

PATHWAYS

July 2026

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

Better Work-Life Balance with Micro-Moments

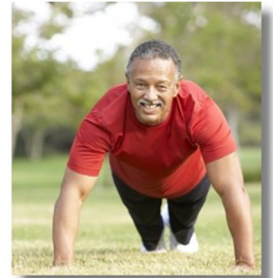
Surprisingly, better work-life balance is less about finding more hours in the day than it is about making better use of the minutes you already have. Many employees assume they need vacations, elaborate family activities, or large blocks of free time to feel connected to loved ones. Not true! Small daily interactions often have the greatest impact. A 10-minute conversation over coffee, a short walk with a spouse, a thoughtful text, or completing a chore together can relieve the guilt of not doing "enough." The key is being intentional: finding opportunities and making them happen. Look for naturally occurring moments when paths cross, and you'll quickly spot connection opportunities. Consistency is key. You're going to discover how easy meaningful contact actually is, rather than waiting for the perfect moment to make a big event happen.



Learn more: Search online for "micro-moments in relationships."

Starting to Exercise When You're Out of

If you haven't exercised in a long time, starting fresh can feel overwhelming. Motivation fades when the gap between where you are and where you want to be feels too large. Here's the hack: Make your first goal just 10 minutes of easy daily effort, which research shows is enough to gain health benefits. Get to the point where you're putting on exercise shoes with little mental effort. Once momentum exists, reward yourself and set rewards for additional mini-milestones. Now you have real leverage for lasting change. See your physician for approval first. Hint: Research shows sharing your goal with others will nearly double your chances of success.



Learn more: learningstrategies.com/article-share-your-goals-to-boost-your-success

Social Wellness Month

July is Social Wellness Month, building awareness of the importance of quality relationships. Loneliness is a growing concern, and is as damaging to well-being as other chronic illnesses. It is a worldwide problem linked to increased risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, depression, anxiety, dementia, and earlier death. The solution is to increase social engagement and make it a regular part of your life. Do you have friends or relatives who remain isolated? Help them and yourself with this low-pressure approach: Text or call one person this week. Put one recurring social activity on your calendar. Spend time with other people, even if you do not talk much. Repeat weekly until connection becomes a habit. Make avoiding loneliness a life skill you continuously develop.



Learn more: cdc.gov/social-connectedness/risk-factors/index.html

Bullied by the Customer?

Most employees know they should not be verbally abused by customers. However, during difficult encounters, the desire to satisfy the customer can sometimes overshadow awareness that their behavior has crossed into mistreatment. Professionalism does not require tolerating personal attacks. A harsh comment or insult can reverberate as you replay the encounter in your mind a normal stress reaction, but one that keeps the interaction alive long after it ends. Does your work unit have a policy for managing abusive customers? Follow your organization's procedures and involve a supervisor when appropriate. Consider a team approach to developing such a policy, including personal wellness strategies for customer service workers and a role for the EAP, which can help you avoid bringing customer's negative behavior home with you.



Learn more:

batetech.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Frontline-De-Escalation-Training-Master-Copy-PDF.pdf

Three Sentences to Save a Workplace Relationship

Workplace conflict is often not about practical issues or performance, but about how people treat each other. For example, a negative comment from a coworker may cause feelings of hurt or resentment. Here is the solution for stopping these feelings from taking root. It is called the "Three-Part Assertion," a decades-old technique taught in couples counseling, parent education, and other venues. The rule for its use is to wait a day to cool down, and then follow these steps before two days are up. Meet with your coworker in private and share the following: 1) "What I observed/heard." 2) "Here's how it landed." 3) "What I'd like instead." Here's an example after an offensive comment. In the meeting yesterday, when I didn't know the answer, you said to the team, "I am surprised." That's what I observed. I felt embarrassed and undermined in front of the team. That's how it landed. Going forward, I would appreciate it if feedback like that came to me privately. That's what I'd like. The three-part assertion works for both personal and professional setting and is specific to your own experience. It relies on specific "I" statements that encourage accountability, minimize defensiveness, and fosters a calm demeanor. This approach has real impact to create positive change with minimal time invested.



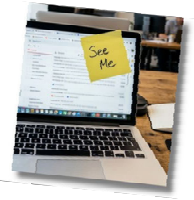
How Self-Awareness Can Save Your Job

When job performance problems surface, the easy response is to look at external factors: a difficult boss, an unfair workload, coworkers who don't pull their weight. Those factors are often real. However, if you consistently struggle, receive critical feedback, or find yourself on a performance improvement plan, you may share a common blind spot: trouble acknowledging your own role in the problem. Attitude, tone, resistance to direction, chronic tardiness, or subtle interpersonal friction can quietly undermine your career while you remain unaware. Fortunately, self-awareness is not an innate personality trait; it is a skill you can develop. If feedback from more than one supervisor shares a common theme, it's time to look at your own behavior and consider asking a trusted colleague for candid input. Journaling about workplace frustrations is also powerful. It will produce insight and highlight behaviors or ways of interacting with others that you can target for healthy change. Additionally, turn to your EAP for help. Together, you'll discover how to turn self-awareness into your greatest advantage.



See Me about Your Performance

A classic cause of workplace anxiety is a note from the boss that says, "Talk to me about your performance." This heart-stopping moment can be managed with a simple strategy: go prepared and turn the meeting into an opportunity to demonstrate professionalism and self-awareness. Before the meeting, take a breath and honestly review your recent work, identifying positives, negatives, and any issues that may have affected your performance. Approach the conversation as a positive intelligence-gathering event, even if the feedback turns out to be negative or somewhat unfair. During the meeting, take notes and listen more than you talk. Instead of becoming defensive, ask for clarification on anything that is unclear, and ensure you fully understand what is expected of you going forward. View everything you hear as valuable data that you can use to your advantage. Afterward, follow through immediately on the agreed-upon changes without needing a reminder; your initiative will be noticed. Check in regularly to show your progress and gather ongoing feedback. Instead of wondering what your boss is thinking, simply ask. If you still feel uneasy, process the experience with your EAP rather than your coworkers. The EAP offers confidentiality, objectivity, stress management tools and a plan going forward.



Stress Tips: When Every Priority Is a Priority

Competing demands become stressful when everything feels equally urgent. When several people want something at once, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by juggling every request simultaneously. The results are frustration, distraction, and a growing sense of falling behind. A better approach is to stop managing all demands at once. Instead, identify the single most important task and focus on that alone. Remaining tasks aren't ignored, they're queued for later. This simple shift reduces mental clutter and restores a sense of control. While you may not be able to reduce your workload, you can reduce the feeling of being overwhelmed by it. When priorities compete, remember not everything can be first. Clarity helps you regain focus, make better decisions, and move forward one task at a time.



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