

EMPLOYEE COUNSELING PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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Getting a Leap ON JET LAG



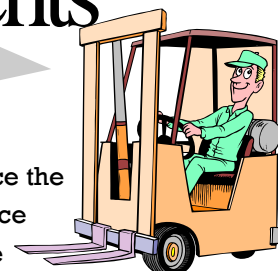
Jet lag throws your body out of sync with your internal clock (circadian rhythm) resulting in fatigue, sleep problems, concentration problems, and mood disturbances. To manage jet lag, anticipate your day/night schedule in the new time zone and practice it before you leave. If you arrive at your destination in the morning, get exposure to bright sunlight immediately. Your body uses light as a trigger to reset its sleep-wake cycle. Talk to your doctor about a melatonin supplement. Melatonin is a hormone that aids sleep. Using it before your new bedtime may help you overcome jet lag. Avoid naps to catch up on sleep because your internal clock will not adjust as rapidly to the new time zone.

Making It Easier to Say "No"



The ability to say "no" is a time-saving tool. But many people feel guilty when they say no, so they put other people's priorities ahead of their own while feeling frustrated and trapped. To say no with less guilt, tell yourself you are doing others a favor by saying no. Rationale: If you don't have the time for their request, you may procrastinate, delay, or not complete the assignment to the best of your ability. This would cause difficulty and frustration to those you are trying to help.

Fewer Accidents with EAPs



Research shows that EAPs reduce the rate of accidents in the workplace because when employees solve tough personal problems, they often reduce many risks. These include unsafe attitudes that can adversely affect health and safety decisions. Do you have a coworker with a personal problem that contributes to risk of injury? Talk with him or her about the EAP. Here's a summary of the most violated OSHA standards for 2003, any of which could be influenced by a personal problem: 1) taking risks with electricity; 2) not wearing hard hats in construction sites; 3) ignoring safety precautions necessary to prevent falls; 4) failure to participate in a training program on hazardous substances; and 5) ignoring fire safety practices.

Prescription: Take Two Laps

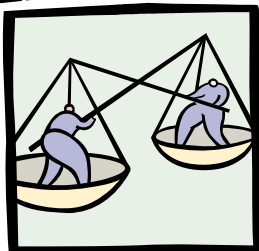


Family physicians are being encouraged to make exercise a primary focus of their patients' health. So don't be surprised if your doctor writes a prescription at your next office visit recommending you get more exercise. Expect to hear more about your body mass index (a health measurement of weight vs. height that predicts risk of disease) and your waist measurement. Your physician may also recommend that you reduce food consumption by 500 to 1,000 calories daily, and keep up with regular aerobic exercise, such as walking briskly five days a week.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION . . .

Win with ASSERTIVENESS

Is a coworker's behavior stressing you out? Have you told others around you about it, dropped hints to your coworker to stop, but are still hoping for change? The problem may be that you haven't tried a truly assertive approach. Resistance to being assertive explains the existence of many coworker conflicts and why they grow worse. The assertive approach frequently requires that you be more vulnerable, which explains its lack of popularity. But the payoff is less stress, improved productivity, and better morale. Example: Imagine a coworker making "put-downs" about you in staff meetings on a regular basis. Would you try an assertive approach like this: "I find it terribly embarrassing to be criticized in front of others. If you feel I should be doing a better job, can you please discuss it with me in private?" Learn more about assertiveness from the EAP.



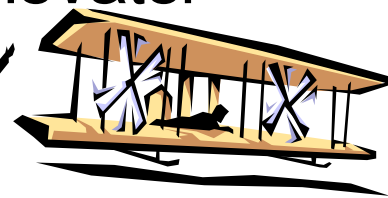
ROTH IRAs for kids!

Do you wish your children could start saving for retirement long before you did? It may be possible with a Roth IRA. And it may help them learn the art of saving early. Minors can't put their allowance in a Roth IRA, but they can invest money earned from jobs such as babysitting, mowing lawns, chores, etc. Talk to your financial advisor about tax issues and how to set up a Roth IRA. Find a kid-friendly mutual fund or broker that will permit you to cosign for it, and be sure meticulous records are kept of earnings.



Unleash the Innovator Inside You

New research from Stanford Business School shows how to be more creative. Get out more! Millions of dollars in resources at your fingertips won't predict creative thought better than the degree to which you have diverse social interaction in your life. Your creative juices are more likely to flow by interacting with family, friends, colleagues, acquaintances, and complete strangers. Diversity seems to improve the ability to reject convention and experiment with creative thought and become innovative. The message: Ties that bind, may bind creativity.



Stanford Business School, Stanford, CA

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder



Do you often have repetitive, persistent, and unwanted thoughts that upset you or make you anxious, and that you can't get out of your mind no matter how hard you try? Do you wash your hands more often and for longer periods of time than other people? Do you often repeat routine behaviors (locking doors, turning off light switches, turning off stove burners) because you're not sure you have done these tasks or done them "just right?" Do you repeatedly count things (ceiling tiles, books, clothes, light poles, cars, and the number of times you do something)? Do you unnecessarily arrange, order, or tidy the contents of your desk, closets, cabinets, refrigerator, or bookshelves to make them perfectly in order? Are you worried about acting on unwanted and senseless urges or impulses, such as physically harming someone you love, or committing some antisocial or illegal act?

These are symptoms of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), a biologically-based, but very treatable psychiatric illness. It is characterized by recurrent, unpleasant thoughts (obsessions), or feeling driven to perform certain acts over and over again (compulsions). Although sufferers usually recognize that the obsessions and compulsions are senseless or excessive, the symptoms of OCD are difficult to control. Contact your employee assistance program to learn more about OCD and additional signs and symptoms. You aren't crazy, and you don't have to live with the frustration of feeling as though you can't control your thoughts and behaviors.