

EMPLOYEE COUNSELING PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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EAP Help for Relationships with Supervisors

Keeping a positive and open relationship with your supervisor is important. Like most relationships, difficulties with supervisors are temporary. This can depend, however, on your ability to be proactive, meet with your supervisor, discuss the issues, and work toward a better relationship. The EAP can help. We can talk with you about the issues, objectively help you identify important personal changes to consider, and prepare you for a successful meeting with your supervisor. Disagreements about performance expectations, conflicting work habits, and communication differences between you and your supervisor can interfere with your happiness and productivity. The EAP will help you so it doesn't reach that point.



STRESS MANAGEMENT TIPS . . .

TOUCH ITEMS Only Once!

Whether you are reading e-mails, listening to voice mail, unloading groceries, taking off your socks, or using a tool, you will save more time and be more productive if you touch things only once. Become a believer in this enduring time-management principle by spending a day experimenting with it. Barnes and Noble book company is such a believer in this time-saving tip that when a new store is opened, the goal of touching a book only once in order to shelve it is a corporate decree.



PROTECTING Children Online

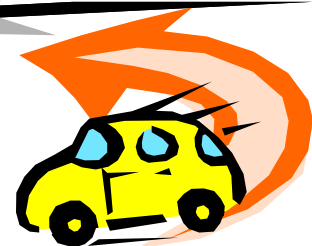
Children gaining access to web sites with objectionable content concerns many parents. Millions of web pages market sexual material, promote drug abuse, advertise hate groups, and more. Seventy percent of children doing homework online have stumbled onto sexually explicit web sites, according to cyber watchdog ProtectKids.com. Even the best Internet filter software tested by Consumer Reports (AOL's Parental Controls) was only moderately successful at blocking objectionable sites. Off-the-shelf software, Cyber Patrol, Cybersitter, and Cyber Snoop were also effective. A variety of useful features among filter software include the ability to track sites visited, monitor downloads, control time-of-day access, and more. View almost every filter program available at www.GetNetWise.org.



Avoid Left-hand Turns?

One out of every three accidents occurs at an intersection. The primary cause is failure to yield the right-of-way.

Left-hand turns at intersections expose a vehicle and its passengers at the weakest point on the vehicle, the side doors. That's why many insurance companies are encouraging employers to educate employees about intersections and avoiding left-hand turns, if possible. Sound impractical? Most accidents occur within 25 miles of home, so an intersection frequently used might be the one to avoid with an alternative route.



Source: Universal Underwriters Group

Customers: More Right Than Ever

You have undoubtedly experienced examples of modern-day customer service: on-the-spot discounts, more free stuff, and faster refunds, especially when a business goofs. Today, the customer is more right than ever.



Does your view of customers match the "always right" philosophy supported by your company? It will if you start by acknowledging that the customer's feelings are his or her reality, and that feelings are always right, even if the beliefs are questionable. You will calm customers quicker, reduce your stress, solve their problems faster, and enjoy your job more by seeing them as "always right."

Can you see complaints as gifts? The book, *A Complaint Is a Gift: Using Customer Feedback as a Strategic Tool*, centers on this idea. A complaint is an *expectation that has not been met*. Paying close attention to complaints can produce insights on customers' desires that rival the most expensive research.

Say "Yes" to Supervisor Referrals

If your supervisor referred you to the EAP but you decided not to go, we would like to remind you of important principles that govern EAPs. EAPs are strictly confidential. They are governed by the organization's EAP policy, but laws that pertain to confidentiality and privacy also safeguard your identity and the information you share with the EAP. When you visit the EAP, you will be treated with respect, not pressured or "analyzed". Our most important goal is to listen to what you have to say, and help you get your needs met in the most effective way possible.



Relaxing with Meditation



Meditation is a very effective method of relaxation.

The idea of meditation is to focus your thoughts on one relaxing thing for a sustained period of time. This rests your mind by diverting it from thinking about the problems that have caused stress. It gives your body time to relax and recuperate and clear way toxins that may have built up through stress and mental or physical activity.

A number of different focuses of concentration may be used. Which one you choose is a matter of personal taste. Some of these are detailed below:

Breathing

A useful method may be to focus your attention on your breathing. Concentrate on breaths in and out. You can accompany this counting your breaths using the numbers 0 to 9. You can visualize images of the numbers changing with each breath. Alternatively, you could visualize health and relaxation flowing into your body when you inhale, and stress or pain flowing out when you exhale.

Focusing on an object

Here you completely focus attention on examination of an object. Look at it in immense detail for the entire meditation. Examine the shape, colour difference, texture, temperature and movement of the object. Objects often used are flowers, candle flames or flowing designs. However, you can use other objects equally effectively (e.g. alarm clocks, desk lamps, or even coffee mugs!)

Focus on a sound

Some people like to focus on sounds. The classic example is the Sanskrit word 'Om', meaning 'perfection'. Whether or not this is practical depends on your lifestyle.

Imagery:

This can be a very refreshing and pleasant way of meditating. Here you create a mental image of a pleasant and relaxing place in your mind. Involve all your senses in the imagery: see the place, hear the sound, smell the aromas, feel the temperature and the movement of the wind. Enjoy the location in your mind.

In all cases it is important to keep your attention focused. If external thoughts or distractions wander in, let them drift out. If necessary, visualize attaching the thoughts to objects and then move the object out of your attention.

You may find that your attention keeps breaking as you worry that time runs out. In this case it may be easiest to set an alarm to go off when you should stop meditating.

You will find that as you practice meditation your attention will improve.