EAP BOCES Employee Assistance Program

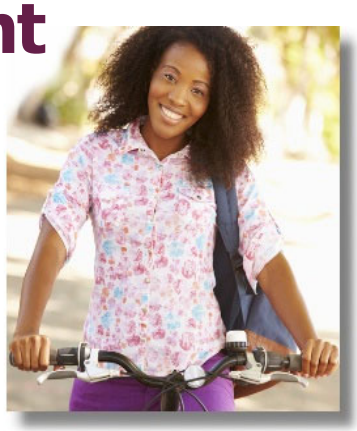
PATHWAYS

June 2022

Meal Planning Will Save You Money

Do you wander the grocery store aisles wondering what you might need, or do you use a checklist from a well-thought-out meal plan? The latter can save you money and time, have you eating healthier, and possibly help you lose weight. It's not complicated. Simply write down the meals you want to make over the next week, identify ingredients, and create your list. Try the new approach this week, and then compare your food bill this week to the one from last week. You may be shocked at the savings, and even more with 52 weeks of savings! Meal planning can give you more discipline to eliminate impulse buying of foods you do not need. Hint: Design meals and list ingredients clearly on 3x5 index cards. Each week, choose seven cards and make a grocery list with those ingredients.

Match Stress Management Techniques to Symptoms



Identify how your body responds to stress. Then use the stress management techniques most likely to help. Anger management techniques won't help you fall asleep if worry is what's keeping you awake at night. Instead, consider meditation or yoga. Keep a diary to track positive effects of stress management techniques you use, and if a technique works, don't stop using it. Make the stress management technique a regular part of your health practices.

Summer Safety: Prevent Head Injuries This Summer

As you head outdoors to enjoy the weather, follow safety rules and precautions. Summer naturally has higher rates of accidents. Head injuries in particular increase in summer. Can you guess the sport with the greatest risk of serious injury? It's horseback riding. It beats motorcycling, skiing, and even football for the rate of serious injuries. Especially the head and chest. Use safety equipment, be properly trained, and ride within your limits.

Source: https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu [search: horseback injuries]

Do You Need a Social Media Break?

Could you stand to be away from all your social media apps for a week? You may reap positive mental health benefits that include less anxiety and depression and increased mental well-being. That's what 154 research participants experienced after abstaining from social media of any kind for seven days. Participants were randomly chosen, but each previously used social media an average of eight hours a day. How much time do you spend on social media? Another study identified 46 harms from social media use, most being some psychological harm or impact. The point of taking a week's break isn't quitting altogether but gaining awareness of the impact and the benefits that can come from moderation.

Source: https://www.bath.ac.uk/ [social media break]
and https://www.uts.edu.au/ [search "dark side social media"]

Effective Communication In the Workplace

Workplace communication problems are common, but almost no one blames themselves when they occur. Instead, we point to the other guy, who dropped the ball, didn't speak up, or didn't do something else. Understanding your role in fixing workplace communication issues before they happen is key to dramatically reducing them. It starts with understanding what's called the "communication loop." First described by mathematician Claude Shannon in 1948, the communication loop is a model for effective communication. There are eight phases: 1) a person deciding to communicate, 2) writing a message they want to convey, 3) configuring the message, 4) choosing the channel to send the message (e.g., email, text), 5) the receiver getting the message, 6) the receiver decoding what was sent, 7) the receiver understanding the message, and 8) the receiver sending feedback to the sender that the message was received. Within the loop are many risks of interference and communication breakdown. When communicating, keep these steps in mind. Anticipate what can go wrong. For example, you email a colleague on vacation who has not set up an away message. You hear nothing back. Now you're frustrated and don't know how to interpret a lack of response or feedback. The communication loop is broken. You phone and a voice recording explains the absence on vacation. A critical part of effective workplace communication is taking personal responsibility for your messages, both received and sent, and being proactive in pursuit of the feedback—closing the loop. Monitor your communications to keep the ball rolling, and you'll experience more workplace success, fewer headaches, and less frustration related to communication breakdown.

Grow Food for Fun and Savings

With the cost of food out of sight, can you possibly save money growing some of your own food? Any small space can help decrease your food bill, but some enthusiasts claim a 10-foot-by-10-foot plot (dirt or pots) can grow $700 worth of fruits and vegetables over a season! With a bit of plastic (creating what's called a "hoop house"), you can extend the growing season. To give it a try, search for "small space gardening" information. Secondary benefits include teaching children self-reliance, eating healthier, saving money, family togetherness, and fun.

Learn more: www.motherearthnews.com [search: "small space gardening"]

Growing Older, Facing Death of Friends and Loved Ones

As we grow older, we experience an increasing rate of loss of family and friends to death. Research shows this experience can contribute significantly to the onset of depression among the elderly, a population that is especially vulnerable to this disease. More elderly today live alone than in the past, and some studies show one out of five have little or no verbal contact with other people for days at a time. But support is available, and guidance for developing a support network is too. Contact the EAP or a professional within your community for help to locate the support you need for someone about whom you have concern, especially if they are feeling grief or are affected by a loss. As you grow older, don't let denial isolate you or keep you away from a support network that can help give you the resilience you need for emotional challenges the passing years can bring.

Conduct a Flash Meeting!

Can you conduct productive meetings on short notice? Yes. Here's how: 1) Announce the meeting, its start and end time, and its purpose. 2) Encourage members to call others "late" who are not on time or "off task" with any digression off the topic. 3) Give a minute for group members to focus on the topic in mind. 4) Divide the allotted time between group members. And have a time-keeper, plus a scribe for notes. 5) Start and end at the time promised. (Educating staff about flash meetings will make boundaries more easily accepted and the meetings more efficient.)

Eastern Suffolk BOCES

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