



rEAP the Benefits

State Employee Assistance Program 1-800-308-4934

Shine at your review

Annual performance reviews don't have to be dreaded by managers and employees. Make annual performance reviews less of a burden for yourself and your supervisor by seeing them as opportunities to capture some of the limelight and demonstrate the investment you have in your position. Bring along a short report that includes last year's accomplishments, what you would like to accomplish in the coming year, and a self-assessment of where you believe you need improvement. Have a plan for making the improvements you have identified and share it. Be sure to let your reviewer know at the beginning of the meeting, if not before, that you have a self-assessment you want to share.

Practice with the small stuff

Working in a fast-pace, sometimes difficult environment can leave you so wired that any frustrating experience no (matter how small) begins to stimulate an overblown emotional response. You missed your bus 30 seconds ago! You spilled your unseen latte behind your laptop! There are no more size 15/32 shirts left on the rack! Use these life stressors as practice sessions to gain better control over the self-talk messages that can make your stress worse. You'll develop an ability to better manage more significant stress-inducing events. Watch how this skill builder helps both you and others benefit from a happier you.

Talk up the EAP Take down violence

All of us naturally give advice to our friends when they face personal troubles. When it's a coworker, don't forget to encourage use of the EAP—especially if it worked for you. It could produce a more complete solution to his or her troubles, and it could prevent workplace violence, especially if your coworker experiences a great deal of physical or emotional isolation from peers, experiences rejection, is easily frustrated and prone to angry outbursts, or who feels severely cynical and complains of bad family relations. These factors and easy access to weapons place employees at greater risk of committing violent acts.

Living with guilt seminar

Do you sometimes feel guilty over not fulfilling those intentions to spend extra time with your children or follow through with plans to visit an ailing relative? Is it difficult to overcome your feelings of guilt over a wrong doing to someone? We often feel guilty over many events in our life that we are unable to undo. If we carry that bag of guilt with us it can impact our life and well-being. Come to this seminar to better understand how guilt resides in our lives and learn how we can reduce its negative impact. Seminars will be held in the following locations and dates at 1:00-2:30 P.M.:

11/1	Martin	11/5	Memphis
11/6	Jackson	11/8	Johnson City
11/8	Murfreesboro	11/13	Knoxville
11/14	Nashville	11/15	Cookeville
11/15	Chattanooga		

Register at www.state.tn.us/finance/ins/eap/

Making negative feedback nicer

Who would you rather get negative feedback from — your boss or coworkers? Many people fear the boss less. That's because supervisors generally follow conventional rules of feedback they have learned, making it easier for the recipient to accept the feedback, while coworkers often take a no-holds-barred, take-no-prisoners approach to letting you know what they think. As a group, coworkers can be a convincing force for help and change, even more than a supervisor, so why not adopt some rules of engagement among yourselves that will make giving and taking feedback more effective, if not exciting. Focus on behavior, actions, statements, and content when giving feedback to a coworker. Don't focus on the person. For example:

- Don't say someone is boring in a presentation. Instead, identify what could be made more interesting.
- Be specific. It isn't helpful when you say, "Your presentation wasn't very interesting." Instead, offer details (e.g., "Mary, you need to speak louder and put more energy in your presentation so people feel your passion").
- Say what's working. (e.g., "Wow, you really dressed nicely for that presentation, Robert, and it was just the right length"). In other words, let your coworker hear that you value him or her despite the constructive criticism.
- Listen calmly to what your coworker has to say in response to your feedback. Refuting the feedback is often a first step toward a coworker accepting it after further discussion. It doesn't automatically mean your coworker is in denial.

Avoid online get-rich-quick schemes

Don't be a victim. While on the Internet, be-ware of spam marketing get-rich-quick schemes requiring you to invest money in a "business opportunity" that involves nothing more than you selling the same "business opportunity" to others while claiming a percentage of whatever they pay for it. And what is the business? There may not be one. The only business is selling the "business opportunity" to someone else, who then sells it to the next person.

Preventing suicide among the elderly

Older Americans make up 13 percent of the population but account for 20 percent of all suicide deaths. Depression is the illness most commonly associated with suicide. Contrary to popular myth, depression is not a normal part of aging. That's important to know, because family members are often on the front lines, frequently playing roles as caregivers who can potentially spot symptoms of depression that can lead to increased risk of suicide. The National Institute of Mental Health has developed a "cue card" to help spot the symptoms of depression in an elderly person. Know these symptoms in the event you are in a position to help. Ask yourself if your family member feels nervous or "empty," guilty or worthless, or very tired and slowed down. Do they enjoy things the way they used to? Do they feel restless or irritable? Do they feel like no one loves them, or that life is not worth living? Additional questions: Are they sleeping more or less than usual; eating more or less than usual; having persistent headaches, stomachaches, or chronic pain? Encourage the elder person you love to let the doctor help. Depression, even in the elderly, is a treatable disease.

Consume the news with awareness

There's an old saying in some media circles that says "if it bleeds, it leads." The translation: bad news sells. Of course bad news adds to our stress, so the more we can reduce its impact, the better. Although most people say that they prefer to have good news, bad news gets our attention first because we are hard wired to pay attention to it. Knowing this gives you a bit of self-awareness and control over how much and when you consume bad news—and its cousin, "fear" news. Fear news is stressful too, but it can influence your behavior—cause you to act differently, switch opinions, and reinforce, even change, your point of view. Consume the news with awareness and you'll reduce your stress at home and at work.