



# rEAP the Benefits

State Employee Assistance Program 1-800-308-4934

## Your role in a drug-free workplace

Drug-Free Workplace Awareness Week is October 26-25, 2009. It promotes drug-free workplaces and encourages workers with alcohol or drug problems to seek help. Here's how to contribute: 1) Discourage use of the phrase "functional alcoholic." It's an enabling term that minimizes the seriousness of alcoholism. It means "His or her drinking doesn't bother me." 2) See alcoholics or drug abusers as having responsibility for getting treatment, not guilty for having the illness. This approach hastens an abuser's admission to treatment. 3) Ask, "Am I enabling?" Are you covering for the abuser when he or she sleeps on the job, has behavioral issues, steals property, or comes to work late? If you cover for a drug-using employee calling in late, it is almost equal to buying that person their next drink or "use." The Employee Assistance Program is available to assist such employees in getting the necessary help. Encourage them to contact the EAP.

## Seeing an EAP counselor

Employees may attend EAP sessions on work time with approval from their supervisor. Transit cards may be used to travel to EAP appointments during the day. Persons may be seen for a maximum of six visits per problem episode. Up to two hours per session including travel time is allowed. Remember, all visits are confidential and at no cost to you with a professional, certified EAP counselor.

## Talk to the boss about job troubles

If you are concerned that you may not be measuring up to the expectations of your position, what should you do? Remaining in denial and hoping no one notices may be the worst move. Get feedback from the boss. Direct communication is almost always the better road to travel because it engages management in helping you to resolve problems. Silence puts the problem in management's lap, and you risk a more unpredictable and uncontrollable outcome. Still not sure what to do next? Talk to your employee assistance professional.

## Stopping victimization by online sexual predators

A missing piece of the puzzle when it comes to stopping Internet predators is having frank discussions to discourage teens from having romantic relationships with adults. Studies show that Internet sexual predators pose as adults, not teens, 95% of the time. They typically do not target young children. Instead they target teens and try to develop trusting relationships. They then engage in face-to-face meetings that victims perceive as romances and sexual adventures. Teen victims are more likely to have histories of physical or sexual abuse, family problems, and risky behavior. Most victims, perhaps as many as 75%, meet with the perpetrator more than once.

Source: American Psychological Association, Press Release, February 8, 2008

## Spouse abuse prevention

When you hear the term “spousal abuse,” do you think of a passive, physically abused, and tormented person in a low-income household, living with an alcoholic? This is one common stereotype, but spousal abuse occurs within all age ranges, ethnic backgrounds, and financial levels. Research shows that both men and women can be abuse victims, but women are more commonly reported as victims. “Not wanting to get involved” or seeing spousal abuse as “other people’s business” are common reactions of those who suspect abuse. An important step in prevention is dispelling stereotypes; but another step is recognizing subtle signs that can lead to earlier interventions. You are not as likely to see overt signs of abuse such as black eyes, cuts, or a disheveled appearance in the victim. Instead, you may hear about the victim’s fear, avoidance of topics that anger the abuser, evidence that the abuser controls access to friends or family, or statements by the victim that he or she can’t do anything right. These may be strong indicators of abuse. Ask about abuse and encourage a friend to get help when you see these indicators. If these problems are part of your own spousal relationship, you should understand that long-term coping can make it harder for you to take action, because victimization can include the false belief that you deserve the treatment you’re getting.

## Managing and eliminating internal stress

Everyday stress that people talk about usually includes traffic jams, work pressure, demands of the boss, parking tickets, and things that “happen” to us. We can manage the stressors, but their elimination is not likely. What about stress that you can control or eliminate, such as fear, unhelpful attitudes and beliefs, and unrealistic expectations? These real stressors compound other types of stress. Deal with them to improve your sleep, quiet your mind, and better shield you from the external stress you can’t eliminate.

## Too invested in conflict?

Everyone thinks resolving conflict is a good idea, but for some, conflict can be difficult to give up. Do you regret and despise conflict, but recognize at times that you feel gratified by it as a way to feel heard, understood, or simply “right”? Is conflict a way for you to feel recognized, protected, and more assured that you are not going to be dominated or controlled by someone? If so, you may be too invested in conflict. When we don’t let go of conflict, it can undermine our effectiveness and keep us from building the effective relationships we want at work. If you experience frequent conflict in relationships, take a closer look at the role conflict plays in your life. Get assistance from your EAP. You may be winning battles but losing the war while you’re always on the lookout for the next confrontation. Divesting yourself of a conflict style takes practice, but it’s a fight you can win.

## Eldercare and accidental neglect

Have a plan to manage your stress and get periodic relief from the responsibilities of taking care of an elderly loved one. Accumulated stress (if you lack a relief plan) increases the risk that you may postpone



care, overlook medication needs, fail to check in to see how things are going, or dismiss safety concerns in the home. This can happen to the most well-meaning family members. A common form of neglect includes isolation, lack of attention, and deprivation of companionship or social contact. With the elderly population growing, government agencies will focus more on protecting the elderly. Plan ahead so you don’t place your loved one at risk, experience burnout, or wind up being accused of neglect.