

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.easeeap.com

Employees Ask about the EAP

Q. My supervisor referred me to the EAP and she asked that I sign a release. Signing a release is voluntary, correct?

A. Signing a release, like participation in an employee assistance program, is voluntary. EAPs operate under a doctrine universal to the helping professions, called “client self-determination.” That’s a technical way of saying, “It’s your life, you decide.” A release only provides for specific information to be shared with one person, with your permission—usually that you have visited the EAP or have agreed to some recommendation (but not specifically what that recommendation is). Releases aid communication, and they are first and foremost beneficial to employees. While working on your improved performance, would you like your supervisor to know that you accepted his or her referral to the EAP? A release lets that happen.

Office Politics Here to Stay

Choose better strategies for coping with office politics.

- 1) Practice compartmentalization—be totally professional at work and rely less on work for your most important social needs. You will detach and stay out of the political fray.
- 2) Maintain your employer’s perspective—put the employer’s needs first. The needs in #1 above will then be less likely to conflict.
- 3) Thinking win-win. It will cure almost any bad habit associated with negativity, criticism, defensiveness, provocation, or the inability to be assertive with coworkers.

Children of Alcoholics Week

It’s estimated that one in four American children is exposed to a family alcoholism problem, and countless others are affected by familial drug abuse and addiction. These young people are at increased risk of a range of problems, including physical illness, emotional disturbances, and lower educational performance. The week in which February 14 falls is observed to create awareness of this national problem. Those who touch the lives of these children are encouraged to help break through shame, silence, and isolation to support them. Talk to the EAP about resources in your community that can help you do this. Learn more at www.ncadi.samhsa.gov.

Laughter in the Workplace

A new study says that laughter is contagious. If that’s true, then it’s definitely something you want to catch. Studies point to laughter’s ability to improve morale and health, even to lower turnover rates. You can make laughter a more frequent occurrence by pointing out laughable events when they happen. Reduce self-restraint a bit and you will see opportunities to laugh more frequently. Hang out with employees who laugh. They often hang out with each other. Don’t forget to laugh at yourself—a tough assignment if you are wrestling with fear and insecurity, but practice it anyway. Much workplace humor involves harmless mistakes made in front of others.

Getting Kids to Do Chores around the House

For many parents, the easiest way to get children to do chores around the house is to say, “Do it—now.” An alternative is to help children learn initiative and self-motivation—a desire to do chores. If you feel up to taking on this challenge, the cardinal rule is to make sure the children don’t learn from the frown on your brow that a chore is boring. Instead, replace that message with this one: how a task is exciting because of observable results (e.g., an orderly, clean room) and how positive one feels when chores are done. Talk about the feeling and point out what is accomplished. Children will draw the connection and acquire a proactive life skill. Add more: help children see an undone chore as a challenge. It may promote a different level of motivation for acquiring the powerful life skill of desiring an orderly world around oneself.

Next Time, You’ll Speak Up

Don’t kick yourself for not speaking up at the last meeting to share a great idea. Instead, understand what held you back, make some corrections, and then go for it at the next meeting. Not asserting your idea or opinion is probably rooted in a firm doubt that others want to hear what you have to say. Forget, for now, how you learned and reinforced this script. Spend the next week observing one important thing: how a majority of people demonstrate their obvious interest in *you*. Compliments, smiles, eye contact, asking for your opinion, people willing to do you a favor if asked or asking you to share the lunch hour with them—these all count. They are here-and-now behaviors that prove you are valued. Keep a journal and try the exercise for three days. Chances are you will be more confident by the next staff meeting.

Bouncing Back with Resilience

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from misfortune or change, and since 9/11, it’s a topic that has gained increased attention from sociologists. It’s a timely topic because we face an age of super-stress, with many personal threats such as the effects of war, financial insecurity, and family/social breakdown. Not everyone needs the same level of support when a crisis happens. And some, it appears, don’t need much at all. They rebound like a foam pillow and just “keep on truckin’.” These individuals are demonstrating *resilience*. What creates this resilience? And how can others get it? Here is what resilient people do and what you can do to bounce back faster from the toughest experiences life has to offer:

- 1) Foster social support and close “give-and-take” relationships.
- 2) Take care of your health, have a daily routine, and ensure structure and purpose in your life.
- 3) Detach from harmful influences, people, or events that interfere with or distract you from recovery after a crisis.
- 4) Have a forward-looking view of your life, and lock onto personal goals that you hold dear.
- 5) Have a plan to “fall back on,” or at least a solid idea of what you’ll do if the worst happens.
- 6) Cultivate a positive view of yourself and your life while maintaining a hopeful view of what the future will bring.