

Take Five:

Tips for a healthier, happier you!

Work • Life Tips

- ▶ Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of major depression that recurs at times of the year when there are more cloudy days or less light. Symptoms may persist until spring. People who live in northern areas of the country may experience more symptoms than those who live in other regions. Symptoms include sadness, changes in appetite or weight, sleep problems, lack of energy, diminishing energy, problems concentrating, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, lack of interest in activities, or suicidal thoughts. If you have experienced this pattern, the EAP can help you find the right treatment. Unique approaches to help those affected by SAD exist, but an assessment is your best first step.
- ▶ Much has appeared in the media about ADHD or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder when hyperactivity is the predominant complaint. Adults with ADHD often complain of inattention, disorganization, carelessness about surroundings or belongings, an inability to concentrate, procrastination, and distractibility. However, these may also be symptoms of depression. Which diagnosis is correct? Terms like ADHD are common in everyday language, and your self-diagnosis may not be accurate. According to a Johns Hopkins University study of self-referred adults seeking help for ADHD, only 4 out of 33 actually had the condition. The rest were suffering from depression but didn't know it! Learn more: neurodivergentinsights.com (click "Misdiagnosis Monday")
- ▶ Could a stand-up desk be a good thing for you? By using a stand-up desk, you enjoy numerous benefits, including decreasing the amount of time sitting while warding off the related adverse health effects, improving posture, reducing strain and pain, remaining more alert, and burning more calories while working, as well as increased energy and higher productivity. Benefits vary among individuals, and some jobs are more suitable than others to the implementation of stand-up desks. Learn more: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8582919/.

Master Persistence and Stick with Your Resolutions

Persistence—who can deny its essential role in the success of any endeavor? Persistence is your ability to continue to strive toward your goal, completing tasks and overcoming obstacles. Motivation is not the same as persistence. Motivation refers to the inner desire, and it is what fuels persistence. To experience more success, foster persistence. 1) Be very clear about your goal so persistence has a vision and target. 2) Make your goal achievable, not overwhelming. 3) Do not delay tasks needed to accomplish your goal. Delay slows progress, and experiencing slowness can undermine one's desire to persist. 4) Avoid negative self-talk, self-doubt, and fear of failure. They too can sabotage your persistence. To fuel persistence, in 2024 laugh in the face of setbacks and embrace mistakes as challenges.



Get a Post-holiday Financial Rehab Strategy

Rather than experience the dread that comes with knowing bills are coming due soon, get proactive with a post-holiday financial rehab strategy plan. Take charge now to regain control over your finances and set a positive tone for the year ahead. Focus on creating a realistic budget, track expenses, and decide on financial goals. Get debt repayment strategies, if needed, from online or community resources like the National Foundation for Credit Counseling, where lots of resources have recently been established online to help you. And don't forget to ask your EAP how they can help! Learn more at nfcc.org.



Embracing Diversity to Enhance Workplace Wellness

Embracing diversity can contribute to a healthier work environment, not just increased productivity. When all employees feel included and valued for their diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and identities, they grow to feel a sense of belonging. What follows is a psychologically safe workplace. It all starts here. This reduces stress, anxiety, and isolation. This, in turn, helps promote better mental health and well-being. What then follows includes reduced conflicts and misunderstandings, improved communication, and increased creativity. Hint: The best thing you can do to create a workplace that feels psychologically safe is to demonstrate "empathetic listening." This means acknowledging and validating the experiences, perspectives, and feelings of others without judgment, and being there to offer support at stressful times. Learn more by reading "The Inclusion Dividend: Why Investing in Diversity & Inclusion Pays Off" by Kaplan and Donovan.



Overcoming an Unwanted Habit

Well-researched strategies exist for overcoming unwanted habits (procrastination, nail biting, poor eating habits, spending, negative thinking, etc.). When you logically combine various techniques, you increase your odds of success. 1) Understand your triggers—realize what prompts you to engage in your unwanted habit. Keep a diary for a few days. Note what happens the moment before the behavior happens. 2) Your goal is to interrupt and replace this trigger-response dynamic. Do so by substituting the unwanted habit with a healthier, more positive behavior as quickly as possible (e.g., put your running shoes on the sofa cushion where you normally sit after arriving home to remind you that going for a run is a better choice than engaging in your habit. 3) Track your progress and do it in writing. This “action” sustains motivation. 4) Define your goal. What will success look like, and how will you behave when you overcome the habit? 5) Use mindfulness techniques, like meditation, to heighten self-awareness. This trains your brain, enabling you to spot triggers and patterns associated with the unwanted habit. 6) Can you find a support group where you can share your experiences and gain strength and hope? If so, this is one of the greatest strategies to help you be successful. 7) Employ external influences to help break the habit. For example, if your goal is to reduce “screen time with your computer,” use apps or tools to control access to the device. 8) Be kind to yourself if setbacks occur—keep going. 9) Consider professional counseling/guidance to achieve your goal, which includes your EAP. Caution: A substance use disorder is not considered a habit by the medical experts but instead a disease process for which appropriate treatment is recommended. Learn more by searching: scholar.google.com, “over-coming unwanted habits.”



Would You Use a Self-help Group?

A self-help group is a gathering of individuals with a shared concern who provide mutual support, encouragement, and guidance to one another. Would you resist using a self-help group? These common myths typically hold people back. Myth: Only people with late-stage problems join self-help groups. Fact: Self-help groups include individuals at all stages.

Myth: You will be judged. Fact:

Self-help members foster acceptance and support, not judgment.

Myth: A self-help group is a cult. Fact: Self-help groups prioritize

personal choice and support, not control. Myth: Individual counseling is better. Fact: Individual counseling and self-help groups

have different purposes; a self-help group may facilitate change in ways not possible via individual counseling.



Conduct a Workday Stress Audit



Small stressors can add up. Regularly assess your workday to identify stressors and make “mini-interventions” to manage them. Start by gaining awareness. Over the next few days, pinpoint demanding tasks, conflicts with colleagues, excessive workloads, tight deadlines, poor time management behaviors, lack of resources, noises, examples of

poor communication, and desk clutter that inhibits workflow. Then, consider how these stressors affect you. Now, find solutions to mitigate their impact. For instance, if excessive workload is a stress factor, consider delegating. Noise? Try headphones. An unresolved conflict with a coworker—iron it out. These stressors might seem minor on their own, but when experienced repeatedly, they can impact overall well-being and productivity. By efficiently managing stress with this strategy, you will experience an improved well-being and a bit more joy at work.

The 101% Mindset: Elevating Your Career

A 101% mindset means consistently striving to deliver exceptional performance and exceeding expectations at work. It’s easier than you think, and it doesn’t mean piling on a lot of extra work for yourself. But it can lead to reduced stress and big returns. Demonstrating the ability to consistently deliver 101% can indicate strong leadership potential. So, employees who show initiative, take ownership of tasks, and exceed expectations typically are considered for leadership roles or given increased responsibilities and recognition. Develop this habit: When given an assignment, identify the acceptable results desired. Then, identify the critical areas where a small extra effort can have a substantial impact on the project’s success. Apply this “101% formula” consistently and watch how increased high regard for your work produces ripple effects for your career.


