



Balance

A newsletter to help employees maintain a healthy work-life balance.



Election Politics and the Workplace

It's common courtesy to avoid political discussions at work. Still, they do happen. If a conversation turns political, here are some tips to prevent an argument: 1) Learn to self-intervene. When tension builds, move the discussion along to more work-related matters. 2) Check your visceral reaction. Politics prompt a “flight or fight” response for many of us. Don't give in to this because it can make you reactive, causing things to turn personal. 3) Remember that everyone has a unique perspective based on their past and remain respectful. 4) Do a “reboot.” End political discussions with a verbal affirmation that despite differences, you really do value your workplace relationships.

Alcoholics Anonymous and COVID-19

AA figured out how to carry its message of hope and recovery to alcoholics worldwide a long time ago, and the online portal it established could not be more relevant in the era of COVID-19 social distancing. Over 1,000 meetings are a click away. To use the no-cost service, visit www.aa-intergroup.org/oiaa/meetings. You can search meetings worldwide by language, time, day, special need/disability, gender preferences, type of meeting, phone, video, and many other parameters.

Stress Management Tip: Reframing

Reframing is a mental strategy to overcome the distress of negative or disappointing events. Reframing starts with a key question – what good thing can come from this undesirable event? The goal is to change the way you think about and view undesirable situations. For example, if you get passed up for a promotion, what good thing or positive outcome of not being chosen might now exist? Reframing works because it changes images in your mind, and these direct your

feelings and sensations. Reframing builds personal resilience to disappointment, and it's a teachable skill. Reframing is used unconsciously by everyone, but when purposely used, it will get you out of pain faster.

Making the Most of a Bad Day at Work

Everyone experiences job-related setbacks and mistakes at work. Our initial focus is usually how awful we feel or how unfair it all seems. The challenge is moving past the negativity. Accomplish these strategies that add to your resilience. Here are six “T's” to recapture a positive you: **Temporary:** Remind yourself that feeling bad is temporary; it will soon dissipate. **Teach:** What can the day teach you? What part of it will add to your skills and abilities? **Talk:** Talk and vent your experience with a friend to experience emotional release. **Twirl:** Move, exercise, or play—engage in physical activity to influence a positive mood. **Transcribe:** Write down your feelings. **Thanks:** Focus on two to three things you are grateful for despite the setback, to help re-energize positivity.

Using Anti-anxiety Medications?

Google reports that searches for “anxiety” and “panic attacks” have skyrocketed during the COVID-19 pandemic (CNN.com Aug. 24, 2020). Have you experienced anxiety and panic symptoms in the past year? Although anxiety and panic attacks don't always require medication, benzodiazepines (Xanax, Valium, Klonopin, Ambien, etc.) are the class of drugs often prescribed for this condition. Work closely with your doctor if these medications are offered to you. Unmanaged, they can leave you dependent (addicted). Improperly managed withdrawal from benzos can be dangerous, too. The older you are, the greater the risk of injuries and accidents while using benzos. If you're starting to take a benzodiazepine, begin with the end in mind. These drugs are not meant for long-term use. Consider psychotherapeutic help in tandem with medication to boost your gains.

Tips to Using Your Time Effectively

You are working remotely from home with a task that takes two hours to complete. You have four hours available, so you plan to finish early and get to some other work. But the job takes all four hours! What happened? The term Parkinson's Law was coined to describe a phenomenon that happens when a task or job at hand consumes all the time allowed to complete it. It feels like the work expanded to fill the time available, but it didn't—you simply filled the time with distractions. Remote workers are vulnerable to



this because no one generally is hovering over their work. To fight back, set deadlines much shorter than needed. Try using a timer set to sound every 10 minutes to increase awareness and help you stay focused. You will soon learn to avoid deadline panic, increase your awareness of distractions, and experience more job satisfaction.

Staying Safe this Holiday Season

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, you can still have a meaningful holiday season with family and friends. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has released some suggested guidelines and social interaction ideas. They've also created a "degrees of risk" section on their website so you can determine whether activities you've planned are low, medium, or high risk. For example, gatherings outdoors and with fewer attendees are lower risk than indoor events with larger numbers. They offer considerations for hosts to reduce risks, such as designating one person to serve food. If hosting indoors, make sure the room or space is well-ventilated. Discover more at www.cdc.gov.

Considerations for Remote Workers

If you work remotely, reach out for help before you begin "adapting" to potential stressors of your position in unhealthy ways. Don't let frustrations drag on. Research shows remote workers can face many unique challenges, including loneliness, inability to process stress with peers, irritability from interruptions at home, go-it-alone technology issues, worrying about completing tasks correctly, resentment from being unable to "switch off" from work to non-work, feeling frustrated at being unable to relax because of unfinished work only steps away, and parenting

conflicts with guilt at being unable to attend to child needs. Reach out to your Employee Assistance Program if you need support.

Source: www.academia.edu [Search "psychological, teleworking"]

Don't Forget Flu Season

With all the attention on COVID-19, don't overlook getting a flu shot. Flu season usually starts around October and can run until the following May. It peaks in December and January. Fact: 35.5 million people got sick with influenza in 2019 and 34,200 died. 188 were children. You can discover locations and organizations that offer free flu shots by visiting www.health.com and searching "free flu shot."

Kepro's Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The Employee Assistance Program through Kepro assists organizations and their workforce in managing the personal challenges that impact employee well-being, performance and effectiveness. Kepro's life management consultants employ a comprehensive approach that identifies issues impacting the employee and assists them in developing meaningful solutions.

The Employee Assistance Program can be accessed anytime, for free, confidential support from a professional consultant or online resource. Call or log on today.

Phone:

Website:

Company Code:

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