

Working With EASE

Wellness, Productivity & You!

EASE, Inc. your employee assistance program is a free, confidential counseling service which provides:

- 24 hour a day access to licensed counselors at (800) 654-9778
- Free individual, marital or family counseling for employees and their dependents
- Information and resources on our website: www.easeap.com

Secrets of Top Performers

You worked hard to acquire the education and skills to compete in the challenging world of work, but do you also possess the winning behaviors valued by employers (often more than some skills)? Here are five winning behaviors that will help guarantee that next job or promotion: 1) Showcase your motivation, and how you can muster up your own determination to get things done. 2) Demonstrate your competence by showing that you routinely achieve your employer's expectations. 3) Do more work than required; it demonstrates your ambition. 4) Gain a reputation for owning your mistakes. Stuff happens. When it does, make no excuses. 5) Exhibit your ability to anticipate problems before they occur.

April is National Alcohol Awareness Month

This promotion encourages local communities to focus on alcoholism and alcohol-related issues with the goal of helping reduce the stigma of alcoholism and its treatment. Alcohol addiction crosses all socioeconomic boundaries and affects both men and women, and every ethnic group. Learn more about helping yourself, a family member, or friend by contacting the EAP. Incidentally, denial is still the major obstacle to treatment for alcoholism—individuals often refuse to consider that alcohol use can be the root cause of their problems.

Source: National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

Avoiding A Team Takeover

When one or two members of your team dominate discussions, you risk losing one of the most important reasons for having a team—more ideas and opinions. The solution? Create a time limit on how long someone can talk. The secret: make it a group norm (a rule that everyone agrees to) that tactful reminders about the time limits are acceptable, so the group benefits from everyone's participation.

Work-Life Balance: The "Carve Out" Strategy

If you find yourself postponing taking that new bicycle for a spin or waiting until everything else is "off your plate" before going fishing, you probably don't view improving your personal well-being as a priority. *Carve out some time to make it happen.* It's that simple. When you doze off at your desk, become easily distracted, or procrastinate on work tasks, your body may be seeking its own balance. Take back control of your life (and your health!) with purposeful recreation and leisure breaks from work-related stress. You'll feel more energized, you'll get more done, and you will discover the benefits of a correct work-life balance.

Keeping Your Hot Buttons on Ice

Sometimes the workplace feels like home, especially if the personalities of our coworkers become as familiar as those of family members. We may then be tempted to push colleagues' "hot buttons" and communicate or behave in ways that create annoyance and aggravation, or provoke back-and-forth, less than civil behavior in the workplace. This common struggle among coworkers makes books about dealing with "difficult people" popular. So how do you keep your cool when a coworker knows how to be as annoying as your kid brother? While avoidance works, it may not always be practical. It is better to develop coping skills to help you understand your own behavior in the workplace. Ask yourself: do you act or react? Choosing to respond to toxic communication, rather than reacting to it with a knee-jerk style, empowers you to make personal changes, de-escalate conflict, and reduce feelings of victimization. Getting a grip on what "sets you off" also helps you take back control of your responses and inoculates you against future incidents. Learn to interrupt the cycle of incivility that could one day lead to violence in the workplace. To avoid pushing buttons, say what you mean and be honest, seek more advice than you offer, and avoid making assumptions about your coworkers and their motives.

Symptoms of Gang Involvement

As your child matures, drugs and alcohol are not the only dangers you must watch for. You must also be aware of the potential for gang involvement. Signs your child may be involved include the following: secrecy about activities away from home; new, uncomfortable friends in their life; possession or use of weapons; a new "street" name; graffiti on personal belongings; gang symbol tattoos or drawings on their skin; lower school grades or declining interest in school activities; diminished interest in the family; possession of unexplained money or things they can't afford; wearing the same colors every day or wearing certain articles of clothing specifically to one side; and negative contact with law enforcement officials. If you notice these types of changes, seek help for gang intervention, available through your child's school as well as through local law enforcement agencies.

When Socializing Brings Suffering

Social phobia is an anxiety disorder where the sufferer feels overwhelming anxiety and excessive self-consciousness in everyday social situations. People suffering from social phobia feel intense fear of being watched and judged by others, of being embarrassed, or of humiliating themselves. Social phobia means more than being shy. Sufferers of social phobia cannot relax or enjoy themselves in public. The fear may be so powerful that it interferes with family life, work, school, or other activities that everyone else completes without a second thought. Effective treatment exists, however, and you can learn more from the EAP.

Grief: Many Keys, No Shortcuts

Eventually we all experience the loss of someone or something so important to us that life seems forever changed, and we respond with grief. Nothing prepares us for grief or equips us with ways of avoiding or shortcutting it, but we can learn to cope through understanding. Grief is your natural, normal response to your loss. It is not a mental illness or a psychological problem. There is no "correct" way to grieve and different people may experience grief in individual ways. Moreover, as it is a powerful emotion, grief may eventually result in positive and personal growth. Until then, you cannot simply treat your grief as if it were a minor illness, soon to be gone. "Grief work" allows you to take charge of it and, in time, it will become less painful. If you are struggling with your grief, you may find that support groups and counselors who specialize in grief and bereavement can be enormously beneficial. The EAP can help you find them, as well as offer you other resources.