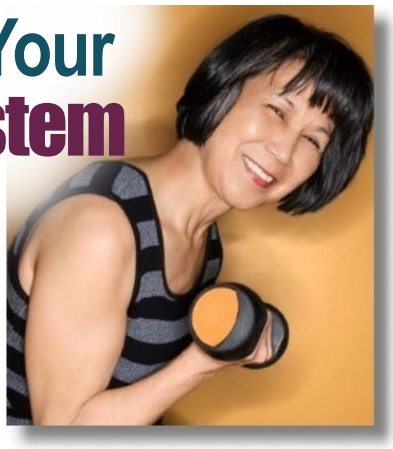
PATHWAYS

March 2020

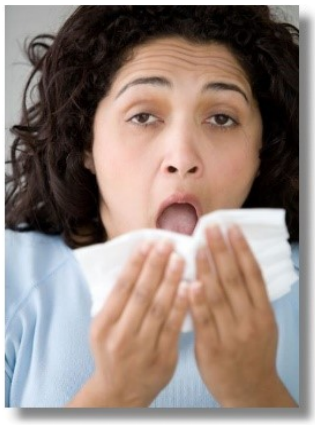
The **Employee** Newsletter of the BOCES Employee Assistance Program

Strengthen Your Immune System



Vaccinations may boost resistance, but cures for virus-based illnesses like the flu don't exist. So, keep your immune system "tuned"—it's the only one you've got! Boost your immune system with 1) adequate sleep; 2) getting recommended vaccinations; 3) eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables rich in antioxidants; 4) getting recommended exercise; 5) washing your hands and maintaining good hygiene; 6) avoiding smoking and heavy alcohol use (or getting evaluated for addictive illness if you struggle with these issues); and 7) maintaining a healthy weight. The immune system becomes less efficient with age. Examine gaps in your immune system maintenance plan, and talk to your EAP, medical doctor, or health/wellness adviser to overcome roadblocks. It may be a first step to a longer life.

Fear and Facts: COVID-19 Coronavirus



Much misinformation exists about the coronavirus. Heed health precautions, and seek authoritative information. The death rate from the virus for those under 60 years of age averages less than one-half of 1 percent, and for those under 50 years old, it averages less than one-quarter of 1 percent. Persons over 60, especially those with compounding medical problems, comprise the majority of deaths. Did you know that 8,000 to 20,000 deaths occur each year in the USA from our seasonal flu, and since Jan. 1, more than 100 of those have been of children?

Source: www.CDC.gov and www.worldometers.info/coronavirus.

Using an EAP When the Problem Isn't Yours

Reach out to your employee assistance program for help with personal problems that aren't directly your problem but still affect you. Examples include mental illness that affects a relative, a close friend experiencing homelessness, a loved one or a friend you fear is at risk for self-harm following a tragic incident, etc. Employee assistance programs do not apply extreme and rigid interpretations to prevent employees from accessing help, and upon inquiry, the EA professional will help you take the next step.

Music Can Make More of Exercise!

New studies show that upbeat, engaging, and fast-paced songs can reduce the perceived effort put into workouts with endurance and cardio exercises, like running, but not so much, however, with strength-based workouts like weightlifting. The reason? Music has been shown to have an impact on our physio-psychological responses. This includes our emotional responses, our coordination, and our automatic and planned movements. That means the rhythmic patterns of certain songs can empower you to perform better and engage more during low-intensity exercises. So, if you're having trouble pushing through your workouts, listening to some of your favorite high-tempo, upbeat music may be the push you need.

Source: frontiersin.org [search "tempo endurance"]

Eastern Suffolk BOCES does not discriminate against any employee, student, applicant for employment, or candidate for enrollment on the basis of sex, gender, race, color, religion or creed, age, weight, national origin, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, transgender status, military or veteran status, domestic violence victim status, genetic predisposition or carrier status, or any other classification protected by Federal, State, or local law. ESBOCES also provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries regarding the implementation of the applicable laws should be directed to either of the ESBOCES Civil Rights Compliance Officers at ComplianceOfficers@esboces.org: the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, 631-687-3029, or the Associate Superintendent for Educational Services, 631-687-3056, 201 Sunrise Highway, Patchogue, NY 11772. Inquiries may also be addressed to the Office for Civil Rights at the US Department of Education, 32 Old Slip, 26th Floor, New York, NY 10005, 646-428-3800, OCR.NewYork@ed.gov.

