

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.



Suffering with Codependency?

Codependency represents patterns of thinking and behaving that contribute to unhealthy communication, control and manipulation, and other types of dysfunctional interaction within relationships. Most people affected by codependency experienced dysfunctional communication in their childhood, and many report having lived with a person who was mentally ill or an alcoholic. Codependency interferes with one's ability to have an emotionally satisfying and mature relationship characterized by mutual positive regard and feelings of intimacy, safety, and security. Many professional counselors specialize in helping codependents. Treatment works. Awareness, changing behaviors, letting go, and increasing self-esteem are key. Could you be affected by codependency? You can obtain an extensive list of issues and behaviors that codependents often experience at <http://tiny.cc/codependent> or find out more from a mental health professional or your EAP.

February: Heart-Healthy Month

Did you know that people over age 75 or diabetics may not feel chest pain during a heart attack? Learn more at the new National Library of Medicine's heart-healthy education training module - <http://tiny.cc/love-your-heart>. The sound/animation tutorial discusses heart attacks, helping to prevent them, subtle signs and symptoms, and not confusing heart attacks with other types of pains in your body. This tutorial could not only help you or save a life, but reduce worry and confusion over heart health issues.

Using an Online Alarm to Keep You Focused

If you often miss appointments because you are too focused on another project in your office, especially an online project, go to www.onlineclock.net. Set the alarm for any interval and forget it. The alarm will let you know when the time is up. You can also use [onlineclock.net](http://www.onlineclock.net) to help you stay focused. If you must stay focused, but find yourself wandering online every five minutes, don't get frustrated. Instead, set the alarm to go off every 15 minutes. Like a friend, (or a watchdog) it will remind you to get back to your task!

Practicing Relationship Wellness

No one gets an instruction book the day they enter into a long-term relationship with someone they love, but a chapter in such a book might be titled: “Practicing Relationship Wellness.” Like physical wellness—the putting forth of effort to stay physically fit—relationship wellness is also achieved by a deliberate effort to stay “relationship fit.” Are you practicing relationship wellness? Over time, you may reduce the distress of relationship disintegration. Tone-up tips: 1) Recognize that a *deliberate effort* is normal and necessary to nurture a relationship. As time passes, this conscious preventive maintenance becomes more important. 2) Taking the time to be together—going away on a weekend together, having breakfast at a restaurant before work, or finding other ways of stopping the rush to enjoy each other’s company can provide powerful inputs for relationship health. 3) Start saying “thank you” and “I love you,” as you did in the past. Over time, it’s easy to turn off these little gems, but they are mini-reinforcements. 4) Talk, listen, and share your wishes and dreams more frequently. Could you quickly write a list of your partner’s hopes and dreams? Try it. Swap lists to discover how much you really know. 5) Practice “random acts of investment” in your relationship: picking up a special dessert on the way home, doing an ignored chore, or buying a greeting card for no occasion. Each of these acts is a *deliberate effort* that interrupts tedium and nurtures your relationship along life’s path.

Putting the Brakes on Impulse Buying

Impulse buying means buying an unplanned purchase, whether or not you need it. Even if you only buy a pack of gum at the checkout or are lured down a fascinating store aisle, you must control impulse buying if you are on a budget. Forget using willpower. Instead, be practical: 1) Create a shopping list and stick to it. 2) Take only the cash you need for a specific purpose. 3) When you approach a checkout counter, keep your eyes laser-focused on the clerk, and avoid displays on your right and left. 4) Never use a store to kill time—even for a minute while pumping gas. 5) And the best tip—accept the fact that pennies and dollars add up. If you need more help, talk to either your EAP or a mental health professional.

Getting Ahead with Your “Contacts”

A contact is an “acquaintance, colleague, or relative through whom a person can gain access to information, favors, influential people, and the like.” Developing contacts to help you advance your career is a skill—not luck, cheating, or abuse. 1) Be receptive to career-boosting help from people you meet. You will spot opportunities more often. 2) Be aware that opportunity knocks once, and usually without warning. Don’t dismiss opportunities. No contacts? You may have more than you think. While participating in community activities and civic events, note people you meet who have influence. Record names, areas of interest, contact details, how you met, and who introduced you (the “pre-contact”). 3) “Ask to receive.” You may spot an opportunity to make use of a contact who can lend you some help, but if you don’t ask for help, you may never get it. Don’t hesitate. If it feels right, go for it.

Stress Tip: More or Less Supervision?

Do you have very little contact with your supervisor, or a lot? Do you have a choice to increase your contact or decrease it? Everyone is different in the amount of supervision they need, and the supervision that their job requires. Some employees perform better with close supervision. Others excel with less supervision. Managing stress and increasing your productivity may be associated with the type and amount of supervision you receive. Have you explored this issue with your supervisor? Adjust-

ments may be linked to improved productivity and a better relationship with your supervisor. Both you and your supervisor want the same thing—optimal productivity, good communication, and well-managed stress. This discussion may serve all three.

