Acentra HEALTH

Volume 27, Issue 2

# Balance

A newsletter to help employees maintain a healthy work-life balance.

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*Welcome to Balance, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) newsletter. Balance highlights important topics related to personal and professional wellness, offering tips and resources for managing life's challenges. Your EAP is a confidential, free resource designed to help you navigate a variety of issues. If any of these topics resonate with you, consider reaching out to the EAP for further information, including referrals to local EAP counselors.*

## LONELINESS...AT WORK

Employee loneliness is a growing problem in the workplace. It doesn't mean being physically or remotely isolated. Workplace loneliness refers to feeling disconnected and emotionally detached from coworkers despite being surrounded by people all day. If you feel like you are simply "going through the motions" at work, lacking meaningful social connections, and experiencing a diminished desire to engage or collaborate on projects, this sense of feeling invisible or undervalued can harm productivity and mental health. Loneliness can happen when social connections don't meet our personal needs, even in busy office settings. This often includes feeling like you can't be your true self, which makes it seem like no one really knows who you are. A recent survey found that one in five employees feels lonely on a typical workday. Try this engagement fix:

- Decide you will build relationships with coworkers rather than leaving it all up to chance.
- Initiate conversations and show genuine interest in others' experiences.
- Look for common interests to discuss.
- Invite a colleague for coffee or lunch.

Small efforts to connect with others can make your workplace feel more supportive and reduce feelings of loneliness. Don't hesitate to reach out to your EAP for support in building meaningful workplace relationships. These feelings can sometimes be linked to depression, and your EAP can help figure out whether that's a factor in your workplace loneliness.

## EMBRACE FRUGALITY FOR BIG REWARDS

Frugality often gets a bad rap and is misunderstood as meaning "cheap," but it really means being sparing, thrifty, prudent, or economical in the consumption of resources. Frugality can promote financial stability and reduce anxiety when practiced with awareness. Could frugality be a good thing for you? When you're frugal, you avoid waste and extravagance. For example, billionaire Warren Buffett still lives in a modest five-bedroom house despite his vast wealth, proof that mindful spending can lead to long-term financial security. Finding a balance between prudent financial management and enjoying life is also crucial for maintaining mental well-being. Get started on your frugal journey by checking out the resource below. Your EAP is here to support your financial wellness.

*Source: "Frugal Living for Dummies" by Deborah Taylor-Hough*

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## INVESTING IN EXPERIENCES OVER MATERIAL POSSESSIONS

Research shows that investing in experiences leads to greater and more enduring happiness compared with purchasing material items. The belief is that experiences create lasting memories and foster social connections that contribute to longer-term happiness and personal growth. For example, you're more likely to frequently and fondly recall a camping trip experience as a child than a toy, both of which brought happiness. While possessions seem to lose novelty over time, experiences stick around and become part of our identity, and the stories we tell about them add to our sense of fulfillment. This year, try embracing new experiences and reflect on whether they truly enhance your overall happiness. If you feel better, create a new habit that will enrich your life.

*Source: https://integrative-med.org/investing-in-experiences-over-possessions-boosts-happiness/*

## BETTER RESPONSE IN A WORKPLACE CRISIS

Workplace crises—violence, accidents, equipment breakdowns, or incidents that damage mission, function, and reputation—happen. Know how to support your organization in a crisis so that you avoid contributing to confusion and chaos through miscommunication. 1) Don't panic. To avoid panic, use a tactic called "presence of mind." For a few seconds, focus not on the crisis but on yourself. Decide not to panic, take a few slow breaths, count to ten if needed. This helps stop the cascade of physiological reactions known as the "fight or flight" response. 2) If your organization has protocols and procedures for dealing with a crisis, be familiar with them so when a crisis happens you can act as needed. 3) Avoid sharing rumors. Increased anxiety can lead to rumor sharing as a coping mechanism and as a way of "filling in the gaps" when accurate information is scarce. 4) If safety is an issue, make it the priority in a crisis. 5) Maintain confidentiality. Don't share sensitive information about the crisis outside official channels.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MINI-STROKES

A mini-stroke, clinically known as a transient ischemic attack (TIA), is a temporary disruption of blood flow to the brain that results in stroke-like symptoms. Although TIAs do not cause permanent damage, they serve as critical warning signs for potential future strokes. About one in three people will have a larger, more serious stroke within a year following a TIA. Symptoms of a TIA last only a few minutes, but they are similar to a larger stroke and include weakness, numbness or paralysis in the face, slurred speech, trouble understanding others, temporary blindness, dizziness, and loss of balance or coordination. See a doctor without delay if you experience a TIA.

*Source: www.yalemedicine.org/conditions/transient-ischemic-attack*

## STRESS TIPS FROM THE FIELD: THE SCIENCE AND SERENITY OF FOREST BATHING

Forest bathing is a mindfulness practice that involves immersing yourself in the sights, sounds, and scents of

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a forest. Originating in Japan during the 1980s (called shinrin-yoku), it encourages slowing down, being fully present, and connecting with nature. To practice forest bathing, engage all your senses: notice the shades of green, listen to rustling leaves, breathe in the earthy aroma, and feel the texture of tree bark. Studies show that forest bathing lowers cortisol (the stress hormone), reduces blood pressure and heart rate, boosts immune function, and enhances mood, helping you feel refreshed and recharged.

*Source: www.psychiatry.org/news-room/apa-blogs/forest-bathing-benefits-mental-physical*

**AVAILABLE NOW**

Acentra Health produces podcasts covering a variety of well-being topics. Listen to this month's podcasts by visiting:
**eap.acentra.com/podcast/**

## Employee Assistance Program

Your EAP is a complimentary service available to you through your employer. The EAP provides counseling sessions at no cost to you, as well as offering a wide variety of services to enhance overall well-being and support healthy work-life balance. The program is completely confidential and available to you, your household family members, and dependents.

Access the EAP anytime for no-cost, confidential support from a master's-level counselor or visit the website tools and information designed to address life's pressing concerns.

**Phone: 1.800.999.1077**

**Website: EAPHelplink.com**

**Company Code: EAPNOW**

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