

EMPLOYEE COUNSELING PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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A.S.S.E.R.T. Yourself!

Wondering how to be more assertive? Follow the A.S.S.E.R.T. formula. **“A” - ATTENTION:** The first step in being assertive is to get the other person’s attention so they will listen to you. **“S” – SOON, SIMPLE, SHORT:** Don’t delay in being assertive. Assertiveness can become awkward and difficult the longer you wait. Stay brief and to the point. **“S” – SPECIFIC BEHAVIOR:** Focus on the behavior that compromised your rights, not the person. **“E” – EFFECT ON ME:** Describe the effect of the other person’s behavior on you. **“R” - RESPONSE:** Say what you want changed or different. **“T” – TERMS:** Make an agreement with the other person about how to treat you differently in the future.



Adapted from *Fighting Invisible Tigers: A Stress management Guide for Teens* (Revisited & Updated) by Earl Hipp ©1995. Used with permission from Free Spirit Publishing, Inc. Minneapolis, MN; 1-866-703-7322; www.freespirit.com. All rights reserved.

EAPs and Teenagers



Q Can the EAP help me with parenting difficulties I am experiencing with my teenager?

A Yes. The EAP can discuss parenting issues with you. The EAP will meet with you or guide you in finding the right help. The EAP might suggest a community resource, perhaps through your insurance plan. Drug and alcohol problems, parental conflicts, legal troubles, relationship problems, and depression are common for many teens. The EAP has experience with all of them.

Avoid Internet Dating Disasters

If you are about to take the plunge into online dating, do your homework on warnings and cautions. Many handy web sites focusing on personal protection exist. A quick search will find them. A few commonly cited warnings and “red flags”: (1) Never use your real name as your online name. (2) Avoid chat rooms. (3) Watch for inconsistent or irrational behavior online. (4) Don’t meet someone unless you have seen his or her photo. Meet in a familiar, public place. (5) Avoid anyone who provides vague or inconsistent information about themselves, is evasive, doesn’t give you a home number, or is difficult to reach.



Bring the Body Feelings Follow

Can’t change the way you feel? Change your behavior and the feelings might follow. The strategy is nothing new to counselors, but a recent study made headlines. Wake Forest University researcher William Freeman, Ph.D., discovered that subjects who acted happier (even if they weren’t) felt happier and more positive after 10 weeks of simply acting like it. Those who acted shy or introverted felt just the opposite. “It’s actually a radical idea to have control over our happiness,” says Freeman. (Note: Difficulty in feeling happy can be a sign of major depression, a treatable illness. In this case, turn to the EAP for assessment and referral.)



SOURCE: Wake Forest News Service and
Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, December 2002.

Better Eat Your Wheaties

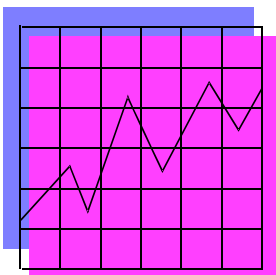
A research study of 80,000 male physicians discovered that those who ate at least one bowl of whole grain cereal per day had a lower chance of dying from heart disease during a five and one-half year follow-up period. The researchers took into account risk factors such as cigarette smoking, high alcohol intake, low physical activity, and high cholesterol. The surprise: Every medical cause of death was reduced as a result of eating whole grain cereal compared to men who ate none, or who ate refined grain or sugar coated cereal. What researchers think: Whole grains help lower cholesterol and blood pressure and improve how the body processes insulin and glucose. They also contain more beneficial micro-nutrients, antioxidants, minerals, and fiber.



Source: Feb 2003, American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

How's Your "APO-B"?

Move over cholesterol screenings, here comes the Apolipoprotein test (or Apo test.) The test takes a look at how many tiny fat particles of a certain type are floating in your blood. Having a lot of one kind of Apolipoprotein (type B is the bad stuff) means a high risk of clogged arteries and heart attack. Cholesterol levels are still important, but the medical journal *Lancet* says four studies indicate the Apo-B test is more accurate than cholesterol screening at predicting a heart attack. If you have lowered your cholesterol, a cholesterol test won't tell you much. The Apo-B test can help such patients spot risk that still exists. One nice advantage: Reportedly no fasting is necessary before taking the test.



Source: *Lancet*, March 1, 2003.

Helping Kids Not Sweat Summer Camp



Consider these tips for your child's first time away from home: (1) See camp as an opportunity to help a child develop a new sense of self, make new friends, develop new social skills, learn about teamwork, and be creative. (2) Prepare for camp together – talking about where to go and what to take. Your child will feel more ownership of the decision to go to camp. (3) Talk about feelings and concerns. Show confidence in your child's ability to handle being away from home. (4) Do talk about what might be easy and what might be more difficult about the camp experience, but keep the emphasis on fun.

Source: American Camping Association

Customer Team Building



Try this group team building exercise or modify it to fit your needs. Its major benefit is identifying and sharing the different personal approaches each of you naturally brings to your team in working effectively with challenging customers:

Step 1: During a 60-day period, hold a contest to see who can come up with the most difficult or challenging customer scenarios. At the end of 60 days, honor the person.

Step 2: Meet to categorize the scenarios. Eliminate duplicates. Give each a clever or memorable name. This will help you more easily recall the attributes of this type of customer and the best manner of working with that customer in Step 3 below.

Step 3: Meet again to develop strategies. Focus on determining what each type of customer values. What motivates each customer? What pleases this customer? What will increase your stress in responding to such a customer? What will reduce your stress? Identify who in the group is the expert on this type of customer. This person can be a resource for any other team member when any of you have difficulty working with this type of customer.

Step 4: Hold the team accountable for applying the effective customer service strategies you have developed and agreed upon. This will help those who have difficulty with certain types of customers to use the strategies and develop new skills.