Acentra HEALTH

Volume 27, Issue 3

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.

BE PREPARED THROUGH SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Situational awareness is the practice of being purposely aware of your surroundings and recognizing something that could be a threat, so you are not caught off guard. It's not about living in fear; it's about actively observing your environment so you can act proactively instead of reactively to a threat or disturbing event. Many professions are taught situational awareness—healthcare workers, police officers, airline pilots, school teachers—but anyone can learn this practical safety skill. While the chances of encountering a terrible threat like a terrorist attack are very low, staying alert in crowded or unfamiliar environments can increase your safety and give you an edge of protection. A simple action like noting nearby emergency exits can help you respond calmly and effectively if something unexpected occurs.

Source: ufpro.com/us/blog/situational-awareness-and-personal-safety-for-civilians

HOW THE EAP CAN HELP YOU OVERCOME THE EMOTIONAL AFTERMATH OF A CONFLICT

After a tense exchange with a coworker, lingering stress and racing thoughts may leave you feeling drained. This emotional aftermath—called emotional reverberation—can affect focus, productivity, and even physical well-being. If a workplace conflict is bothering you long after it ends, your EAP can help. A trained counselor can guide you through healthy conflict resolution and emotional processing, helping you regain control of your thoughts and return to feeling more centered and productive.

WAKE UP FEELING REFRESHED

If you suffer with sleep issues, seeing a medical doctor specializing in sleep disorders can often help. However, if you sleep well—or think you do—but don't wake with that "refreshed" feeling, experiment with these sleep hacks: 1) Go to bed at the same time every night to prompt your circadian rhythm to produce better sleep. 2) Make your room cool, dark, quiet, and prevent pets from sleeping in your space. (Subtle movements may not awaken you but may disturb deep sleep.) 3) Establish a nighttime routine (without technology) to signal your body to prepare for sleep. 4) Don't check the clock in the middle of night. This can trigger stressful concerns that may delay a return to sleep. 5) Skip the "nightcap." Alcohol sedates and can produce a rebound effect that interferes with deeper sleep.

Source: www.cdc.gov [search "sleep"]

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EASY WAYS TO BE KIND TO YOUR HEART

A healthy heart isn't just about diet and exercise. Try these easy, research-backed ways to boost heart health:

1. Choose stairs or take short walks. Even just ten minutes will help.
2. Wash your hands often. Viral infections strain the heart, and proper handwashing lowers your risk significantly.
3. Add just one extra fruit to your daily diet
4. Stay well hydrated to support cardiovascular function.
5. Limit time on screens in order to promote more movement.
6. Listen to calming music. This helps with stress regulation.
7. Try deep breathing exercises daily to help lower blood pressure.
8. Reflect on the positives in your life. Gratitude and optimism are linked to heart health.

Source: www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/10-small-steps-for-better-heart-health

FLEX YOUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage our emotions and the emotions of others in our interactions. EI is essential for building strong relationships and driving sustained productivity. However, EI is not a fixed skill and, without practice, can gradually decline over time. This loss of EI can happen if you spend excessive time online at the expense of real-life interactions, says research. Do you spend hours a day on social media or is it your primary means of interacting with others? If you're substituting social media for healthier ways of bonding with others, recognize that your EI is underutilized and it might be reflected at work or home with poor communication, inability to empathize, more conflicts, and problems working collaboratively with others.

Source: pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11321225/

PRACTICE ACTIVE LISTENING

Do interruptions frustrate you at work? You are not alone. Nearly 30% of employees say being interrupted is one of the most irritating communication habits. If you are prone to interrupting, you can break the habit by practicing active listening. This involves more than just hearing. Active listening is about showing focus, engagement, and understanding. By improving listening, you validate others and reduce miscommunication. Here are some steps to help you stop interrupting and start listening:

- Give your full attention and maintain eye contact.
- Show you are engaged through nods or verbal cues like "I see."
- Reiterate what you hear (e.g., "So you're saying the other driver ran the red light?").
- Ask thoughtful questions before responding.

Source: preply.com/en/blog/bad-communication-habits/

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A POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE TOWARD NUTRITION

Making sudden, radical diet changes may offer temporary results. However, such radical changes may not be healthy or sustainable. Instead, focus on long-term change through a simple three-step strategy: **1. Reflect** on your eating patterns—both good and bad—and identify what triggers poor choices. **2. Replace** unhealthy habits with better alternatives. Try meal planning and mindful snacking. **3. Reinforce** positive changes by building new routines and celebrating progress. Small, consistent steps build lasting success.

Available Now

PODCAST

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

Balance is a newsletter produced by your EAP that spotlights relevant issues related to personal and professional wellness. This newsletter is intended for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional. Individuals should follow the policies and procedures laid out by their human resource management department concerning use of the EAP. Some articles reprinted with permission from DFA Publishing and Consulting, LLC. Acentra Health, McLean, VA. All rights reserved.