

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 Web site: www.easeeap.com

Pathways to Powerful Public Speaking

Meet your goal of becoming an effective public speaker by understanding what is included in good public speaking and recognizing a couple of myths. The most common roadblock to public speaking is fear of making a mistake or of embarrassment. What you may not know is that the key to great public speaking is not avoiding these things, but overcoming them with class when they happen. For some public speakers, normal mistakes become spontaneous entertainment and can add to their desirability as speakers. Try incorporating the following desirable traits of public speakers or use it as a checklist to assemble your presentation; you will increase the likelihood of getting invited back as well as earning a good reputation.

- 1) Enlightening your audience with things they don't know about or connections they have not made regarding your topic.
- 2) Entertaining with your presentation (not the same as a joke) to keep people focused.
- 3) Provoking thought in your audience by what you say or offer.
- 4) Educating and providing useful information your listeners have not heard before, which can be applied to their lives once they leave.
- 5) Adding a story to illustrate a point.
- 6) Being appropriate but provocative in material you present.

There are hundreds of resources on improving public speaking, and the above are only a few tips. Consider talking to the EAP about your fear of public speaking and discover whether other resources would be recommended to help you reach your goal.

Families Facing Deployment Stress



Military families experience increased stress that results from separation due to deployment. Uncertainties regarding future communications with family and friends, reunification, and challenges faced by one parent playing the part of two, are just a few of the issues deployment stressed families must cope with on a daily basis. The EAP can be a helpful resource available to support you. Emotional problems can increase during deployment periods. The EAP can help you and find support and resources in your community.

Exercise Even If You Smoke

Don't put off your fight to quit smoking ahead of starting an exercise program. Start exercising now—especially if you smoke. Exercise could help delay the deterioration of your lungs from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Smoking and exercise are not great go-together activities, but a large research study found that those with COPD had less deterioration of lung functioning from the disease if they maintained moderate-to-high levels of exercise. COPD is usually caused by cigarette smoking. Ask the EAP for referrals to helpful stop-smoking resources in your community.

Your First Hundred Days



Are you still sticking with your New Year's resolution if you made one about 100 days ago? If you don't have an organized way to track your progress and reinforce your success, things may have gotten off track. Get re-energized with this free goal tracker that keeps whatever you are trying to accomplish directly in front of you with check-in charts, progress monitoring, and even a reminder in your e-mail in-box if you fail to check in and click away on your progress. Find it at www.joesgoals.com.

Using Pen Power to Fight Stress



If you haven't tried "expressive writing" or "journal therapy" as a stress management technique, maybe you should, because more than one research study has supported its powerful effects on well-being. The benefit appears to come from the technique's ability

to pinpoint the issues that trouble you most. Some professionals believe the process can help boost immune system function by reducing stress. The technique is to spend thirty minutes a day, a few times a week, writing whatever comes to your mind that is associated with a worrisome issue. The target of your pen could be your innermost thoughts, feelings, hopes, fears, dreams—nothing is off limits. Grammar and spelling don't matter—what counts is going with the flow.

Mental Health Day Again

Harris Interactive's annual survey of unscheduled absences shows that unscheduled days off by employees are higher now than at any time since 1999. Unscheduled absences include personal illness, but only 30% of employees reported really being sick. Instead, they report taking time off due to family issues, personal needs, stress, or because they simply felt they "deserved" it. The key indicator linked to unscheduled absences in the survey is low morale in the work unit. Unscheduled absences or "mental health days" may feel like a quick fix, but it is not the cure that you and the EAP could discover together by discussing issues troubling you. Give us a call.

Do-It-Yourself Conflict Resolution

Learning some simple conflict resolution techniques can prevent minor conflicts with coworkers from turning into larger disputes. Try "validation." Validating is acknowledging the feelings of your coworker with whom you have a disagreement. This technique takes practice because you will feel like you are "giving in" to the other person's point of view. However, validation is not about putting aside your disagreement. Instead, you are acknowledging that the other person's point of view is respected and understood. The more you can zero in on your coworker's feelings, the better. For example, rather than saying, "Forget it, Jane! This project can't wait until after the holidays," start with, "Jane, are you feeling uneasy about rushing this project to completion before the holidays because it will put too much stress on our team?" This is not a psychology ploy. This is communication that throws game playing out the window and helps others feel respected, something all of us want from our coworkers at work. The outcome is higher productivity.

Spring Break: Yes, Say Something About Alcohol



Ignore that inner voice that says your son or daughter in college won't listen to your discussion about alcohol before he or she heads off on a spring break trip. Spring break is a carefree time away from classroom pressures, but unfortunately for many, it is also a time of excessive drinking and dealing with its aftermath—violence, sexual aggression, and even death. Take the opportunity to talk with your son or daughter about the consequences of drinking. If you only have a few moments before the listening time runs out, focus on how alcohol affects the body and how long these effects can last.