

THE FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE

Wellness, Productivity & You!

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Hypnosis Not a Mystery

Hypnosis – for many people the word conjures up a person in a trance on a stage. Unfortunately, such spoofs have given hypnosis a bad reputation. In reality, hypnosis is a skill – self-taught or learned from a mental health professional – to produce a state of relaxation that enables a person to pay complete attention to suggestions he or she wishes to implant. One common use of hypnosis is helping smokers quit. Other uses for hypnosis include goal achievement, building confidence and reducing stress. Do you have a goal that could be accomplished by learning hypnosis? The EAP can help you decide, and if appropriate, find a mental health professional that can teach you the skill.

“Conduct Unbecoming”

In a new era of ethical scrutiny, more organizations are worrying about the behavior of employees – both on- and off-duty. Could your off-duty behavior harm your organization’s reputation? This is often called “conduct unbecoming.” Know your company’s policies on conflicts of interest, off-duty activities, and trouble with the law. One definition of conduct unbecoming: conduct that adversely affects the morale, image, integrity, operations, or the good order and efficiency of the employer; or adversely affects, lowers, or destroys respect and confidence in the organization or the employee.

Seated Massage

Corporate massage (or seated massage) is a progressive, hands-on approach to workplace stress management. It is performed in a special chair that supports the body in a relaxed, upright position. Employees are fully clothed and able to take part in a seated massage without any preparation. If you have ever had a massage, you undoubtedly remember it. Therapeutic massage professionals who offer onsite seated massage services are as close as your phone book and they aren’t expensive. Consider a seated massage for events like health fairs, morale days, staff meetings, corporate gifts, birthdays or awards for work groups. Your EAP may be able to help you find a suitable service or massage professional through its many community contacts.

Predatory Lenders!

You’ve heard the commercials and gotten email solicitations – refinance before the rates go up! Beware of credit scams. Before you sign on the bottom line, check out the consumer complaints against lenders. You will find a growing list at www.ConsumerAffairs.com. Although you won’t be able to judge the lender from a specific complaint, you will know what to look out for.

Inside Your HMO's Guidelines

Some relief from the gnawing worry of whether your doctor or HMO is doing everything possible to treat your healthcare condition appears to be on the way. Kaiser Permanente, America's largest HMO, will soon post guidelines for the treatment of hundreds of diseases and conditions on their web site, www.kaiserpermanente.org. If you are a Kaiser customer, you can use the information to assess the treatment you are getting. Posting the information is part of a settlement of two consumer lawsuits. It is not unusual for healthcare organizations, agencies and associations to produce recommended guidelines for the treatment of healthcare conditions, but few are available to the public, and when they are, they can be hard to find. Another source of guidelines for diseases and health conditions is the National Guidelines Clearinghouse at www.guideline.gov. Operated by the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the clearinghouse posts treatment guidelines that have been agreed upon by various groups. The American Medical Association and the American Association of Health Plans, a managed care trade group, co-sponsor the web site. If you are concerned about the quality of your care, visit the site to see a vast collection of preferred treatment approaches for almost any physical or mental illness. You can then determine what might be missing from your care.

Furious Customer FIRST AID

Few things are as stressful as facing customer fury. Try this soothe-and-diffuse technique: 1) Communicate with your customer in a calm way your perception of what you think is correct or fair. 2) Allow the customer to do the same. 3) Validate the customer's concerns by demonstrating empathy, not necessarily agreement. Example: "Yes, I can see how you thought those shirts were 50% off." Studies show most customers are reasonable -- it's recognition of their frustration that they really seek. 4) *Powerful, but not for the faint of heart*: Allow the customer to question your judgment without getting rankled.

Your Evaluation

Evaluate your last performance evaluation with the following eight guidelines. Discuss any possible improvements with your evaluator. 1) The meeting was scheduled in advance with sufficient time for each party to prepare. 2) Your evaluator was prepared for the meeting. (All forms and documents, with copies for you, were available.) 3) The meeting was held in a comfortable, private room. 4) The meeting was not interrupted by phone calls or visits. 5) The evaluation came one year after the previous one. 6) The meeting was concluded in a professional manner. 7) Your evaluator followed-up after the evaluation to discuss any unfinished business. 8) Mutually agreed-upon performance goals for the upcoming year were discussed and documented as a precursor to preparing for next year's evaluation.

Could You Use an Addictionologist?

Since 1986, the American Medical Society on Addiction Medicine (ASAM) has awarded certification to doctors in addiction medicine

— addictionologists. ASAM is the nation's medical specialty society dedicated to educating physicians and improving the treatment of individuals suffering from alcoholism and other addictions. Still in short supply, only about 3,000 physicians are certified. All ASAM doctors have primary specialties other than addictions. Many specialize in internal medicine, cardiology or psychiatry. This makes them good collaborators in intervening with medical conditions caused or exacerbated by existing addictions. Finding an ASAM doc is easy. Contact www.ASAM.org or your EAP.