



PATHWAYS

August 2024

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

Intervene to Manage Financial Stress

Get help from your employee assistance program if you are under financial stress. You'll start feeling relief with this first act of taking charge. The EAP will support your referral to the right source of help. Don't wait. Download a budgeting tool to control income and expenses more effectively. Don't juggle numbers in your head. Write it all down--income in column one, a list of anticipated payments in column two, and a record of what was actually spent in column three. Evaluate your budget daily. Be sure your personal intervention plan includes health and wellness activities to overcome ill effects from stress. Find hundreds of ways to save money by Googling "100 Ways to Save Money". A ton of ideas will populate the page.



Download: consumer.gov/sites/default/files/pdf-1020-make-budget-worksheet_form.pdf

Stress Management Tip: Don't Wait to Enrich Your Life

"I'd love to learn Italian...Volunteering at the children's hospital would be satisfying... Someday I will learn the piano..." Start now! Pursue satisfying activities you dream of rather than waiting for the perfect time someday.

These enriching activities can give fulfillment and joy and directly enhance well-being, productivity, and help prevent burnout. When you are happier and more content, your productivity increases because a positive mindset fosters creativity, better problem-solving skills, and improved focus. This causes you to be more engaged on the job. Start, if needed, in the smallest way possible and bring balance to your busy life.



Dealing with Difficult Personalities

A thousand books exist on "dealing with difficult people." Nearly all elaborate on skills, labels, interventions, and coping strategies. There is an overarching skill for having fewer problems with difficult personalities and it is your ability to build a foundation of trust with coworkers. The vast majority of workplace problems relate to communication. Building a foundation of trust makes good communication thrive. Issues and problems are more quickly and more frequently addressed. There's increased transparency, a more positive workplace, reduced fear among workers, fewer suspicions, less wasted energy, and more valued constructive feedback. Check out the guide sheet on building a foundation of trust found at www.entrepreneur.com. (Search "build trust infographic")



Back to School: Preventing Bullying at School

Many parents worry about bullying in school.

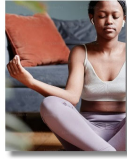
Early intervention and prevention are possible with proactive communication that encourages openness with the parent. Gentle probing might be needed because some children will resist sharing their victimization. Resistance stems from fear the bully will retaliate, and they may be embarrassed or ashamed about being bullied. Sometimes they fear the parent might recommend some action that would add to the torment. Some might believe the parent's help would be futile. Some children's desire for independence may drive them to remain silent and deal with the bullying on their own. Knowing these rationales for silence can help you be a more effective supporter and communicator with your child and you can help prevent bullying victimization.



Resource: www.stopbullying.gov/resources/get-help-now

Mentally Prepare for a Better Day

Often, our mood or emotional state is dictated by what's happening around us at any given moment. We react to each situation as it occurs. However, we have the power to make choices about how we feel and respond. Taking time before work and mentally preparing for the day is a perfect opportunity to practice this life skill. Doing so allows you to work as the real you with an unforced, positive frame of mind. How to do it: 1) Spend 15 minutes in mindful meditation to clear your mind and visualize positive expectations and outcomes for the day. 2) Use deep breathing exercises. Deep breathing exercises improve focus and concentration. This calms you and helps the visualized messages sink in and feel more certain. 3) Listen to motivational podcasts. Motivational podcasts (or tapes) shift your focus from negative thoughts to positive ones. They can excite you about possibilities to boost your mood. 4) Create your own playlist of uplifting songs. This works because upbeat songs release neurotransmitters like dopamine, which lift your mood. 5) Reflect on gratitude—what are you thankful for? This practice has numerous payoffs, but one that will show at work is your more optimistic perspective where challenges are seen instead as opportunities. (This is called having a “growth mindset.”) 6) Finally, don't let your day just simply happen. Be intentional. This means planning not just what you want to accomplish, but also how you would like to feel today, taking charge of your mood and what happens to it.



Tips for Managing Fear of Job Loss

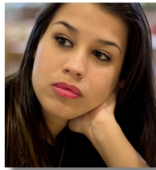
One national survey last January reported 84% of employees were worried about a layoff this year. Coping with the fear of job loss can be challenging, so find strategies for managing “layoff anxiety.” Consider the following to be better prepared, feel more in control, and prepare for possibly new future opportunities: 1) Continuously improve your skills. Don't appear as though you've “plateaued.” 2) Share your fears. Get advice from trusted persons who can provide emotional support. 3) Engage in stress management activities to relieve tension, experience positive distraction. Maintain a healthy work-life balance. 4) Build an emergency financial cushion and combine it with reducing unnecessary expenses. (The act of doing so relieves or lessens fear.) 5) Talk with your supervisor. Express your concerns. They may know little, but their view or perspective may spell relief. 6) Keep your work quality high. When layoff decisions are made employees perceived as indispensable sometimes have more opportunities presented to them.



Source: www.hrtoday.com/news (Search “84 percent worried”)

Victim of Sexual Harassment, But Unsure about Next Steps?

Employees who are victims of sexual harassment often feel uncertain about how to seek help. Despite clear workplace policies, victims may feel confused about their situation. For instance, you might have experienced multiple incidents of harassment but downplayed their seriousness to “keep the peace,” leaving you feeling stuck and unable to act. You may fear retaliation despite assurances to the contrary or worry your memory of events is unclear, which could undermine your complaint. Some victims hesitate to come forward, fearing their concerns will be dismissed by someone replying “that doesn't sound so bad.” Reach out to the employee assistance program or your human resources department to gain clarity on your experiences, feel support, and learn about the next steps. You can get support to feel empowered to follow your organization's relevant policy and get the help you need.



Small Habits with Big Benefits

There's power in performing small, routine behaviors that organize our lives and help maintain our mental health. Something as simple as making your bed each morning can be a component of preventive mental health practices. Surprisingly, however, only 38% of adults do it. Making your bed each morning sets a positive tone for the day. It gives you a quick win and the chance to experience some approving, positive self-talk. The task clears mental clutter. It gives you a sense of order and control. This can carry over to other tasks and goals in your life. Can you think of other habits that promote mental clarity, boost self-esteem, foster discipline, and reduce stress? Statistics: Sleepdoctor.com (Search “make your bed”)



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