

PATHWAYS

October 2024

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

Domestic Violence Awareness Month: Supporting Coworkers Facing Domestic Abuse

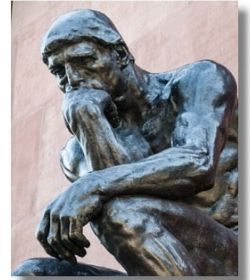
You may not immediately recognize a coworker is a victim of domestic violence by spotting bruises or a black eye. Instead, several symptoms observed over time can lead you to feel a stronger sense of concern about your coworker's situation. Isolating themselves at work, not participating in office events, receiving flowers at the office as a gesture of forgiveness from an abuser, or being overly cautious about not staying late can all raise suspicions. Talk to your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) about your concerns. They can provide you with resources, support, and strategies for approaching the situation sensitively. Domestic abuse victims—30% to 40%—eventually confide in a coworker. This places you in a unique position to offer support. The EAP can help you understand how to offer assistance to your coworker while maintaining confidentiality and respecting their privacy.



Source: <https://workplacesrespond.org/>

Stress Tips: Schedule "Think Time" and Decompress

Simply pausing to think might be one of your best techniques for managing stress. On a busy day, pausing to think can help you organize your thoughts, prioritize tasks, and clarify goals. Doing this may lead to better decisions while you reduce mental clutter. (Mental clutter is the overwhelming thoughts, worries, distractions, and information piling up in your mind making productivity difficult.) Just five minutes of no distractions and calm can help you prevent burnout, give you a bit of renewed energy, and let you decompress. This week, plan some five-minute think times throughout the day. Then, see if you experience more mental clarity, creativity, and job satisfaction, along with the sense you are more effectively managing stress.



<https://www.apa.org/topics/healthy-workplaces/work-stress>

Discover What Nutrition Can Do

Participate in a one-week nutritional improvement challenge. Then, see if you notice the benefits, including a positive difference in mood, energy level, concentration, sleep quality, and overall stress levels; especially at work. Do this with a friend then you can discuss your experiences together. The end result may be a greater conscious awareness for healthier eating, and less reliance on—or perhaps even rejection of—unhealthy, processed foods. You will find more than 30 such seven-day healthy meal plans to choose from at this link:

<https://www.eatingwell.com> [Search "seven day meal plan"]



Deepening Relationships at Work for Improved Job Satisfaction

Most people come to work, do their job, and leave. They interact with coworkers just enough to get by—without recognizing the value their colleagues bring. Don't leave workplace relationships to chance. Actively build them to enhance your well-being and create a fulfilling work environment. You'll find more meaning in your job. Here's how: Seek out and participate in transparent conversations where ideas, concerns, and feedback are shared freely. Offer support and show appreciation for your coworkers' efforts. Regularly collaborate on projects. Participate in team activities. Be approachable and "askable," which means being open, friendly, and an easy conversationalist. This allows others to feel comfortable coming to you with questions or concerns. Learn simple skills to resolve conflicts constructively, and make a habit of celebrating successes together.



Don't Undermine Your Assertiveness

Many who want to be more assertive often undermine their own attempts at this skill. As a result, they later feel confused about why their needs or concerns weren't taken seriously. When assertiveness is mixed with uncertainty and fear of the consequences of being too direct, you lose the effectiveness of your message and hinder your goal in communication. Do you recognize any of these assertiveness "missteps"? 1) Hesitancy and unsureness: "If it's okay, and if you have time—it doesn't have to be today, but can we discuss my performance review?" Better: "I would like to discuss my performance review. What is a good time for you to meet?" 2) Framing a question instead of a statement: "May I offer another idea for everyone to consider?" Better: "I believe we should consider an alternative approach for this project." 3) People pleasing or conflict avoidance: "I have a few observations to share about your report's conclusions." Better: "I noticed some areas of your report where we might review them together to ensure accuracy." A person may perceive the initial statements above as assertive. However, in each case, the level of assertiveness is diminished. This can trigger ineffective communication, confusion, delays in problem resolution, and a greater risk of weakening, not enhancing, your workplace relationships. Having trouble communicating with someone at work? Your Employee Assistance Program can help.



There's a Path to Recovery from an Eating Disorder

Nearly three million people in the U.S. suffer with anorexia nervosa, (not a lifestyle choice) characterized by an intense, irrational fear of gaining weight or becoming over weight. Only a fourth of those affected seek treatment. The majority suffer in silence and fear. If you suffer from anorexia, you know the profound pain and frustration of feeling trapped in the need to isolate yourself and the fear of judgment from others. You're forced to both struggle with intense hunger while battling horrible anxiety about food and weight. Any health issue including a tremendous struggle over fear of getting help, along with a battle over its associated behaviors, has a recognized path to wellness that has been discovered by others, and it can lead you to the relief you seek as well. Seek confidential help from your Employee Assistance Program and/or a medical doctor experienced with this health issue. Source: National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders



Conquer Digital Time Theft

Digital time theft is passage of time producing no or little workplace productivity resulting from diverted attention while engaged in online, nonwork-related activity prompted by distraction. If you have experienced digital time theft, you know the frustration of suddenly realizing you've been distracted by some online activity again. It can feel as though you have little control over how easily you are sidetracked, but gaining control might be easier than you think. Experiment with what works for you. Do a search for highly specific apps/tools allowing dramatic increase of self-control over precisely this problem. They allow you to avoid online distractions, so you do not mindlessly browse the Web but instead stay on task. Some tools even add a delay in opening a web page long enough for you to catch yourself being distracted, therefore you can return to your current work! Google: "apps to help you focus".

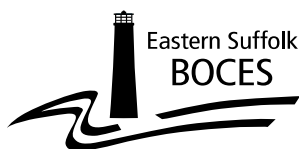


Mammogram Myths: Busting Common Misconceptions

Myth and misconceptions about mammograms still persist, contributing to tragic outcomes due to resistance to early breast cancer detection. Despite efforts, the following myths remain highly prevalent: "Radiation from mammograms is harmful." Fact: Radiation exposure during a mammogram is minimal and considered safe. "Mammograms can cause cancer to spread." Fact: No evidence exists compression of the breast during a mammogram causes cancer to spread. "A mammogram is needed only if a lump is felt." Fact: Many cancers found through mammograms are never felt. "Mammograms are only needed for older women." Fact: One in six breast cancers occurs in women in their forties. "Having no family history of breast cancer makes it safe to skip screenings." Fact: 85% of women diagnosed with breast cancer have no family history of the disease.



Source: American College of Radiology at www.acr.org (search: mammography)



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