Acentra HEALTH

# BALANCE NEWSLETTER

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

Volume 28, Issue 1

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.

## MICROBREAKS: THE 30-SECOND HABIT THAT BOOSTS YOUR DAY

Microbreaks, short pauses lasting 30 seconds to 2 minutes, can significantly improve focus, productivity, and physical comfort throughout the day. A microbreak might be standing to stretch, rolling your shoulders, taking a few slow breaths, or walking to refill your water. Research shows that even a brief shift in posture or a mental reset reduces muscle tension and prevents fatigue from building up unnoticed. These tiny pauses create a surprising cumulative effect: sharper concentration, steadier energy, and fewer emotional "dips." Try setting a reminder every hour to pause and reset. For more tips on the benefits of prioritizing microbreaks into your day visit https://ehs.stanford.edu/subtopic/microbreaks.

## GUARD YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Identity theft continues to be one of the fastest-growing crimes, and it's not limited to the online world. Protect yourself by shredding sensitive papers, securing your mailbox, and limiting the personal information you share on social media. Be cautious of "phishing" attempts, which are messages or calls claiming to be from trusted institutions asking for account details. Always verify requests using official contact information. Review your free credit reports from TransUnion, Equifax, and Experian annually at AnnualCreditReport.com. For ID theft recovery steps and prevention tips, visit the Federal Trade Commission at ftc.gov/idtheft.

## DEVELOPING SMARTER DECISION-MAKING SKILLS

Good decision-making requires patience, awareness, and reflection. Avoid rushing into choices. Instead, take time to fully understand the situation and how different outcomes could affect your life and relationships. Consider all possible options, even those that aren't obvious, and weigh the pros and cons carefully before acting. Remember that not every decision will be perfect, but mistakes are valuable teachers. Pay attention to what worked, what didn't, and how others respond to your choices. Over time, this awareness builds confidence and resilience in both personal and professional decisions.

## EASING POST-HOLIDAY FINANCIAL STRESS

For some, financial stress from holiday spending can take months, or even years, to fully overcome. Creating a realistic plan can ease anxiety. Start by reviewing expenses, prioritizing essential bills, and setting one manageable financial goal. Avoid ignoring financial concerns, as uncertainty often increases stress. A spending

plan is about clarity and control, not restriction. Remember to reward your progress, like reaching a savings milestone, to reinforce healthy financial habits. If you need help getting started, your EAP offers professional financial and legal consultation and referrals to help you make informed decisions and feel more in control.

## NAVIGATING CHANGE WITH CONFIDENCE

Whether in your workplace, relationships, or routines, change often brings discomfort before it brings growth. The key is to focus on what you can control. Gather information to reduce uncertainty and accept that transition periods can feel unsettling. A positive attitude helps you see potential opportunities, while proactive steps like building new skills or reaching out to colleagues can restore a sense of control. Even small actions like organizing your workspace or creating a daily routine can ground you in times of transition. Remember that resilience is learned, not innate. Your EAP can offer tools and counseling to help you manage change effectively. Visit apa.org/topics/resilience to learn more about strengthening adaptability.

## CARING FOR AN AGING RELATIVE

Supporting an elderly loved one can be deeply rewarding but also emotionally and logistically demanding. Begin by identifying their needs (medical, financial, emotional, and social) and encouraging them to stay involved in their own care decisions for as long as possible. Delegate tasks to family members and consider professional services, such as in-home aides or adult day programs. Address important topics early, like advance directives, power of attorney, and end-of-life wishes. Most importantly, take care of your own well-being. Caregivers often experience burnout, so schedule regular breaks and seek support when needed. The Family Caregiver Alliance at caregiver.org offers helpful planning resources and community connections.

## PRACTICAL TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER RELATIONSHIP WITH STRESS

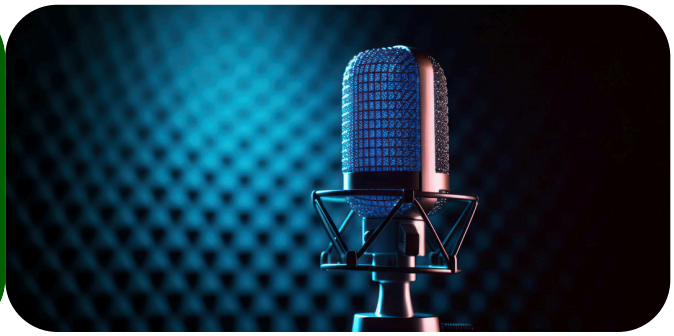
Chronic stress can take a physical toll, but small adjustments in routine can make a big difference. Prioritize sleep, nutrition, and hydration, which directly affect energy and emotional balance. Mind-body techniques such as yoga, progressive muscle relaxation, or meditation help calm the nervous system. If stress leads to irritability, low mood, or changes in appetite, don't hesitate to reach out for professional support. Your EAP offers confidential counseling at no cost. Learn more about stress and healthy ways to manage it by visiting stress.org.

## THE MOOD-LIFTING POWER OF EVERYDAY CREATIVITY

Creativity isn't just for artists. It's actually a great way to boost your mood. Simple creative activities like doodling during meetings, cooking something new, arranging a workspace, keeping a journal, or taking photos on a walk can activate parts of the brain that support well-being and problem-solving. These small acts help you shift out of "task mode" and reconnect with curiosity and playfulness, which can be especially grounding on stressful days. You don't need to be skilled, just engaged. A few minutes of creative expression can provide a reset that lasts for hours.

## ACENTRA HEALTH PODCASTS

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 highly qualified counselor or visit the website for 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.*