

**Working with EASE****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, couples or family counseling for employees and their dependents
- Information and resources on our website: [www.easecap.com](http://www.easecap.com)

### Smart Steps to Prevent Cancer

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**Because almost half of all cancer deaths** are preventable, choosing low-risk behavior promotes good health. Aside from the obvious culprit—smoking—your nutrition and exercise habits also play a key role. By maintaining a proper weight, which means staying within your recommended body mass index (BMI), you guard against colon, breast and prostate cancer. See [www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi](http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi) to compute your BMI. Also, ask your doctor to set a timetable for scheduling cancer-related screening tests. Examples: A colonoscopy can catch colorectal cancer in its early stages, and a qualified doctor can conduct a skin exam—and remove potentially cancerous moles—to protect against possible melanoma. You should also use sun block (even on overcast days) and inspect your own skin monthly for new moles, freckles or blemishes that change in size, shape or color.

### Formula for Family Meetings

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**If life seems so rushed** that it feels like you are passing family members like ships in the night, here are some tips for conducting a family meeting that may help you not miss the boat when it comes to getting time together to discuss important issues in everyone's life. 1) Carve out the time for a family meeting. Make this time regular and make meetings official. Establish three group traditions: No interrupting another person who is talking. No using shared information against a family member. No using family meetings regularly to discuss only difficult and emotionally draining topics. Mix family meetings with positive and enjoyable topics or plans. Keep a diary for an exciting look back over the years. Make meetings fun by having snacks, fun things to do and changing the meeting location.

### Take Breaks that Energize You

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**The way you spend your breaks** can either energize you or sap your strength. If you take a brisk walk around the block for 15 minutes in the morning and again midafternoon, the fresh air and exercise will arouse your senses and make you feel refreshed. You'll return with heightened awareness and a sense of well-being. If you prefer, devote your morning break to physical exercise and your afternoon break to mental exercise. Give yourself a fun cognitive workout using a brainteaser book. Flexing your mental muscles can carry over into your work and help you think more creatively. Conversely, if you habitually smoke and drink caffeinated beverages during your breaks, you will undermine your health. Any temporary pleasure they provide will be offset by the long-term harm they cause. And chat with positive people, not malcontents, to nourish your good mood.

### Welcome Criticism With an Open Mind

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**Impress your boss** by listening to criticism and asking clarifying questions to confirm that you understand. Then map out a strategy to apply the suggestions and follow through. Your ability to learn from even harsh or painful feedback—and act on it—will separate you from those who react defensively. Arguing only makes matters worst. If you think someone's giving you invalid or misguided input, ask for examples in an earnest, nonthreatening tone. It's fine to express genuine confusion at the criticism, but withhold final judgment until you allow others to cite evidence. Most important, don't interrupt. Let the comments sink in before you respond.

## Win with Positive Influence

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**When you participate in a project team**, use “positive influence” to earn your peers’ respect. How? Communicate shrewdly by looking for opportunities to recognize excellent comments by others and tie them to your ideas. Example: “Chris, that’s a great concept! And we can maximize its impact by...” Before you offer a controversial opinion, review the facts and confirm everyone’s agreement. Once you get their heads nodding in unison with your unbiased summary of the issue, you’re in a better position to propose bold solutions without triggering undue resistance. Make every word count when you speak. Don’t go off on tangents, tell meandering anecdotes, or overly repeat yourself. By expressing yourself with clarity and brevity, you hold everyone’s attention and prevent misunderstandings. If a team member says something that you deem wrong or upsetting, let the speaker finish before you respond. Positive influence is a skill for winning relationships.

## Halloween Safety Tips

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**Before your children don costumes** and start trick-or-treating, feed them dinner. You want them full when they knock on doors so that they’re not as tempted to consume candy right away. Set a rule that they won’t eat munchies as they go. This way, you can review their collection of sweets when they return home. Discard any food that isn’t commercially wrapped and inspect every item for possible tampering. Beware of pinholes or tears in wrappers and packaging that looks discolored or feels abnormal. If small children will be eating the snacks, weed out the gum, peanuts or hard candies that pose choking risks. If cider is served at Halloween parties, check the label to see if it’s pasteurized.

## Adopt Safe Practices at Work

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**Workplace safety benefits everyone:** You avoid painful and possibly disabling injuries, and your employer avoids costly workers’ compensation insurance claims. By diligently following safety precautions, you can prevent accidents that can harm yourself and others. Before you use any equipment or operate machinery, make sure you understand how to use it properly. Know what safety gear to wear—from goggles to face masks to fire-retardant protective clothing—and check that everything fits properly. In work environments with active loading and unloading facilities, remain attentive to what’s going on around you. If you use heavy equipment, review a checklist of safe practices first. Create your own cheat sheet and refer to it regularly to remind yourself how to operate high-powered tools, agricultural implements or sharp objects. If you notice a hazard, such as an unusually wet or slippery floor, use cones or other markers to alert others and then notify your supervisor. Even if you’re careful, your colleagues’ unsafe behavior can put you at risk. Confirm that safety instructions are provided in your co-workers’ primary languages so that everyone knows what’s expected of them. Participate, and encourage others to participate in safety training programs; many workers’ compensation insurers provide knowledgeable speakers, posters and videos, free of charge, that educate employees on tips to prevent accidents.

## EAPs and Family

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**When problems arise with a family member**, from depression to substance abuse, the EAP can help. Everything you say in the EAP is safeguarded by strict confidentiality laws, so it’s a safe way to vent your anxiety and get constructive ideas for what to do next. The EAP can guide you and your family member to community resources that can provide information, treatment and support. Remember: It’s fine to visit the EAP for personal problems that have nothing to do with work.