

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

Build Your Immunity to Criticism



Although eagerly welcoming constructive feedback, employees who accomplish a lot on the job know their successes will sometimes rub others the wrong way. Not everyone will be quick to praise your triumphs when you are cast into the limelight by others who recognize your achievements. Learning to detach from unhelpful criticism is a skill to help you stay motivated, adapt to change, and think more creatively about your job. Try these “inoculators” to beef up your immunity:

- 1) Remember that those who criticize don't know the real you.
- 2) See negative criticism as possible validation that you are “on the right track.”
- 3) Accept criticism of your success as normal and part of life's challenges.
- 4) Search for the truth in the criticism, if any. Something about it may be helpful despite the style of its delivery.
- 5) Let criticism inspire you to work with even more vigor toward accomplishing your dreams, rather than forcing you into retreat.

Pay Attention to Accolades



Pay attention to moments of super satisfaction in your work expressed by customers and superiors. Ask yourself: What skills, abilities, or personality traits did I exhibit to earn this praise for my work? These are what make you unique and outstanding as a worker. Tuck these gems away so that you don't forget them. Use these descriptions of yourself in resumes and cover letters in the future. In job interviews, you'll sell yourself with believability.

Adapt to Technology and Thrive



Don't be overwhelmed by software related productivity tools that seem complicated now—like Web building software, software programs beyond MS Word, or discovering how to be effective with graphics programs. Learning these tools can only make you more desirable as an employee. Dependency on technology in the workplace is increasing, not decreasing, so remaining in denial rather than facing your diminishing ability to keep up will only increase workplace stress. As long as you get started, you will learn more each passing day.

Help Prevent Internet Harassment



Internet harassment or cyber-stalking is rapidly gaining attention as a serious crime in many states. Cyber-stalking is the intentional harassment or threatening of another person through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication. Online harassment is similar to real-world stalking in its ability to be extremely disturbing to the victim. Perpetrators take advantage of the anonymity of the online environment and its false sense of security to act anonymously and harass another person. These activities may include disturbing text messages, the sending of unwanted, abusive, threatening, or obscene e-mails or messages, or the use of Internet postings, message boards, or chat rooms to slander another person. For more information and tips on preventing cyberbullying visit Wired Safety online at: www.wiredsafety.org.

Affected by a Mentally Ill Family Member



Each year millions of people are diagnosed with mental illness. Family members commonly feel an overwhelming sense of helplessness and anxiety and may secretly blame themselves for the mental illness, believing that something they did caused it. Since family members are often the key to successful intervention, helping them cope is crucial to helping those with mental illness. To empower your ability to cope and intervene, do the following:

- 1) Learn about the mental illness, its signs and symptoms, including recurrence symptoms so you can act sooner to intervene.
- 2) Avoid falling into traps of shame and guilt. Reach out for support from professionals or self-help support groups.
- 3) Don't ignore the needs of children. Let them know they are not to blame for the mental illness, and provide information suitable to their ability to understand. This can help prevent self-blame into the future.
- 4) Understand the patient's responsibility for managing the illness—a key principle in chronic disease treatment. Work with professionals to appropriately reinforce the patient's management of the illness. Know the laws pertaining to involuntary hospitalization in case you need legal help.
- 5) Take care of yourself! Being affected by a family member with mental illness will take a toll on your own mental health. Schedule activities that are fun and also make sure you have social support.

2008: Eat Right, Exercise...Plan for Setbacks



If you're targeting improved personal health and wellness this year, plan ahead for intervention the moment a setback like a missed workout is experienced. You're highly motivated to stick with your resolution, but it may not last. It's normal, but you can act faster to intervene by not dismissing it and allowing it to snowball into inactivity as in years past. Plan your intervention now so you can improve your chances of climbing back into the saddle and going on. Don't rely upon pure willpower to rekindle your motivation. Instead, motivate yourself with fast, massive action by seeking help from companions and friends who share your goals, audio/visual material that motivates and reinforces your commitments, and other pre-planned inspirational inputs. Planning ahead for the "what-ifs" won't sabotage your efforts. It will make you feel more capable and less doubtful about your ability to meet your goal.

Shyness: Overcoming Over-Awareness



Shyness is a lack of confidence or a feeling of discomfort, embarrassment, or fear during social interactions. Shyness may inhibit a person so much that he or she has difficulty attaining professional or personal goals and may feel unhappy much of the time. Shyness may be mild or severe enough to create a social phobia. Research has shown about 50% of Americans report experiencing shyness. (*Psychology Today*; Nov/Dec 1995) Does shyness interfere with your goals, behaviors, and emotions? Are you more likely to agree with unfavorable statements about your performance, while dismissing the positive things people say about you? Make this your year to tackle shyness head-on. Start with a Web site called www.shyness.com. It has an excellent list of recommended self-help books. Many books, research discoveries, self-help guides, and specialized treatment programs have emerged to treat shyness in recent years. Step forward and claim the help.

Using Office Politics as a Positive Force



Negative experiences regarding office politics lead many employees to believe that politics is always a negative force in the workplace. Office politics can be disruptive to productivity, but it can also be a positive force. Politics is defined as shrewdness in managing, contriving, or dealing with people. Here's how to make that definition a positive force: Use free time at work to get to know a teammate better in order to foster a better working relationship. Examine why you dislike a coworker, and take steps to correct any problems you have with that person so you have an ally, not a foe. Form healthy alliances with others for succeeding with mutual goals. Lastly, nurture positive relationships, so you can work in harmony to create positive changes when they are needed.