PATHWAYS
February 2023
The **Employee** Newsletter of the BOCES Employee Assistance Program

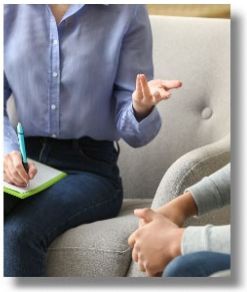
Teaching Children to Be Better Problem Solvers

If you are a parent of a young child, here's a "formula" for teaching problem solving: 1) Encourage the child to explain the situation needing a fix, solution, or answer. 2) Ask questions that prompt critical thinking and solutions. 3) Help the child break the problem up into smaller parts. Tackle one piece at a time. 4) Let the child brainstorm for answers. 5) Guide the child to the solution. 6) Praise the effort. 7) Talk about mistakes as learning tools and being understandable. 8) Have a post-event discussion and reflect on the steps to solving a problem. For more opportunities to learn the problem-solving process, give examples like. "I don't know what to make for dinner, but this is what we have in the refrigerator." Then allow your child to problem solve with you.

Living Better in the "Sandwich Genera-

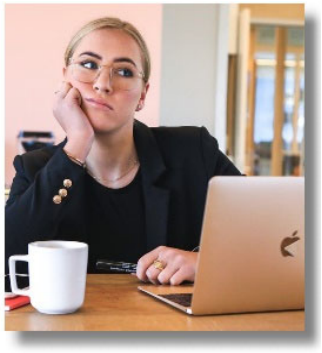
The "sandwich generation" refers to adults raising children under the age of 18 while also caring for elderly parents. Are you a member of this select group? If so, key stressors may include finding time for yourself—sleeping and eating well and engaging in physical activity—setting boundaries with finite time and energy resources, financial stress, a need for emotional support, and wondering what resources are out there to assist you. See the following website for help and support: U.S. Area Agencies at www.usaging.org/adrcs.

Achieve Goals with the EAP's Help



Achieving goals naturally includes circumventing roadblocks and hurdles. Many are personal, like maintaining motivation, overcoming self-doubt, remaining unshaken by failures, staying on track, planning, time management, avoiding procrastination, and overpowering distractions. Your EAP is the perfect starting point for issues like these to asses roadblocks. Give up the struggle and make contact. Worthwhile achievements rarely come easily, but with assessment, counseling, short-term problem-solving, or referral to the right resource you can claim the success you're dreaming about.

Finding More Meaning and Energy in Your Job



Gallup research has found 40% of employees believe their mental health is negatively affected by their job. Managing stress is important, but improving wellness is also accomplished by becoming more "engaged." Could you enjoy your job more despite aspects of it you do not like? If so, research says you will increase energy, find new meaning in work, feel more positive and in control, and feel more hopeful and productive. You're also less likely to burn out. Helping employees become more engaged is a hot topic in the world of work. If you haven't explored this idea yet, you may be on your way to discovering new energy and improved mental health on the job. See the resource below to get started.

Learn more: greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_be_more_engaged_at_work

Is a Marital Workshop the Answer?

Could you benefit from a marital/couple's workshop as a way to have a more satisfying relationship? Such workshops allow for time away from distractions. They are usually one to two days, while participants explore many aspects of relationship wellness. Marital workshops may facilitate the changes you desire if traditional, weekly counseling hasn't brought the results you seek. The goal is to reorient your view of the relationship to see yourself as a team, not adversaries. Improving communication is paramount. Especially the use of deeper empathy, listening, and validation skills. These skills help partners feel truly understood. All relationships have challenges and stressful times can test resilience. Workshops are usually designed to give you a lasting framework both partners can understand as their go-to approach to stay cohesive in times of significant stress. Most importantly, a marital workshop can help couple's feel more positive and hopeful about the future and in control of where their relationship is going. Many research studies have shown, negative communication patterns of couples threaten physical and immune health, with slower healing and more vulnerability to physical illness. This is a strong incentive to repair a relationship that is not working. One benefit might be a longer life.
Learn more: "Best Guide to Marital Counseling Retreats" at www.guidedoc.com/best-marriage-counseling-retreats-us. Also: "Transform Your Marriage Vision Retreat: A Self-Guided Getaway for Couples" (2021), available at online book sellers.

Dating Violence Prevention Month

There's great concern about teen dating violence because recent research points to a strong correlation with domestic violence in later years. Parents are on the front lines in providing education and awareness. They should keep an eye (and ear) out for signs of abuse. Many teens are unaware of what constitutes abusive behavior. They rely on parents to tell them. But 80% of parents don't believe teen dating violence is a serious problem. Here's why: Many teens won't acknowledge victimization for fear of being embarrassed or losing the relationship to which they attach strong social value. If you are a parent with a teen, don't wait to detect a problem. Be proactive by using the resource below. Avoid having your child wonder years later why you didn't say more about how to prevent or protect themselves from abuse.

Source: https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/DMpromotionalbrochure-508.pdf

Focus on Excellence, Not Perfection

Excellence at work involves setting high standards and striving to achieve them. But not letting go of a work project because it is not "perfect" is a path to frustration and burnout. Most people know perfection is not attainable, but it may not feel like it when it's your project. Just one more tweak seems critical. Then comes another. Start by not labeling yourself as a "perfectionist." Next, think about your relationship with mistakes and failure. Do you see these things as personal flaws rather than learning experiences? If so, being self-critical is likely a habit that accompanies your perfectionism. Talk to a professional counselor. You will learn how to reframe how you view mistakes, errors, and imperfections and see these moments as opportunities to practice letting go, patience, and self-love.

Stress Management, Right Now:

Refresh Your Relationship with the Boss

There's nothing like a positive meeting with the boss. You feel confident of what they think of your work. You feel the strength in your relationship and the rest of your day flows. However, worrying about what the boss thinks is a major stressor for employees. Resolve this stress by having a refresher, status, or reacquaintance meeting. Here are the signals it's time set a meeting date: 1) You don't get regular feedback anymore. 2) You aren't sure of what you are supposed to do or what the boss wants. 3) Your boss does not follow up after giving you an assignment. 4) Your boss does not engage with you to discover how things are generally going. 5) Your gut tells you there is something wrong.

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