

## 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.easeap.com](http://www.easeap.com).



### *Be Competitive, But Stay Healthy*

Do you view yourself as competitive? Competitive employees have enthusiasm, energy, and motivation to get a job done. They can be prized assets of an organization because they want to succeed. Opportunity to compete makes them work harder. Caution: 1) Don't be competitive for competition's sake. Use competitiveness to help you focus on producing something positive for the company or your coworkers. 2) Manage stress, and avoid the stress of competition that can adversely affect personal relationships, especially at home, or your physical and mental health. 3) Celebrate the success of coworkers with whom you compete. The true value in competition is bettering yourself, reaching your next goal, and winning for your employer. It's not about beating others.

### *Positive Anticipation Helps Manage Stress*

No matter how much you love your job, everyone needs healthy work-life balance to reduce stress. One way to achieve this balance is always having a non work-related activity planned that you are looking forward to. Sure, this could be a weeklong vacation to an exotic locale, but most of the time, this will probably mean penciling in outings close to home. The key is "positive anticipation." These activities should be fun and meaningful. So schedule your next break and watch your attitude improve.

### *Boost Creativity with a Positive Mood*

If you feel like you're lacking in the creativity department, it could be because of your mood. Research suggests that being in a positive mood can increase creativity, which frequently leads to creative problem solving and innovative ideas. Changing your mood is not as difficult or time consuming as you may think. Listen to upbeat music, watch a funny video, talk to a cheery coworker, or go to lunch at your favorite restaurant near work. When you achieve a brighter outlook, return to the task that requires your creative touch.

### *Find the Chunks in Your Chores*

Chunking is something you do every time you dial or memorize a telephone number — for example, 688-555-7402 is memorized like this: “688,” “555,” “7402.” It’s simply easier than memorizing like this: “6885557402.” You can do this with chores, as well, especially chores at home or work you especially dislike. Find the chunks in your chores and tackle them one at a time. Is the clutter in your garage about to explode? Tackle only the workbench, then the lawn tools later, and move the boxes last. One reason to put off tasks is their perceived size. To become a productivity machine and do more, chunk your chores.

### *Every Employee Can Be a Leader*

You can benefit from understanding and practicing leadership skills, even if you don’t have a manager’s job title. Do you have a willingness to share information, teach others what you know, and show others in your work unit how to perform a complicated task properly? Do you take initiative when something needs doing, urge others to pitch in, and demonstrate positivity in an effort to motivate your peers? Are you trusted because of your consistent follow-through and ability to think ahead and meet the needs of internal and external customers? Do you strive to learn more about your job and how to do it better? Do you view your coworkers as having valuable opinions and ideas? Do you withhold criticism in front of others, avoid the phrase “that’s not my job,” and avoid whining and complaining to peers? Do you share the glory and see your team as a powerful force greater than the sum of its individual members? If no one raises their hand to run with the ball when things get tough, do you? If you’re practicing these skills and behaviors, you’re a leader, no matter what your title.

### *The Science of Gratitude*

Practicing an attitude of gratitude appears to have a scientifically measurable positive impact for improving mood and facilitating resolution of a variety of life problems. If you have participated in a 12-step group or know someone who has, have visited with a mental health professional, or have taken advice from a self-help book, it’s likely that you have heard about or practiced the simple principle of “having an attitude of gratitude.” Those who practice gratitude tend to be more optimistic. And research shows this can contribute to improved health and maybe even longer life. Gratitude is a two-way street in the workplace. It benefits the person expressing gratitude as much as it does the recipient. Social scientists believe this may extend to improving productivity when gratitude is practiced between managers and employees; the payoff is more job satisfaction for both. This may lead to other outcomes such as loyalty, a desire to become more engaged with the organization, reduced absenteeism, and even a healthier bottom line. Source: <http://tiny.cc/gratitude-yes>.

### *Scheduling “Me” Time*

Finding private time each day for a healthy activity that helps you unwind is a powerful stress management and productivity enhancement technique. You may feel a little guilty at the thought of scheduling “me” time, but being “self-attentive” in this manner can reap huge rewards for you and others who love and depend on you. Whether you take a quiet bath or simply detach to read a favorite book for 15 to 30 minutes, you will rejuvenate yourself, find more creativity, gain motivation, and most importantly, dump that “I’m trapped” feeling. Find a healthy way to unwind and plan it into your day just like a business appointment. You’ll feel good about finding balance, and you’ll look forward to your next “me” time appointment.

### *Painkiller Addiction: Signs You May Have It*

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, there were 7 million abusers of prescription drugs in 2009. If you answer yes to even one of the following questions, meet with a qualified counselor or medical doctor, preferably one who specializes in addiction medicine. Do you doctor shop? (Doctor shopping is seeking out doctors who will prescribe what you want and refusing to see those who won’t, and preventing any one doctor from learning about the others.) Do you take risks with your

personal safety by going to places or seeing dangerous persons to acquire pills? If you do not have pills, do you borrow prescription medication from others or accept alcohol if drugs aren’t available. Have you pawned items in your home for cash in order to purchase pills? Do you postpone the idea of getting help, even after frightening experiences, falls, blackouts, or car accidents?

