



rEAP the Benefits

State Employee Assistance Program 1-800-308-4934

So the layoff didn't affect you?

After downsizing, be prepared for a natural response experienced by many employees —“layoff survivor syndrome.” Relief can turn to feelings of guilt and powerlessness. Anticipating this phenomenon and being proactive will reduce your vulnerability to more severe effects like distrust and dissatisfaction with your work. Other symptoms can include lower morale and commitment, increased absenteeism, and depression. Work toward accepting that things have changed. Decide that you will move forward. This intention is key to feeling empowered, and it will help you spot opportunities for support and take steps that you may not have considered, such as talking to your employee assistance program, taking a fresh look at career and financial plans for your future, deciding not to lose trust in your employer, and avoiding the negative effects of anger in favor of understanding.

Is ADHD getting in the way?

Nine million adults in the United States suffer from ADHD. Left untreated, adult ADHD can make it difficult for sufferers to maintain steady employment. Here are some signs to watch for at work: inability to stay focused during meetings, difficulty finishing projects, poor time management, disorganization, and difficulty maintaining concentration. Treatments for ADHD include medication and psychological and behavioral therapies; there are also other approaches to the problem. Don't stay frustrated. Instead, seek help from your doctor, employee assistance professional, or other qualified professionals.

(Source: National Mental Health Association.)

Holiday eating survival tips

Here comes the fudge. The holidays add one pound to our waistlines every year, and most of us keep the weight once we've put it on. Formulate your game plan now. Don't wait to start after January 1st. This sort of “look ahead” diet planning can cause you to “live it up” now before cracking down. Try shooting for maintaining your current weight through the holidays. This year, try Googling “portion control strategies.” It will lead you to many ideas on the Web. A few include using smaller plates, eating before you attend holiday parties, doing drive-by “recons” at holiday buffets before piling up your plate, and allowing yourself leeway for eating some of the good stuff. Think moderation, not denial!

Forgo and fend off gossip

Gossip can range from harmless chitchat about a co-worker's embarrassing weekend skiing to mean-spirited remarks about an individual's personality or character. Left unchecked, some gossip can feed rumors that contribute to a distrustful and a conflict-ridden workplace. A few intervention skills can make you an advocate for civility. Practice stepping in rather than stepping back with these tactics: 1) The Redirect: Friendly questions or comments such as, “Can we talk about something important—like where we're going for lunch?” or “That reminds me of something funny...”; 2) The Big Shift: If the rumor involves someone such as the head of the marketing department, intervene with a question like, “Hey, speaking of marketing, what do you think of our company's advertising campaign?” 3) The Call It: When the gossip is malicious you must confront it by saying, “That sounds like a rumor to me,” and walk away. These teachable skills will foster trust and teamwork by not reinforcing the gossip and rumor mill.

Suicide: The correlation between substance abuse and suicide

Research shows strong links between suicide, substance abuse, and mental illness (particularly depression). 90% of people who die by suicide have a mental illness or a substance abuse disorder. Several national studies have shed light on the relationship between alcohol and other drug use and suicidal behavior. A clear relationship between drug abuse and suicide exists between current drug use and suicidal ideation and unplanned attempts in these individuals. 37% of people who die by suicide have measurable blood alcohol at the time of death. 50-75% of people who are alcohol-dependent and who die by suicide also suffer from depression. 40% of people who attempt suicide have measurable blood alcohol content at the time of the attempt. Over 20% of all non-traffic injury deaths associated with alcohol intoxication are ruled as suicides. People with substance abuse issues often display numerous risk factors for suicide attempts (social isolation, financial problems, etc.) and they are also prone to impulsive and/or high-risk behavior. (Borges et al., Analysis of US. National Co-morbidity Study (1880-2., Am J Epidemiol. 2000).

There are many ways you can support someone who is at risk. One way is to give the person the National Lifeline number. This number will connect them to the nearest crisis center where support and help are available. 1-800-273-TALK — it could save a life.

For more information and resources in Tennessee, go to Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (TSPN) web page www.tspn.org and the Jason Foundation, www.jasonfoundation.org.

Sleepy at work?

A lack of sleep inhibits concentration and the ability to carry on complex mental tasks. Other side effects include irritability, chronic tardiness, sleeping on the job, and a higher likelihood of on-the-job accidents. Negative health effects include weight gain and increased risk for heart problems and diabetes. Sleeplessness may be caused by sleep disorders or health and lifestyle issues. Develop a plan to get more sleep in consultation with your medical provider.

Emotional intelligence and customer service

You may be smart, but if you have an outstanding reputation as a customer service professional, it's probably your "emotional IQ" (EIQ) that deserves a lot of credit. Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, describe, understand, and work effectively with emotion. You're what's known as a "people person." If you don't see yourself as a "people person," here's how to boost your EIQ:

- Practice analyzing customer emotions. When you witness undesirable emotions, respond with a voice tone or statements that communicate your assurance that they will experience satisfaction.
- Validate your customer's feelings by using empathetic language like, "I can certainly understand your concern about this matter."
- Practice "upstream thinking" by anticipating and acting on your customers' needs even before they recognize them.
- Be aware of your body language. The way you stand, use your hands, or nod your head can send powerful messages of enthusiasm or indifference to customers, which they'll feel—and remember.

Overtime and methamphetamine

Methamphetamine is a dangerous and addictive illegal drug. The prolonged energetic state it produces is offset by erratic behavior, anxiety, paranoia, and depression. Long-term use can result in permanent brain damage, seizures, and even psychosis. If you work in a labor-intensive industry where long hours equal more income, you may be at higher risk for being introduced to meth. On-the-job deaths are high in industries such as oil and gas, and industry safety professionals fear meth is a contributing factor. Warning signs: hyperactivity, extreme mood swings, repetitive and compulsive behavior, and rapid weight loss. Refusing to enable workers could save your life or that of others.

Source: U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration