



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

## Gam-Anon: Help for the Family of a Compulsive Gambler

**T**hose in relationships with compulsive gamblers are overwhelmed and feel powerless to help. Initial focus is naturally on tactics for managing the gambler's behavior, the path to mental stability for loved ones is self-care. This means protecting oneself physically and emotionally, placing a priority on one's well-being, and setting boundaries. This is the purpose of "Gam-Anon," a 12-step self-help group modeled after Alanon (for loved ones of problem drinkers). When loved ones set boundaries, understand skills of healthy detachment, and prioritize their own well-being, then compulsive gamblers often quickly recognize the true impact of their behavior, become motivated to seek help, and ultimately accept it. Gam-Anon meetings are found nationwide. If you are affected by another person's gambling, talk to the EAP to discover more about this powerful source of help.



<https://gam-anon.org/>

## Stress Tips: Declutter a Small Space to Manage Stress

**S**pend 15 minutes decluttering a small space within your living area as a stress management technique. Decluttering gives you a win, but there is more to it. Your brain sends a signal that there can be order and control at a time when you're not feeling much of it. This positive state of mind has ripple effects when you benefit from a feeling of accomplishment and well-being. A small release of dopamine occurs when you declutter, and cortisol, the stress hormone, lessens. Elevating your mood. Some studies have demonstrated improved sleep quality, too. The next time life feels chaotic, take a few minutes to declutter, get the calm, control, and renewed energy back into your day.



Research: <https://extension.usu.edu> [search "declutter mental benefits"]

## Credit Education Month: Get a Grip on Impulse Spending

**We** often tell ourselves that spending is based on necessity, yet emotions play a major role—and why big ad agencies devote all their efforts to influencing them. Unplanned, emotionally driven purchases of things we don't really need, triggered by some desire but with little thought, are called impulse purchases. Intervene with impulse purchases by increasing your awareness with two personal interventions. 1) Wait 24 hours before buying to see if you still want it. 2) Set a meaningful goal for the money you'd otherwise spend. This creates a strong incentive to skip the impulse purchase in favor of something more valuable later.



## Fresh Perspectives: Your Job Finances Your Journey

**You** need your job for income, it's also a tool for achieving your life's dreams. Consider this perspective to manage stress: "Your job finances your journey." This mindset makes workplace challenges easier to handle and helps you find more purpose and motivation in daily tasks. Staying focused on what truly matters—your personal journey—bringing other benefits, like better work-life balance. By creating emotional distance between work and personal life, you can worry less and enjoy your time off more.



# Your Inner Voice Can Prevent Workplace Miscommunication

**P**ay attention to your inner voice when you sense a need to follow up, clarify, or check in with others concerning projects, events, and deadlines. You'll prevent misunderstandings, delays, and unnecessary stress. By acting on this intuitive sense, you will hone a skill that helps you avoid costly problems while increasing workplace productivity. This week, try identifying passing thoughts "Should I double-check that deadline?" or "I wonder if she heard me say how many people will be at the meeting." These kinds of thoughts are so fleeting. They are easily dismissed or forgotten in a busy day until the consequences of not acting on them appear. The skill is to recognize these cues—often felt as a gut instinct—to follow up, pause, assess, or take action to prevent a problem. The next part of the skill is to act promptly, dismiss the temptation to avoid acting because of the hassle it may entail. Ask experienced employees and supervisors, they will tell you this skill is honed from hard experience. Understand that your brain can process thousands of thoughts, your intuition will capture the gaps and potential pitfalls, which are prompts for action. Avoid the last-minute panic and distress that come with "I should have..." or "I knew this would happen..." Doing so will surprise you with smoother workflows, fewer crises, improved morale, and avoided stress.



# Do Highly Processed Foods Contribute to Depression

**Y**ou may get drowsy after eating burgers, fries, or pizza at lunchtime. Besides zapping your energy, eating ultra processed food often can also contribute to health problems like diabetes and possibly depression. A recent study discovered that among 32,000 participants, those who ate ultra processed food the most often, including artificial sweeteners, had the highest rates of depression. Do you frequently consume ultra processed foods? If you suffer from depression, is your diet a contributing factor or making it worse? If you're being treated for depression, is your diet undermining wellness? Talk to your doctor about a diet that supports your health or request an assessment from your employee assistance program to learn more. Click the link below for a list of ultra processed foods and healthier food choices. You might be surprised to discover that some foods labeled as "healthy" are ultra processed and unhealthy.



Study: <https://jamanetwork.com> [search "ultra processed foods depression"] List of ultra processed foods: <http://knowablemagazine.org> [search "ultra processed foods"]

# Building Resilience: Mastering Composure Under Fire

**N**egative interactions at work sometimes happen, so why not develop the art and skill of preventing them from throwing you off your game and derailing your mood? You'll stay productive and maintain a better sense of well-being. Call it "staying composed under fire" or "workplace emotional resilience." It takes practice, you should start by understanding these four principles: 1) The key to staying in control is realizing your reaction is a choice. It may feel like pure reflex, but with practice you'll see how this can flip. 2) Be aware by identifying emotions like frustration, anger, or stress appearing in response to everyday interactions. 3) Practice pausing before reacting. This gives you a mini-time gap to respond more thoughtfully rather than impulsively. 4) Here's a reframing trick—when you witness negativity on the job, don't personalize it. Instead, see it as a reflection of the other person's stress or struggles and focus on solutions, not drama.



# Create an Action Plan for Your Well-being

**D**on't wait for healthcare problems to suddenly appear in your life, instead create a personal action plan to thwart illness and chronic disease. Many health problems are associated with lifestyle and failure to prevent them; research consistently supports this observation. Genetics and the environment play a role in health, but lifestyle far outweighs these factors. Put these six pillars in your personal plan: 1) nutrition; 2) physical activity; 3) stress management/mental well-being; 4) sleep quality and recovery; 5) avoid toxic and environmental assaults (excessive screen time, too much negative news, noise, and chemicals/additives, etc.); 6) personal growth/creativity/self-improvement/joy.



<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1559827618785554>



**BOCES Employee Assistance Program**  
1741D North Ocean Avenue, Medford, N 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

