

# THE FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE

Wellness, Productivity & You!

E.A.S.E. Inc. • (800) 654-9778 • www.easeeap.com

## Hot Headed or Heart Healthy?

Researchers studied 1,081 older men and found that those who were quick to anger were more likely to have bodily physiological responses that interfered with the ability to ward off heart disease. Such persons had a greater increase in blood pressure in mildly irritating, social situations than persons not easily angered.

Some studies have shown that heart disease is more common among those suffering from depression. Anger and irritability can be symptoms of depression. So, if you struggle with being quick to anger, but can't admit it, consider this: It might be a symptom of depression — a very treatable health problem.

*Jan/Feb 2000, Journal of Psychosomatic Research*

## Managing Stress With All the Right Pieces

Want a better stress management program? Consider whether you are missing any pieces. Almost all stress management techniques will focus on one of the following areas: improving sleep management, re-considering diet and nutrition, beginning or increasing exercise, talking about stress with others, and detaching from the source of stress, if only temporarily. Examining gaps or making improvements in any of these five areas can help you manage personal stress more effectively.



## Sleep & Dreams

When you go to sleep, your brain forms memory traces that enable you to retain and process things you have learned or experienced during the day. If you have a job where you routinely witness traumatic events, good sleep and dreaming is crucial to helping you process this critical stress. This plays an important role in reducing your risk of acquiring posttraumatic stress disorder, a healthcare condition resulting from unresolved trauma.

*Advice:* Intervene with factors that disturb effective sleep to stay healthy. *Examples:* depression, financial worry, stressful personal life events, marital and other relationship problems, interruptions to your exercise routine, and alcohol before bedtime.

## Is It Really ADD?

Much has appeared in the media about adult Attention Deficit Disorder or ADD. (Also called ADHD or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder when hyperactivity is the predominant complaint.) Adults with ADD often complain of inattention, disorganization, carelessness about surroundings or belongings, an inability to concentrate, procrastination, and distractibility.

However, these may also be symptoms of depression. According to a Johns Hopkins University study of self-referred adults seeking help for ADD, only 4 out of 33 actually had the condition. The rest were suffering from depression, but didn't know it. Concerned? The EAP can help.

*Medical Post, Vol. 33, No. 9*

## Better Questions Better Answers

Stay away from ineffective and “backward focused” questions such as “Why?” “Who did it?” and “What’s the problem?” This is the advice of Ed Oakley and Doug Krug, two power consultants promoting the idea of using “effective questions” that are “forward focused” to solve complex human problems. Human beings are naturally inclined to focus on the “problem” in any given situation. This is a survival-driven behavior to attack the cause of pain. However, it locks people out of finding more satisfying solutions to problems.

“Focusing on the negative locks us out of solutions like drifting off the highway when taking your eyes off the road,” says Krug. In their book, *Enlightened Leadership*, they believe all of society would change for the better with an “effective questions” approach to problems.

Examples of effective questions include: 1) “What is already working?” or “What are our strengths?” “Where are we successful?” and “Where do we agree?” 2) “What specifically causes it to work?” 3) “What is our objective, goal, or vision?” 4) “What would be the benefits to the customers, the organization, the department, ourselves, of reaching our goal?” 5) “What specifically can we do more of, better, or differently to begin moving toward our goal?”

*Adapted from Enlightened Leadership: Getting to the Heart of Change*

## Employees Ask About EAP and Coworkers

Q. My stress comes from others in my office. I am also a customer service representative. I can’t bring the people that cause me stress to the EAP, so how can the EAP help?

A. Two things — having to deal with difficult people and choosing how to deal with them — cause the degree of stress that you experience. The EAP can help you with the second part. Help may lead to improvements in the personal organization of your work, the development of better techniques for getting along with others, finding a balance between your work and personal life, and improvement in how you manage your time. Any of these things may help you manage stress better without the people around you changing at all.

## Head for the LIGHT!

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of major depression that recurs at times of the year when there are more cloudy days or less light. Symptoms may persist until spring. People who live in northern areas of the country may experience more symptoms than those who live in other regions. Symptoms include sadness, changes in appetite or weight, sleep problems, lack of energy, diminishing energy, problems concentrating, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, lack of interest in activities, or suicidal thoughts.

If you have experienced this pattern, the EAP can help you find the right treatment. Unique approaches to help those affected by SAD include medical recommendations to use a “light box” that exposes one to full-spectrum light that replicates the daylight of a sunny day.

## New Year’s Resolution Solutions

If you made New Year’s resolutions and are still hanging in there after a couple of weeks, fantastic! Studies show that most of us do make New Year’s resolutions, but have trouble working steadily toward these goals. The most popular resolutions are to spend less money, stop smoking, lose weight, exercise, and eat better.

If you are slipping a bit, you may have omitted measurable strategies and tactics. If you decide to lose weight, for example, make a part of that goal to consume less sugar. This is a measurable tactic toward your goal. If you want to save more for retirement, choose the amount, method, and the way to record it. Goals are things you want. Strategies and tactics are things you do.