



# rEAP the Benefits

State Employee Assistance Program 1-800-308-4934

## The hazard of inactivity

As many as 50 million Americans are living sedentary lives, putting them at increased risk of health problems and early death, says the American Psychological Association. In a long-term study of more than 40,000 adults, 16 percent of deaths were directly related to sedentary living. This percentage did not include deaths complicated by other illnesses such as obesity, smoking, high cholesterol, or diabetes. Plain and simple, a lack of exercise was the culprit. Men with moderate levels of exercise on average lived six years longer than sedentary men. Close examination of more than 14,000 women showed that active women were 55 percent less likely to die of breast cancer than women who were not in good shape. This was after researchers had controlled for Body Mass Index, smoking, family history of breast cancer, and other possible risks.

Source: [www.apa.org/releases/sedentary-lives.html](http://www.apa.org/releases/sedentary-lives.html)

## Time to talk to the EAP

EAPs help employees with personal problems that may affect job performance. But what if you don't have a personal problem and just want to talk confidentially about what's "going on" in the office—worries about workplace trends, internal politics, and related frustrations—or perhaps a work idea that you want to bounce off of a good listener? Is it appropriate to call the EAP? Can these discussions also be confidential? Answer: Yes.

## Fight the recession with good customer service

It's easy to feel helpless and unable to help your employer fight the recession. You may have overlooked one thing, however—providing good customer service. It could have a positive affect on your job security. During a recession, businesses that can stick it out usually gain market share. Even with zero growth, these businesses can be well-positioned when things turn around, having fewer competitors. Layoffs, furloughs, resource limitations, fear, and stress can test your optimism, but don't neglect the customer. Customer service heavily influences buying decisions. And word-of-mouth advertising is the most effective tool in your arsenal. You do have the power.

## Become an expert at using waiting-time

How many months or years do we spend waiting? From DMV lines to doctors' offices waiting rooms, some social scientists figure it could be up to three years. You can't get your time back, so get even. Start with a new attitude about waiting time. View it as a gift or unexpected opportunity to get something or a lot of things done to increase your personal productivity. Decide what types of tasks you want to do or complete while waiting. From adding phone numbers to your cell phone address book to creating a grocery list to listening to a self-development course on your iPod, waiting time can be your secret friend. To find the best activities, consider which tasks you are most likely putting off right now. They may be the best time-gap fillers with the highest returns, and may produce the best feelings for finally getting them knocked off your to-do list.

## Obligated to get along

Getting along with coworkers is a lot like dealing with family. There are bound to be occasional squabbles, flare-ups, and coworkers who remind you of relatives you try to avoid visiting. Certainly, you don't always have to love each other, but the truth is that you are obligated to get along at work. One powerful strategy for doing so is improving your "other-awareness" skills. Unlike the more familiar self-awareness, other-awareness is the degree to which you are tuned in to the environment and what others are feeling or needing. Simply asking is the fastest route to finding out, but the real world doesn't always work that way. You can't be a mind reader, of course, but you can practice reading the signals. Is your coworker tired, frustrated, rushed, or experiencing anxiety? Is he or she avoidant and non-talkative, in need of space and privacy? This social skill takes practice, but the degree to which we possess it enables us to build better relationships. Ask yourself, "How are my other-awareness skills?" If you could use some skill building, take a day to notice the signals others send without spoken words.

## Toxic relationship troubles

A toxic relationship is a relationship that doesn't work. It produces negative physical and mental health consequences for its partners. The relationship is not simply a pattern of repeating disagreements, bickering, or periodic feelings of incompatibility. Instead, toxic relationships fuel worsening self-esteem and negative views of oneself. Fear of the other person because of physical, emotional, or verbal abuse is not uncommon. Toxic relationships are not characterized by reciprocal "give and take" or "I/you" conversations. Interactions in which each party feels respected and supported, heard, and valued are rare to nonexistent. Feeling shackled by patterns of dysfunctional behavior that leave you feeling drained is more common. It can be difficult to come to terms with the fact that you are in a toxic relationship. And it can be even harder to determine what to do about it. You need support. A professional counselor, employee assistance professional, or other mental health professional can offer perspective and help. You can discover how to feel safe and explore whether there is some way to intervene and make the changes necessary to salvage the relationship.

## National Depression Screening Day

Did you know that depression is the leading cause of disability in the United States or that it affects 9.9 million American adults or 5% of the adult population in a given year. Did you know that nearly twice as many women (6.7 million) as men (3.2 million) suffer from major depression each year. It is important to remember that all ethnic, racial and socioeconomic groups suffer from depression. Although major depression can be a devastating illness, it is highly treatable. Between 80 to 90 percent of those suffering from serious depression can be effectively treated and return to their normal daily activities and feelings. You can help yourself by attending a depression screening on October 8, 2009. During the screening you will complete a questionnaire and speak with a mental health professional if you wish.

National Depression Screening Day is scheduled for Thursday, October 8, 2009. For those in the downtown Nashville area, Free Screenings will be held on this date in conference room A & B on the second floor of the Cordell Hull Building. Screenings will be scheduled in 15 minute intervals between the hours of 11 am and 2 pm. Those interested can call the Office of Consumer Affairs, Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities at 615-532-6700 to schedule an appointment or may simply "walk in" without an appointment. All screenings are confidential.

For those who work and live in other areas of Tennessee there will be events throughout the state. To find a site near you, please go to the web site: [www.mentalhealthscreenings.org](http://www.mentalhealthscreenings.org). The web site also has additional information on a variety of topics as well as an anonymous online screening tool.

National Depression Screening Day held each year during Mental Illness Awareness Week, is designed to call attention to the illnesses of depression, manic-depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder on a national level, to educate the public about their symptoms and effective treatments, to offer individuals the opportunity to be screened for the disorders and to connect those in need of treatment to the mental health care system.