

THE FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE

Wellness, Productivity & You!

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Dealing With Garnishments

A garnishment is a court order directing your employer to send a certain amount of money to a third party after deducting it from your paycheck. Whether or not you believe the garnishment is justified, your employer must honor the court order. Your employer does not get reimbursed for the staff time and paperwork associated with garnishments. If you are faced with the possibility of being ordered by a court to pay money to a third party, consider talking to EASE confidentially to see if help can be found to assist you in arranging payments or reconciling the debt with your creditor. This will keep your financial business between you and your creditors and reduce the burden on your employer.

Should You Get Less Sleep?

Surprising research suggests that people who sleep five to seven hours per night live longer than those who sleep eight hours or more. But don't start setting your alarm for an earlier time yet. This study of 1.1 million people did not rule out many possible explanations, like the effects of depression. Depression sufferers may sleep more. Some studies have pointed to depression as a contributing factor to heart disease! Sleeping too much? Don't rule out getting screened for depression. Despite this research, sleep experts still say you should get as much sleep as it takes to feel rested the next day.

Is "Harm Reduction" Hurtful?

Think twice before experimenting with so-called "harm reduction" approaches to manage an alcohol problem. Harm reduction suggests that controlled drinking is an option for people with drinking problems and that alcoholism is not a disease. Alcoholism is a real illness and evaluation for it is quick and easy. Those who meet the criteria for the diagnosis need to achieve and maintain abstinence to arrest the progression of the disease and the problems it causes. The American Medical Association and the World Health Organization have not reversed their nearly 50-year-old determinations that alcoholism is a disease best managed by abstinence.

Respond To Your Customers & Reduce Your Stress

Instead of saying...	Replace it with...
"I don't know."	"I'll find out."
"No!"	"What I can do is..."
"That's not my job"	"This is who can help you."
"That's not my fault."	"Let's see what we can do."
"Go talk to my manager."	"Is there another way I can help?"
"You want it WHEN!?"	"I will try my best."
"Calm down!"	"I am sorry."
Nothing —	"I'll be with you in a moment."



Are EAPs Cost Conscious

A. My friend went to EASE and was referred to a psychiatrist, who I heard was very expensive. Are there cheaper resources for professional counseling? Is ability to pay a consideration when EASE makes referrals for clients?

Q. EASE is ethically bound to consider your ability to pay for services to which you might be referred and to locate those best suited to your health insurance when applicable. Numerous possibilities exist in the typical community, making it almost certain that a resource you can afford will be available. Psychiatrists, who are the professionals of choice for monitoring psychiatric medications, may charge higher hourly fees for psychotherapy than mental health providers with a master's degree. However, short visits to psychiatrists for medication management may last only 20 minutes. Master's and doctoral-level therapists charge less than psychiatrists do for hourly services and are used by employees more frequently for traditional counseling or psychotherapy.

Stress Tips from the Field. . .

Try this stress management tip for getting more oxygen and practicing deeper breathing during the day at work: Get a file sticker (a colored one is ideal) or Post-It® note and write the word "BREATHE" on it. Put this sticker someplace in your office or work area out of direct sight, but someplace where you will see it periodically during the day. During your day let this sticker be a reminder to check your breathing and to practice taking deep, slow, and satisfying breaths. This is a good, simple, technique for managing stress!

On-Time Team Tips

Tired of coworkers coming to meetings late? Establish a tradition of having *all* on-time peers (not the supervisor) give feedback to stragglers at every meeting by saying, "You're late." This way, you may be able to cure a tardiness problem, even if it has plagued your group for years. Group members will come to meetings on time just to avoid the feedback from peers. Start your meetings EXACTLY on time (this is critical to the intervention). This technique worked so well for patients who chronically came late to patient group meetings at the Arlington Hospital in Arlington, Virginia, that some local businesses adopted it!

Two Brains Are Better Than One

Brainstorming is the well-known technique in which creative solutions or answers to complex problems are discovered by having everyone in a group generate uncensored ideas — no matter how wacky or implausible — so that the one best answer is identified. This is called a brainstorming session. Now try "brainwriting." First popularized in Germany in the 1970s, this less familiar technique avoids limitations of brainstorming and, as numerous studies have shown, produces more ideas. The average: about 100 ideas among six people in 20 minutes!

How to do it. . .

Each person in a group writes down an idea on a note card or a piece of paper and passes it to the person on their right. The person receiving the card or piece of paper can 1) use the other person's idea as a stimulus for a new idea, 2) use the other person's ideas to think of a modification, or 3) just pass the card on to the next person. The rotation of cards continues uninterrupted for 20 minutes. They are then collected and evaluated.

Brainwriting eliminates two glitches of brainstorming: inhibition of the group members caused by fear of criticism. (Brainstorming is never supposed to include the critiquing of any participant's ideas, but this happens more often than not.) And, influence caused by the presence of a supervisor, which can naturally cause members to hold back or offer only ideas that would meet with the supervisor's approval.