

Working With EASE



EASE, your employee assistance program, is a free and 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.

The Hazard of Inactivity

As many as 50 million Americans are living sedentary lives, putting them at increased risk of health problems and early death, says the American Psychological Association. In a long-term study of more than 40,000 adults, 16 percent of deaths were directly related to sedentary living. This percentage did not include deaths complicated by other illnesses such as obesity, smoking, high cholesterol or diabetes. Plain and simple, a lack of exercise was the culprit. Men with moderate levels of exercise on average lived six years longer than sedentary men. Close examination of more than 14,000 women showed that active women were 55 percent less likely to die of breast cancer than women who were not in good shape.

"Sexting" with a Cell Phone

Sending sexually explicit images or photos via cell phone has been dubbed "sexting." It is a disturbing trend among young people that has made national news recently, and the dangers of this practice should be explained to them. Images can be uploaded from a phone to the Internet easily. From there, images can be downloaded anywhere in the world and exploited by pornography distributors. In one recent survey of young cell phone users, almost all had no idea that distributing or holding on to such images could be unlawful.

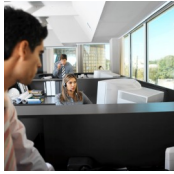
Time to Talk to the EAP

EAPs help employees with personal problems that may affect job performance. But what if you don't have a personal problem and just want to talk confidentially about what's "going on" in the office—worries about workplace trends, internal politics and related frustrations—or perhaps a work idea that you want to bounce off of a good listener? Is it appropriate to the call the EAP? Can these discussions also be confidential? Answer: Yes.

Fight the Recession with Good Customer Service

It's easy to feel helpless and unable to help your employer fight the recession. You may have overlooked one thing, however—providing good customer service. It could have a positive affect on your job security. During a recession, businesses that can stick it out usually gain market share. Even with zero growth, these businesses can be well-positioned when things turn around, having fewer competitors. Layoffs, furloughs, resource limitations, fear, and stress can test your optimism, but don't neglect the customer. Customer service heavily influences buying decisions. And word-of-mouth advertising is the most effective tool in your arsenal. You do have the power.

Obligated to Get Along



Getting along with coworkers is a lot like dealing with family. There are bound to be occasional squabbles, flare-ups and coworkers who remind you of relatives you try to avoid visiting. Certainly, you don't always have to love each other, but the truth is that you are obligated to get along at work. One powerful strategy for doing so is improving your "other-awareness" skills. Unlike the more familiar self-awareness, other-awareness is the degree to which you are tuned in to the environment and what others are feeling or needing. Simply asking is the fastest route to finding out, but the real world doesn't always work that way. You can't be a mind reader, of course, but you can practice reading the signals. Is your coworker tired, frustrated, rushed or experiencing anxiety? Is he or she avoidant and non-talkative, in need of space and privacy? This social skill takes practice, but the degree to which we possess it enables us to build better relationships. Ask yourself, "How are my other-awareness skills?" If you could use some skill building, take a day to notice the signals others send without spoken words.

Toxic Relationships



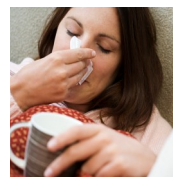
A toxic relationship is a relationship that doesn't work. It produces negative physical and mental health consequences for its partners. The relationship is not simply a pattern of repeating disagreements, bickering or periodic feelings of incompatibility. Instead, toxic relationships fuel worsening self-esteem and negative views of oneself. Fear of the other person because of physical, emotional or verbal abuse is not uncommon. Toxic relationships are not characterized by reciprocal "give and take" or "I/you" conversations. Interactions in which each party feels respected and supported, heard, and valued are rare to nonexistent. Feeling shackled by patterns of dysfunctional behavior that leave you feeling drained is more common. It can be difficult to come to terms with the fact that you are in a toxic relationship. And it can be even harder to determine what to do about it. You need support. A professional counselor, employee assistance professional, or other mental health professional can offer perspective and help. You can discover how to feel safe and explore whether there is some way to intervene and make the changes necessary to salvage the relationship.

Become an Expert at Using Waiting Time



How many months or years do we spend waiting? From DMV lines to doctors' offices waiting rooms, some social scientists figure it could be up to three years. You can't get your time back so get even. Start with a new attitude about waiting time. View it as a gift or unexpected opportunity to get something or a lot of things done to increase your personal productivity. Decide what types of tasks you want to do or complete while waiting. From adding phone numbers to your cell phone address book to creating a grocery list to listening to a self-development course on your iPod, waiting time can be your secret friend. To find the best activities, consider which tasks you are most likely putting off right now. They may be the best time-gap fillers with the highest returns, and may produce the best feelings for finally getting them knocked off your to-do list.

Swine Flu Facts



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has established a Web site (www.flu.gov) as the one-stop source for almost anything you can think of regarding the H1N1 influenza virus (swine flu). The Web site has news updates daily that can help you or your community better protect yourself and respond to a flu pandemic. Included are answers to dozens of common and not-so-common questions; facts and figures; reported cases and deaths; state-by-state information; action steps to prevent the spread of the virus in schools, workplaces and households; and much more. Flu fact: Those most vulnerable to H1N1 are younger people, pregnant women, health care personnel and people who have underlying health conditions.