

EMPLOYEE COUNSELING PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

Daytime: 410-366-1980 x 278/279

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Wants, Wishes, & Living Wills



If you were in a permanent coma or persistent vegetative state, would you want to be kept on life support for years? Would you decline life support under such circumstances? Provided you are mentally competent, you have the right to make this decision before such a tragedy may occur. A living will is a document that lets you decide whether to be kept on artificial life support. It's not complicated, and it is usually accompanied by a health care power of attorney so someone can make a decision on your behalf if necessary. These two items are also called advance directives. The EAP can help you locate resources for constructing a living will. Good idea: consider a wallet card of your living will and advance directives.

Accessing Sexual Offender Registries



The FBI's Crimes Against Children Unit coordinates the development and implementation of the National Sex Offenders Registry (NSOR). This was made possible by the Pam Lychner Sexual Offender Tracking and Identification Act of 1996. All 50 states participate in separate programs to track sexual offenders. It is from these databases that the public can obtain information by name, county, city, and zip code with some restrictions. The FBI Website listing all 50 state Websites is:
<http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/cac/states.htm>

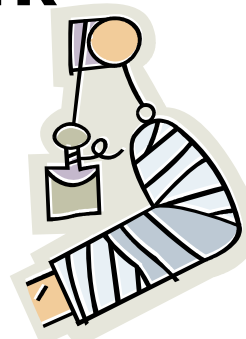
"LIFTING" Yourself from Depression



Most research points to a combination of medication and psychotherapy as being most effective in treating depression.

Does exercise help? The most talked-about research concerning exercise and depression was reported in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* in 1999. Older adults who exercised experienced improved mood equal to the benefits of their antidepressant medications. Always follow your doctor's advice about use of medication. If your doctor recommends exercise, do it. In your fight against depression, research supporting the benefits of exercise is in your favor.

Injured at Work EAP Help for Hurdles



If you are injured on the job and forced to miss work, work closely with medical professionals and follow their instructions. Don't forget about the EAP—its assistance could help you get back to work sooner. Injuries can dramatically alter your routine. The effect on your life can contribute to depression. It makes sense to get help. Some studies have shown that interpersonal conflicts at work, unresolved stress issues on the job, and even reactions by family members can contribute to delays in recovery and a return to work. The EAP can help with these issues, too.

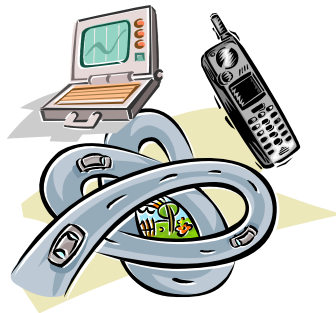
Three Day Team Fix



Your team's conflict is growing and morale is on the ropes. You are determined to be part of the solution. So, take the initiative and experiment with this three-day team fix:

- **Day One:** Agree to drop negativity and meet uninterrupted as a group for one or two hours. List the key issues facing your team. (One member keeps notes.) Divide discussion time into four areas: 1) The team's needs from the leader or supervisor. Examples include communication, support, guidance, availability, and so forth. 2) Conflicts experienced by team members regarding their roles and duties, and problems demonstrating mutual support. 3) Tangible resources needed by the team to be effective, if any. 4) Issues beyond the team that prevent or hinder its effectiveness. These issues may include climate, cultural, environmental, system, or political issues.
- **Day Two:** Meet for two hours to discuss the items produced on Day One. Discuss each issue and work to achieve possible solutions. You will discover that agreements to resolve many ongoing issues emerge quickly. You will notice an improvement in morale by the end of the second day.
- **Day Three:** Finish with solutions and get group agreement to support them in writing. Ask your leader or supervisor to affirm the solutions. Meet regularly thereafter to practice team maintenance. The more stressful the work environment, the more frequently you should meet.

Technology Liberated or Leashed?



The increasing use of cell phones, BlackBerries®, beepers, and laptops is a reflection of our growing, technology-driven society. Today, it's possible to work 24/7 and never take a break! The challenge is avoiding entrapment in a work-world blur with the only escape being sleep. As a work-life balance seeker, are you winning the battle for boundaries? If it's getting tougher, consider an emerging model of work-life balance intervention—making technology work for you rather than the other way around. Don't get mad at technology for keeping you "connected." Instead, get even. Personal technology devices are increasingly numerous. Commit yourself to learning about personal technology, integrating it into your life as it becomes affordable, and managing stress better. This is called "technological literacy." The leading country in this skill among the citizenry is not the U.S. It's Singapore!

MENTAL HEALTH FITNESS



You know that physical exercise is important to staying healthy and warding off chronic disease. Well, your mental health is no less important—you just don't hear about it as much. Here are a few "exercises" to help you stay fit: 1) *Emotional Awareness:* Practice being aware of your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. When you experience stressful states, manage them with healthy ways of coping. 2) *Talk about Your Feelings:* Talk about how you feel with someone you trust in order to process difficult emotional events. 3) *Focus on the Positive:* Difficult and distressing experiences happen to everyone. Bounce back faster by practicing letting go, anticipating a positive future, and taking action to shape a desired outcome. 4) *Think Upstream:* Many life struggles are avoidable. Make decisions early that may thwart preventable crises later. 5) *Aim for Balance:* Make time for things you enjoy, and practice renewal by detaching regularly from sources of chronic stress. 6) Count on the EAP to help you with the above!

Networking Know-How!



Is it about *who* you know? New sales, new jobs, new ideas, new opportunities—networking makes it possible. Networking tips: 1) Identify your professional organization and join it. No matter what you do, there's a group of people talking about it somewhere. Become a regular face, and others' perceptions will cast you as "on the inside track" and "the person to get to know." 2) Know what you want from a group you join. In other words, have an objective. When the opportunity knocks, you'll know it. 3) Keep a log of contacts: names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, notes. 4) Volunteer. It builds credibility. 5) Help others who are networking. Your returns are faster and magnified.