

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.easeeap.com

Negotiate Like a Champ

Negotiation is not a mystical potpourri of skills that will give you the ability to land a monstrous deal for your company or provide a sure-fire technique for getting a raise. It could do these things, but the truth is that negotiating is simply how humans interact. Expressing assertiveness, managing conflict, improving your marriage, or dividing up chores around the house can all benefit from understanding a few things about negotiating. Adopt these life skills and see what you gain: When negotiating, first decide that you won't demand anything. Next, decide on your bottom line. For example, what won't you give up? Is going on vacation to the ocean instead of the mountains the bottom line, or is it simply visiting the ocean soon? Both are similar and may meet your true need. Next, completely understand the needs and wants of the other person with whom you are negotiating. What is their bottom line? It may not really conflict with yours at all. Mutually understand each other's bottom lines. Make an agreement that the bottom lines, not the paths leading to them, are the most important issues between you and your partner. Agree to avoid anger and emotionalism to prevent your negotiation from being derailed. If you reach an impasse, take a break and start over.

Early Smoking: Trigger for Trouble

There is nothing new about teen smoking and its known role in facilitating the use of alcohol or other drugs. But what is new is that teen smoking may be more than a "gateway drug." It may actually groom the brain for susceptibility to alcoholism and other drug addictions later on. That's the conclusion of a recent study showing that teens who begin smoking before age 15 are five times more likely to have alcohol-related disorders by the ages of 18 to 21—compared to their teenage peers who also drink, but who started smoking only a couple years later!

Warn Teens About Predatory Drugs

Warn teenagers about "predatory drugs."

These are drugs with depressant effects or excitability and depressant effects that may be illegally manufactured or illegally smuggled into the country from Mexico or Europe. They have been notoriously used as aids to facilitate sexual assault. These drugs are virtually tasteless. Common predatory drugs include GHB, Ecstasy, Rohypnol, and Ketamine. There are many "street names" for these illicitly obtained substances, which are commonly referred to as "club drugs" because they are the ones most often found at nightclubs and all-night parties called "raves."

Other Back Injury Culprits

If you know how to properly lift a heavy object, you may still be at risk for a back injury if you don't know about the other four common causes of back injuries. These culprits get less publicity despite the damage they do—having poor posture, being in poor physical condition, using improper body mechanics (aligning the body correctly prior to performing a task), and moving too quickly when picking up a heavy object. Tips:

- 1) If you can slide it, don't lift it.
- 2) Pay attention to minor aches and pains before they become big ones.
- 3) Always ask, "Should I be getting help to lift this object?"

Don't Quit Your Job Yet!

If things aren't going well at work and you are thinking about quitting your job, a meeting with the EAP may help you decide. Common issues leading to a decision to quit that could benefit from a discussion with the EAP include the following:

- 1) You believe that your relationship with your supervisor is permanently damaged.
- 2) You've stopped having fun and enjoying your job.
- 3) You have behaved in ways that are considered improper at work (such as missing too many days, developing a reputation as a poor performer, or slacking off).
- 4) The stress level at work is so high that it is affecting your physical and mental health.

Get Fired Up for 2007

Even if New Year's resolutions are not your thing, you still want the coming year to be just as good, if not better, than last year. Every successful business plans its future, and you can too. Apply strategic planning to your personal life in the following ways:

- 1) Take time to think about your job, its importance, and its possible future role in your organization.
- 2) Zero in on identifying your personal strengths. Where do you have advantages in talent or ability compared to others?
- 3) Where are your talents and skills needed in your organization or industry?
- 4) Add to your skills and abilities so that you are clearly seen as an asset—a stronger and more desirable employee than last year.
- 5) During the year, gauge how you are perceived by the organization and make adjustments to stay in front and responsive to changes and its emerging needs.

Speak Up for Support

Don't struggle too long with problems you face on the job that are caused by things out of your control. If your job requires you to be responsible for tasks that are made difficult or impossible by a lack of readily available resources, failure to follow through by others, broken equipment, or insufficient training, don't find yourself in the awkward position, on the day of your performance review, asking for resources or explaining performance shortcomings. Speak up now. You may be the right fit for your job, but you also need the right tools. Many employees have to do more with less, but if you are unsure about your ability to perform a job or find it challenging to be assertive, you're less likely to speak up and discover if resources are available to you. Don't let these issues stand in your way. By far, most managers want their employees to be successful, but you must let them know your needs and what's keeping you from becoming a superstar.

Where has All the Motivation Gone?

Motivation is a feeling or desire that drives you to act. If you become "demotivated," a different feeling or belief takes over and fuels negativity to push you away from a desire to act. Stay goal-directed by discovering your limiting beliefs and taking appropriate *action steps* to deflect them. Consider these common demotivators and their interventions:

- 1) Fear of failure: Create a contingency plan.
- 2) Fear of making mistakes: See mistakes as "outcomes" not to be feared, but to be used as steps to success.
- 3) Must be "perfect": Give yourself acceptance for less than perfection.