



PATHWAYS

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

Parental Conflicts ... Helping Kids Not Suffer

Follow these practices to reduce potentially harmful effects on kids when adults argue: 1) Avoid personal attacks by focusing on the issues and avoiding personal insults or name-calling. 2) When disagreements are heated, strive for a calm and respectful tone. 3) Choose a private place and time to discuss sensitive issues. 4) DO: Demonstrate healthy ways of resolving conflicts (active listening, compromise, negotiating). 5) DO: Apologize and make amends—show it's normal to end on a good note after a conflict. 6) Offer reassurance a conflict does not mean the household is unstable or children aren't loved. Tip: After a conflict, review these tips. You'll acquire greater ability to manage heated discussions in healthier ways.

Learn more: talkingparents.com/parenting-resources/fighting-in-front-of-kids



They Swore they would Stop Drinking

SeeK support and guidance if you are living with a partner affected by an alcohol use disorder. As you focus on the substance user's behavior, a downward spiral of your own health may begin. This may include neglect of your own physical, emotional, and mental health needs. Other areas of your life may also suffer. Neglecting self-care can lead to burnout, resentment, and a decline in overall well-being, making it tougher to intervene. Successful recovery of a substance use disorder often begins with the nonaddicted partner's awareness and determination to stop this downward cycle. A qualified professional or the EAP can explain how, offer resources, and help you get your sense of self back.



Stress Tips: Make Stress Management Routine

Life naturally includes various forms of stress, whether from challenges, responsibilities, or unexpected events. But you don't have to feel stress before practicing stress management. Regular stress management practices can help you maintain a calmer state of mind, help prevent stress from building up, and allow you to handle challenges with greater ease. Stress management goes further. Effective stress management can enhance connections with family, friends, and colleagues. How? Reduced stress fosters greater patience, empathy, and presence in your interactions, promoting more harmonious and supportive relationships. Why? An improved emotional state fosters deeper connections, enhances communication, and helps resolve conflicts more amicably!



Xylazine – Worsening the Fentanyl Crisis

A drug called xylazine, which is an animal tranquilizer, has been found mixed with the illicit opioid fentanyl in drug arrests throughout North America. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) wants the public to be aware of this deadly mixture because it may undermine the effectiveness of life-saving opioid medication given to reverse an opioid overdose. Principally, a nasal spray available over the counter in places like drug stores, convenience stores, and online. Xylazine is not an opioid; hence drugs meant to reverse opioid overdose may not be effective, and may even undermine the overdose treatment. The message is don't give up on administering the intervention until emergency help arrives. Follow instructions of first responders.



Source: www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-alerts-health-care-professionals-risks-patients-exposed-xylazine-illicit-drugs

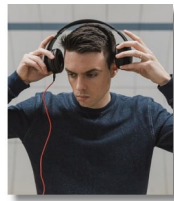
A Closer Look at Resilience: Practice Self-Compassion

Building resilience is a popular wellness topic. Almost anything helping you develop physical and emotional strength, and the ability to face adversity and overcome it, can be lumped into this life skill. One resilience-building skill you may have overlooked or never heard mentioned is practicing self-compassion. Self-compassion is not just avoiding being self-critical or treating yourself with kindness and understanding like you would a friend. Its purpose is more far reaching. People who practice self-compassion are less overwhelmed by negative emotions when faced with adverse events. They develop more positive reflex responses. This mindset in turn links to an ability to maintain a balanced perspective, not become as easily agitated and more easily troubleshoot problems. Positive self-talk habits are patterns of reacting to what we see and hear around us. Self-compassion will be a new skill if you frequently do not engage in positive self-talk. The action step of course is to avoid berating yourself when mistakes happen and try speaking to yourself kindly. Acknowledging everyone makes mistakes and realizing daily life frustrations are inescapable surprises we all face is the key. Ironically, practicing self-compassion is essential if your initial attempts to build this new habit of personal resilience don't come quickly. Keep trying.



What Neurodivergent Employees Want You to Know

Supporting neurodivergent employees to be healthy, happy, and productive is a growing focus in today's workplace. Neurodivergent individuals—often have unique needs. Here's what they want you to know: 1) Learn about autism and neurodivergent worker issues and check your biases. 2) Understand each person is unique—we're not all the same. 3) Be clear, concise, and direct in your communication. 4) Ask about preferred methods of communication—oral or in writing. 5) Be patient in anticipating a reply or response to allow extra time to process information. 6) Be mindful of possible sensory issues pertaining to boundaries and personal space, loud sounds, and bright lights. 7) Understand social differences—small talk, eye contact, and social activities may be avoided. 8) Be specific and direct with feedback. 9) Seek out special skills. These might include our ability to stay focused, enhance creativity, and improve problem-solving. By incorporating these practices, workplaces can become more inclusive and supportive of neurodivergent employees, allowing them to thrive and contribute fully to their teams. Learn more at the Association for Autism and Neurodiversity at www.aane.org.



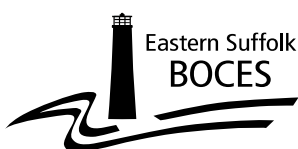
Get an Energy Boost from Decluttering

Has clutter affected your workspace? Are years of old reports or papers to be filed piling it higher and deeper? If you speak with coworkers who finally took the declutter plunge, most will tell you they experienced renewed energy, more excitement about coming to work, more creativity, and a mental release with an increased desire to engage with the work culture. There is a lot of promise if you declutter. Try a decluttering experiment if you're not convinced. See if the above benefits or the following ones here don't apply to you: streamlined workflow, more focus, clearer thinking and "thinking outside the box," reduced visual distractions and mental overload, a more serene environment, cleaner air, a better sense of control and order, less depressive feelings, reduced accumulation of stress, improved professional image. Tip: Using a kitchen timer, at the end of each day to declutter for five minutes until you achieve your declutter goal. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-resilient-brain/202302/the-many-mental-benefits-of-decluttering>



Is the EAP for Me: "It's Not Me, It's My Coworkers"

If you're feeling stressed by interactions with coworkers or your stakeholders, the EAP can be a valuable resource. Many employees seek help from the EAP for this very reason, making it one of the most common concerns addressed. The EAP professional will guide you to focus on one or all of the three broad strategies that fit nearly all difficult employee situations: maintaining professionalism (staying calm, responding professionally, and keeping the focus on the work situation); setting boundaries (defining and communicating your limits regarding unacceptable behavior and assertively reinforcing them); and seeking the right kind of leader/organizational support, if needed. The goal is to help you create positive relationships and productive allies among all those with whom you interact. The EAP is a great source of help to make that happen.



BOCES Employee Assistance Program

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