

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.



Prevent Caregiver Depression

Caregivers suffer depression at three times the rate of other people. Because depression is a disease, it's important to know the signs and symptoms—and five important rules: 1) Don't dismiss stress and the symptoms of depression with "self-talk" lectures about "handling it better" or "brushing it off." 2) Understand the difference between "caring" and "doing." Be open to help from other people and from devices and technology that can ease your burden or encourage independence by your loved one when appropriate. 3) Don't wait to feel strained before asking for help. 4) Know what activities rejuvenate you so when you get respite, you can retool and reenergize yourself. 5) Find another caregiver and develop a friendship with that person so you can bond socially for support. Find tips at tiny.cc/care4yourself.

Be a Customer-Diplomacy Pro

Are you a customer-diplomacy pro? Sharpen your diplomacy skills by viewing unhappy customers as a challenge for your skills. Allow irate customers to vent before responding. (This takes the edge off their anger.) Maintain positive body language with nods and eye contact. After the customer finishes speaking, apologize and empathize by saying "I can certainly understand why. . . ." If appropriate, accept full responsibility on behalf of the company. Lower your tone and slowly present your proposed solution. Then follow up. It's often a forgotten last step and can work magic.

Fabulous Freebies

The only downside to FREE is the time spent hunting down all those no-cost goodies. Here's how to avoid searching all over the Internet and get those freebies fast. Visit <http://tiny.cc/free-to-you> and grab free books, movies, music, digital storage, computer apps, hotel perks, prescription drugs and even advice on buying your next car. Now meet freebie expert Stacy Fisher. Her daily blog at tiny.cc/free-bees features links to free food, consumer products, toys, games and more. Happy hunting!

Keeping Your Computer Safe and “Leak Free”

In the world of technology-speak, an “insider threat” is someone who is not careful about how he or she stores, shares and transmits company information. Is that you? If you’re not following security policies, you may unknowingly compromise sensitive information. This is called “data leakage.” Avoid installing and using unapproved applications on your computer. Don’t share company devices and/or passwords. Never transmit files over unsecured networks at public libraries and local coffee shops. Don’t share files between work and personal computers. This can pass viruses on to the network. Finally, minimize or eliminate personal use of company computers. (If an audit becomes necessary, you’ll be glad you did.)

Don’t Shy Away from the Signs of Suicidal Thinking

A person who attempts suicide will usually reach out for help first. Behaviors or cries for help may be subtle; would you recognize the warning signs? Finding a list of warning signs is easy (see below), but there is another key to prevention: avoiding denial prompted by the anxiety these warning signs can naturally provoke. If someone mentions having suicidal thoughts, don’t shy away. Be ready to act by knowing the risk factors and second-guessing your denial response. Refuse to pull away. Here’s rule No. 1: Ask about it. Don’t let your fear hold you back. Empathizing or inquiring about suicidal statements saves lives. It is not what pushes a suicidal person over the edge. People who are contemplating suicide will usually talk about it, but they often need to be led into the conversation. Always take the matter seriously. Stay calm, and express your concern and assure the suicidal individual of how much he or she is loved and valued. Get a commitment from the individual to seek professional help, and agree to facilitate access to help by removing obstacles to it. Provide child care or transportation, or summon emergency help if a threat is imminent. If you need immediate help for yourself or a loved one, call 911, 1-800-SUICIDE or 1-800-273-TALK. Other resources include your employee assistance program, www.suicide.org, www.afsp.org (American Society for Suicide Prevention) or www.survivorsofsuicide.com. Source: www.tiny.cc/suicide-help.

Quick! Change Your Mood!

If you’re feeling negative and grumpy today, here are some ways to turn on positivity: 1) Use deep-breathing exercises to reduce stress. The slow, rhythmic breathing will calm you down and the extra oxygen raises alertness. 2) Get moving. Even a quick 15-to 20-minute workout is enough to produce mood-elevating endorphins. 3) Push away and tune out negative influences. Read or engage in something that uplifts and inspires instead. 4) Fake it ’til you make it. Enthusiastically engage a friend or coworker and put your focus on brightening his or her day. You’ll find that cheering others up cheers YOU up as well. 5) Finally, make a quick “gratitude list.” Nothing shrinks upsetting events to a manageable size like focusing on what you are thankful for in your life.

Winning Tactics for More Agreements

Whenever coworkers disagree with you, it’s a smart move to focus on understanding how and why they feel the way they do. Don’t rush to convince them you’re right, at least not yet. Here’s why: Most disagreements are driven by a difference in *unexpressed assumptions*, and you can’t know what these assumptions are unless you listen intently and ask good follow-up questions. This winning tactic helps cut through emotional barriers and builds a kind of trust. The longer you’re able to listen without arguing, the better you’ll understand where coworkers are coming from and empathize with their points of view. Often you’ll be able to find a compromise that addresses everyone’s needs even if you don’t come to complete agreement that gives you everything you want.



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