EAP BOCES Employee Assistance Program

PATHWAYS

May 2022

Protect Your Back

Ask anyone plagued by periodic flare-ups of a back injury, and they'll tell you: "Don't take chances with your back." This is especially true if you work in a physical position, where 40% of workers complain of chronic back pain by the time they are age 50. Back injuries also happen as a result of slips and falls, not just when lifting, tugging, pushing, twisting, and carrying heavy objects. Avoid fall risks. Back injuries are invisible to others, thus if a coworker has modified duties, others should not question the severity of the coworker's back injury or pressure the coworker into participating in a prohibited work activity while in recovery. Such peer pressure is a key contributor to reinjury and sometimes ongoing disability.

Source: (See www.cpwr.com [search: "back pain older worker"].)

Will Pooling Finances Aid Relationship Health?

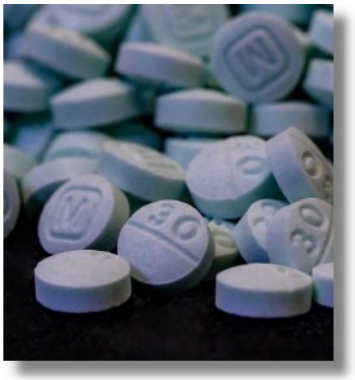
It's an age-old argument. "Will couples have a more harmonious relationship and be less likely to break up if they pool all of their income or if they keep it in individual accounts? What about pooling some and separating some?" One large research study examining 34,000 couples that were previously part of six smaller studies may have the answer: Pooling it all together is better. The more financially stressed the household the more the recommendation to pool income applies. Is it a decision that's right for you?

(Source: www.cornell.edu [search: "couples pool finances"].)

Match Your Exercise Program with Healthy Changes

Are you ramping up your exercise program with the spring weather? If so, consider healthy lifestyle changes along with an increased exercise regimen. Eat better by consuming less sugar, less white flour and starchy foods, less red meat, and more veggies, and make fewer stops at the drive-in window on the way home. You will improve the value and impact of your exercise program with a healthier body to respond to it.

Where Fentanyl Is Found



Fentanyl smuggled into the U.S. is up 400% compared to 2021, according to the U.S. Border Patrol. In Texas it is up over 1,000%. This killer drug, now the number one cause of death among young people, finds its way into many substances purchased on the street, including cocaine, heroin, pain pills like Percocet (oxycodone), and even anti-anxiety pills like Xanax. Many people assume fentanyl is only added to opioid-based drugs. This is not true. It can be laced into any drug, and legitimate-seeming prescription drugs on the street are often counterfeit, laced with fentanyl. Be cautious about any medication not provided by a licensed pharmacist.

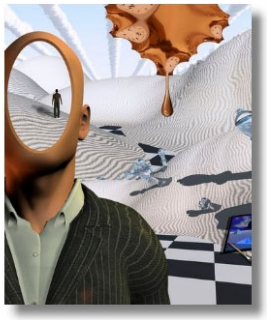
(Sources: www.tn.gov [search "fentanyl health"] and www.drugfree.org [search "laced with fentanyl"].)

Learn to De-escalate Conflict in Relationships

The ability to de-escalate a heated argument or conflict is a life skill that can help you avoid unnecessary stress. In the workplace, it allows you to experience greater job satisfaction. Conflict is not an inherently bad thing if it leads to positive outcomes. But many of our verbal skirmishes create serious tension. Unnecessarily intense arguments can erode trust, build resentment, involve hurtful insults, and ultimately undermine productivity. To help de-escalate conflict, keep some things in mind: You will rarely succeed in winning control over someone or outwitting them in a heated exchange. To interrupt tension quickly, try one of these three tactics: (1) Interrupt the flow of anger with a relevant statement about something you both agree on. This often creates a "reset" effect and halts intensity. (2) Switch your role from "co-arguing" to that of an empathetic listener. This also flips the script. (3) Let go. Don't tie your psychological survival to winning or losing. Virtually all heated arguments are fueled by the fear and psychological impact of loss. It is often easier to end a conflict by reminding yourself you don't have to prove anything to the other person. To become a de-escalation pro, practice these intervention techniques. You will fear conflict less, discover the arguments worth pursuing, and create more collaboration, while making your job more enjoyable.

May Is Mental Health Awareness Month . . .

Is My Family Member Suffering?



Families may worry about a loved one's mental health. Changes in mood, personality differences, worries and fears, strange thoughts, anger issues, unusual habits, sleeping or eating too much, and more. Is it something more serious or just a phase? Does their behavior interfere with their daily activities? Is their social life or occupational functioning adversely affected? If you are concerned about another's mental health, the best first step is to speak with a professional EAP counselor to discuss the issues. You can then determine next steps, including how to influence your loved one to get help. Emotional problems are common, and one in five people will experience something in any given year, But a supportive loved one is often the path to early and successful help.

Avoid the Top Three Career Regrets

Three commonly cited career regrets are (1) not taking more initiative; (2) not having enough mentorship or guidance; and (3) playing it safe and not taking more chances. These are the findings of a recent survey conducted with 1,000 late-career workers by Zety.com, a career, resume, and online job recruiting company. Are you at risk for one of them? Regrets 1 and 3 are closely related. Initiative means taking action without being prompted by others—acting on your imagination, firing up your ambition, and motivating yourself to take massive action on something you want to do—not someday, but right now, without putting it off another second. Talk to a counseling professional or your EAP and discover how to get fired up to employ initiative today.

Try This:

To-Do List Tip

Do you make a to-do list to help you manage your workday? Many people try this strategy, but there is one thing they are not doing correctly—they are making it in the morning. Instead, the to-do list should be written at the end of the previous day to be followed the next. Creating a to-do list at the end of the day allows you to spend more time on it. It is more meaningful and thought out at the end of the day. You are at less risk for distractions that may present themselves first thing in the morning, and the to-do list can be created with less stress. (The dynamic is similar to laying out your exercise clothes the night before to help you follow through.) Here's a bonus—you don't have to get up early in an effort to find time to write it!

Eastern Suffolk BOCES

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