PATHWAYS

May 2020

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

Have a Team Refresher

Will you need to reenergize your team after months of social distancing? Consider a refresher meeting: 1) Meet with your team and reaffirm that trust and open communication with each other is the mutually desired goal. Have each member discuss what this means to them. 2) Ask if there are any outstanding issues that need to be discussed. For example: a) Do we have any unresolved concerns about communication between ourselves or management? b) Do our duties or roles need clarifying? c) Are resources to do our jobs lacking? d) Do any roadblocks exist to impede our work at this time? Spend a few minutes during meetings revisiting these questions, and then periodically in the future. Your team will bounce back fast.

Don't Tough Out Acute Stress

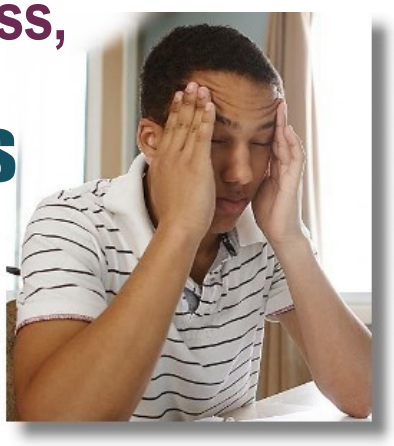
Does your job include a higher risk of witnessing workplace violence? If you are exposed to such an event, be sure to meet with a qualified mental health professional to discuss your experience and understand symptoms of acute stress disorder (ASD). ASD can follow any type of traumatic event. Don't tough it out or assume "Ah, I'm okay." Proper care for symptoms may help prevent post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a mental disorder that can follow if ASD symptoms don't resolve after six months. ASD may include anxiety, depressed mood, sleep disturbances, nightmares, being constantly tense, being easily startled, irritability, poor concentration, and more.

Source: www.ptsd.va.gov

Grief, Loss, and the Pandemic

Those needing to attend or arrange funerals are facing extreme challenges because of social distancing and travel restrictions related to COVID-19. These circumstances can make grief and loss worse. Thoughtful and effective answers to almost every question imaginable about funerary services and COVID-19 can be found at www.rememberingalife.com, with new content posted by the National Funeral Directors Association. You will find the answers about communication, support, grief, overcoming long-distance challenges, funeral options, safe viewing processionals, planning, leveraging technology, holding multiple small ceremonies, and dozens of other issues.

Parenting Stress, Isolation, and Coronavirus



Many national associations for child abuse prevention are concerned about incidents of child abuse being underreported during the COVID-19 pandemic. School closures, child care centers, and other programs are not open or operating. Typically, this is how adults outside the home spot signs and symptoms of abuse and make reports. Are you a parent who needs more parenting support or at least great ideas for child behavior management? Find hundreds of ideas at www.preventchildabuse.org/coronavirus-resources. (You will also find great ideas for taking care of, and even pampering, yourself during this difficult time.)

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

Avoid Virtual Harassment as a Remote Employee

Know your responsibilities for avoiding sexual harassment and increase your awareness if you telecommute. On the job, we are surrounded by coworkers, managers, and usually a dynamic workplace. These factors naturally create social and environmental controls that positively influence our civil behavior, manners, and communication. Many of these controls diminish or disappear entirely when we work remotely, although technology tools allow for more contact, along with more options for communication, including texting, chatting, videoconferencing, and telephone—most of it recorded. So, what if you type, text, or voice mail something to your coworker and they reject it, express displeasure with it, or otherwise take offense? The answer is, don't repeat it. Common sexual harassment behaviors include discussing one's sex life, asking a coworker about their sex life, sharing inappropriate photos or background images, making indecent jokes, sending suggestive texts, sending unwanted gifts, and repeatedly asking someone out on a date after they have said no. Most sexual harassment prevention relates to self-awareness, appreciating boundaries, and common courtesies. For example, with regard to communication, do you repeatedly use video chat when a simple text is sufficient? Do you sometimes say or do things at work that you suddenly realize you should not have said or done? Don't hesitate to reach out to the EAP or a professional counselor for confidential assistance with issues associated with communication and on-the-job relationships. You can discover resources, strategies, and new skills to help you enjoy your job more.

Managing FEEDBACK from your BOSS

No one escapes occasional criticism at work. But with a few steps, you can face it like a champ, gain from it, and decrease the "ouch." Virtually all evaluation produces some tension, so remaining unflustered shows your professionalism. Feedback is meant to improve your job performance, don't take it personally. Remember you have control over accepting "what fits" as true about the criticism and what does not. Knowing this, view any criticism as a free gift. This will inspire an attitude that elevates your reputation. Our positive self-evaluations often hide our ability to see fully how well we perform, but you will triumph when you welcome rather than fear feedback.

Prevent ARDS Effects of COVID-19

Are you still considering an exercise program or attempting to motivate yourself to get fit? Here's some motivation: New research shows that regular exercise can protect you against acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), a possible complication of COVID-19. Avoiding ARDS can keep you off a ventilator. The myth about ventilators is that they help you breathe, and when you are well, you go home without any issues. Not exactly. A ventilator often leads to other complications, including damage to the lungs. The older you are, the higher this risk—along with the possibility that it can't be removed. If the ventilator is successfully removed, risk of death from respiratory-related health problems later is also higher. COVID-19 is going to be around for a while, so if you are struggling to find the right exercise program, speak with an exercise coach, health advisor, doctor, or EAP.

Source: www.uga.edu (Search "ventilator elderly") and www.news.virginia.edu (Search "COVID exercise")

Challenges of Working Remotely

If you are new to working remotely, then you are discovering the challenges that come with it. The most frustrating are distractions. As soon as the last one is gone, the next one appears. To deal with distractions, rely less on willpower and more on strategies for each one. Start by keeping a list of distractions you notice. How many did you find or experience, such as dings from email, TV and radio, pet needs, social media, phone calls, text messages, wandering thoughts, and leftover pie that calls out to you? Next, decide on an intervention for each one. If you still struggle, try setting a kitchen timer for 10 to 15 minutes of solid chunks of work time that you blast through—then repeat.

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