lessened intensity, experiment by consuming news in moderation and use more time for other things you want to accomplish in your life.

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