OCR 4520 7/16 WS

March Is Optimism Month

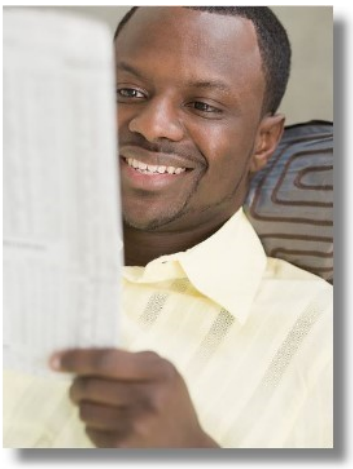
Optimism has received attention in recent years, with research attesting to its significant health benefits. One study showed that optimistic people are more likely to live past 85 years old, or 15% longer than non-optimistic people. That makes pessimism as a life orientation nearly as harmful as poorly managed type 2 diabetes! Fortunately, optimism can be understood, learned, practiced, and acquired as a naturally reactive way of viewing the world. You may have an awareness of how optimistic you are (or are not) from feedback you have periodically received from others. Viewing the need to be more optimistic as a health issue can inspire you to take the next steps to improve your disposition. The key is practicing a few exercises that will shift and slowly reinforce behavior change with their results. For example, experiment with a "coincidence journal." Unlike a diary or the daily recording of positive affirmations, a coincidence journal is a highly proactive approach to maintaining awareness and spotting positive events and pleasing interactions as they occur. In a way a diary can't (although diaries can be helpful, too), this trains your brain to think ahead, spot, and eventually expect daily life experiences that are affirming. You can find more ideas for retraining your thought patterns to reflect more optimism through hundreds of books and resources online. There is more to discover about the impact of optimism, but scientists think being optimistic may be accompanied by more goal-setting behaviors, staying on top of one's health needs, and proactive communication skills that reduce stress and conflict. They're not sure, but with experimentation, you may discover optimism's fortunes in your own life.

Source: www.harvard.edu [search: "optimism live longer"]

Should You Freeze Your Credit Report?

Visit the federal government website IdentityTheft.gov for free advice on fixing problems caused by identity theft. You can print off an entire recovery plan, and it will walk you through each step, including tracking progress. You also can find prepared forms for communication with credit bureaus and debt collectors—free services that otherwise would cost a lot of money. Do you know what a "credit freeze" is? It prevents others from accessing your credit report so it can't be used to obtain credit. It's free, it doesn't affect your credit rating, and you're in control of lifting it. Learn more at IdentityTheft.gov.

Flip the Script to Fight Negativity



Overcome negative self-talk more effectively by "flipping the script" and transforming the moment of negativity into positive energy. Examples: 1) Whether you stub your toe or are criticized on the job, be aware of the impulse to engage in negative self-talk. Instead, think "I could make myself feel worse or beat myself up about this, but I refuse. I'll focus on preventing a similar experience." 2) If you're dieting, don't say, "I *can't* have cake." This is self-limiting and self-punishing. Flip the script and say, "I *don't want* cake." It's more empowering. 3) Be your own best personal coach. After a mistake, rather than say, "I am not good at this," flip the script, and consider how to do it better. If you don't know how, say, "If I did know how to do this better, what would I be doing?" Then try that!

Supporting a Suicide Loss Survivor

Losing someone to suicide is traumatic and overwhelming. Suicide loss survivors often don't know where to find support. Whether you're a survivor or supporting someone who is, seek counseling help. The aftermath can be so traumatic that mental health problems may follow. If you are supporting a survivor, make yourself easy to reach. Don't pressure a survivor to talk or "get it all out." Don't ask for reasons (for instance, "Why do you think he did it?" or similar questions). Experience shows it is often impossible to know exactly why someone has taken his or her life. What's important is finding a way to move forward. Surviving suicide is a long process, but with the right support—perhaps from a friend like you—it's possible.

Source: SAVE.org Suicide Awareness

Eastern Suffolk BOCES

BOCES Employee Assistance Program

1741D North Ocean Avenue, Medford, NY 11763 (631) 289-0480
154 Commack Road, Suite 210 Commack, NY 11725 (631) 218-5445
188 W. Montauk Hwy, Ste. E1, Hampton Bays, NY 11946 (631) 728-2008

BOCES Western Suffolk