PATHWAYS
September 2023

Coping with the Sunday "Scaries"

The Sunday "scaries" refers to the sinking feeling or anxiety some people experience on Sunday night when they realize the weekend is over. They realize Monday morning will soon arrive, and along with it what awaits at work. Gain control over this state of mind by jotting down your tasks and goals for the week. You will feel more control and quickly dispel the sense of dread. Anxiety is often reduced by self-care techniques. Experiment with an enjoyable form of relaxation. For more impact, incorporate this into a regular evening routine. Try a bit of "thought blocking" replaced with an activity which keeps your mind occupied. Plan your Monday on Friday by taking a bit of time to go over your schedule for the next week. You're more likely to stay in the present come Sunday night.

Have You Added Plants to Your Workspace Yet?

Indoor plants have been shown to favorably impact individuals' physiological and cognitive functions. One study even showed their presence can lower blood pressure. Indoor office lighting is suitable for many kinds of plants, including the following: snake plant, ZZ plant, peace lily, pothos, Chinese evergreen, and dracaena. Go get some healthy greens on your desk by searching images of these plants to see which ones will work for you.

Source: Effects of Plants at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9224521/

Stress Tips: Newly Divorced

End of summer is a time when many divorces occur. If you're newly divorced, serious stress can naturally follow your decision, regardless of how tough it was to make. Emotional stress is common among divorced couples, includes grief and sadness, and negatively affects self-esteem. Other stresses, such as co-parenting challenges, financial concerns, and navigating changes in your social life, can also be overwhelming. Your goal is to create a new life with new routines. Don't go it alone or remain in isolation. Bring tough challenges to your Employee Assistance Program to get the support you need.

Impress the Boss with Your Reliability

Reliability is a soft skill valued by employers because reliable employees demonstrate consistent results with accuracy and achievement. They also help reduce supervisor stress about outcomes, predictability, and timely communication. To ramp up your reliability, you need to deliver consistent, high-quality work and let your boss's positive response motivate you to consistently perform in this way. Take the initiative by identifying issues or problems upstream and resolving them before management is forced to resolve them. Be adaptable to sudden change ("roll with the punches"), and develop a sense for what, how much, and when your boss needs to communicate.

Marijuana Edibles: What Parents Should Know

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports a significant increase in the number of children who have consumed marijuana edibles leading to the need for emergency medical assistance. A rise of 214% in emergency room visits by children under the age of 11 has occurred in the past two years. Eating products of any kind that include THC is more dangerous than smoking cannabis due to both the unpredictable and inconsistent amounts of THC added to these products and the tendency to consume more of the cannabis product, especially if the intoxicating effects of THC are not immediately felt. With 23 states now legalizing cannabis for recreational use, this health risk is not likely to diminish. Marijuana edibles can create psychotic effects and may not be much different in appearance from a gummy vitamin. Parents should follow these six guidelines regarding teen and child substance abuse prevention: 1) provide accurate education about risks and legal consequences of substance abuse; 2) discuss peer pressure and how to respond to it effectively; 3) educate young people early about stress management and coping strategies; 4) practice, model, and encourage open communication about issues and concerns young people experience; 5) discuss expectations and boundaries for your family regarding substance abuse and what the consequences will be for crossing these boundaries; and 6) know where to get help, counseling, information about counseling, or early intervention when you suspect your child is using illicit substances. Begin this search via your Employee Assistance program.

Learn more: www.justthinktwice.gov/article/drug-alert-marijuana-edibles

Is There Hidden Meaning in Your Job?

Do you feel bored with your job, unable to leave, and helpless to change your state of mind? There are personal interventions you can try that have worked for others. Start by taking time to think about your interests, goals, and values (what's most important to you in your life). Next, search for how these things are hidden within the scope of your job's essential functions. Don't be too quick to say, "There's nothing!" For example, do you value "meaningful relationships"? If so, can you make your job more meaningful by mentoring others, being more helpful, collaborating, engaging more empathetically, and lessening your isolation. These behaviors have ripple effects at work and can lead to more positive interactions, cooperation, teaming, and sharing of ideas.

Resource for you: "From Burnout to Purpose: Simple Strategies for a Soul-Fulfilling Approach to Work," 2022, by Gina Calvano.

Prepare for Disasters and Catastrophes

No matter where you live, a natural disaster or catastrophe can happen. Are your family and home prepared to face an event that could completely upend your life? Denial ("it won't happen here (or to me)") and procrastination in taking preparatory steps are your worst enemies. Find information and steps to take, along with guidance and checklists, at www.ready.gov. After experiencing the effects of a disaster or catastrophe, be mindful of signs or symptoms indicating a need for mental health support—such as emotional distress that lingers, sleep disturbances, somatic or physical symptoms like headaches and gastrointestinal distress, or a desire to withdraw or remain isolated.

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