

THE FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE

Wellness, Productivity & You!

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Stress Between the Ears

Stress researcher, Hans Selye, wrote "It is not stress that kills us, it is our reaction to it." He showed that deciding to react differently to stress can often prevent its negative effects.

Three steps help develop this skill:

- (1) Increase personal awareness of stress. Decide *you will* prevent its undesirable effects.
- (2) Reinterpret stressful events and see them as opportunities. Selye observed that those who coped with stress without dire physiological consequences saw crises as constructive challenges.
- (3) Act "upstream." With awareness in hand, take steps early to feel more in control of stressful events.

Those who managed stress well also took steps to avoid feeling overwhelmed by it.

EAPs are Callback Careful

Q. If I call the EAP and leave my phone number, how will the EAP avoid speaking to someone else in my office or at my home when they call back?

A. The EAP has procedures to avoid breaking your confidentiality on a return call. They can explain the procedures or steps they use. Help the EAP by making sure you specify callback instructions if you leave a message. For example, consider making arrangements for a callback at a time when you will be alone.

Mold, Fear It or Forget It?

The National Centers on Disease Control and Prevention say there is little proof that household molds cause serious health problems. The American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) agrees. "Toxic black mold" is a media-created term says AIHA. The term usually refers to one type of greenish-black mold called *Stachybotrys chartarum*. Effects of breathing it may produce cold-like symptoms, but other effects are inconclusive. More is known about what happens when people accidentally eat mold than when they breathe it.

Source: *The Facts about Mold, AIHA, www.AIHA.org*

Decreasing Binge Drinking

The Centers for Disease Control says binge drinking by young people ages 18-20 is up 56% since 1993. Intervention is difficult with this group, however the following steps can help reduce the incidents of poor drinking choices, especially when that person is dependent on his or her parents – like a college student:

- (1) Tell your son or daughter you disapprove of underage drinking.
- (2) Avoid the tales about your own college drinking. It leads to the appearance of passive approval.
- (3) Make sure your son or daughter understands that drinking alcohol in large quantities can kill.
- (4) Set clear expectations about academic and personal development.
- (5) Provide early education about family susceptibility to alcoholism, if any, based upon family history.

Source: *Adapted from Alcohol, Other Drugs, and College: A Parent's Guide, U.S. Dept of Education*

Getting More from Less

"Eighty percent of profits come from 20% of customers." "80% of a teacher's time is taken up by 20% of the students." "80% of this, is caused by 20% of that." These observations refer to the 80/20 Rule, also known as Pareto's Principle after Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), an Italian economist who observed the applicability of the principle in everything from economics to the productivity of beans in his garden.

The 80/20 Rule has enormous meaning for managing your time and your life. The 80/20 Rule says that 80% of your time is spent doing things that aren't as productive as the other 20%. Discover which of your activities are the "vital few," and separate them from "the trivial many." Do this often, and you will stay focused, reduce stress, increase productivity, save money, increase profits, help more people, find more solutions and accomplish more goals.

Is My Child Depressed?

Young children are not very capable of describing how they feel. This makes it difficult and confusing to determine if they are suffering from depression. Start thinking about the need for an evaluation (and how the EAP can help) when you see your child experiencing lengthy periods of sadness, crying easily, losing pleasure or interest in activities, turning away friends, worrying and behaving irritably, withdrawing and having fits of anger when distressed.

Rudeness in America

A large national study on "rudeness" reported that 79% of survey participants say lack of respect and courtesy should be regarded as a serious national problem, and most say it's getting worse. Forty six percent of those surveyed said bad service drove them out of a store in the past year. Seventy seven percent said it was common for sales people to act like "the customer is not even there." On the other side of the coin, 74% say they often see customers treating salespeople rudely. The most frequently cited cause: 84% of survey participants believe parents are not teaching respect to their kids.

Source: Aggravating Circumstances: A Status Report on Rudeness in America, 2002, www.PublicAgenda.org

Quick! Give a Speech

Will you be asked without warning to give a speech someday? Make it memorable for the right reasons with these tips for putting a speech together in less than five minutes.

- (1) Remember this famous formula for virtually all speeches: "First, tell them what you are going to tell them. Second, tell them. And third, tell them what you told them."
 - (2) Think about your audience and their needs. Then decide on a single purpose for your speech. How do you want your audience to benefit from it?
 - (3) Decide on three to four points and present them in ascending order of interest with the best said last. Give each point a number as you present them in the speech.
 - (4) Start the speech with an attention-grabbing statement. A well-delivered joke is effective, but not critical. Avoid using humor if it feels awkward.
 - (5) Use simple language. John F. Kennedy was a master at short and easily understood speeches. Here is an example from a speech where he challenged America to put a man on the moon before 1970: "We choose to do these things and the other things not because they are easy, but because they are hard."
 - (6) End in a memorable way with a concluding statement.
 - (7) Stay on task by remembering that "all speeches are too long."
- What if your fear of speaking in public is getting in the way of your success? Talk to your EAP. Resources may exist in your community including coaching, public speaking clubs, personal counseling, and other options.