

November 2020

EAP NEWS

A worksite newsletter for employees provided by your Employee Assistance Program.



EAP Support for Employees

Did you know that you have access to free round-the-clock services to help you and your family? Whether you would like to talk with a counselor or need caregiving support, financial assistance, or a legal consultation we are here to help.

Thanksgiving Safety—Yes, It Is Possible

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, you can still have a meaningful Thanksgiving celebration with family and friends. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has released some suggested guidelines and social interaction ideas. They've also created a "degrees of risk" section so you can determine whether activities you've planned are low, medium, or high risk. Even better, they give you some workarounds for how to engage, yet still create memories rather than sour your event with boredom or the tragedy of a loved one becoming ill. Examples: Celebrate at the home of the person least likely to have been exposed to the coronavirus at work or within the community. Host your gathering outdoors, and if not, make sure the room or space is well-ventilated (for example, open a window). Discover more at www.cdc.gov. [Search "holiday celebrations" and "social gatherings"]

Hidden Stress Hazards of Remote Workers

If you work remotely, reach out for help before you begin "adapting" to potential stressors of your position in unhealthy ways. Don't let frustrations drag on. Research shows remote workers can face many unique challenges, including loneliness, inability to process stress with peers, irritability from interruptions at home, go-it-alone technology issues, worrying about completing tasks correctly, resentment from being unable to "switch off" from work to non-work, feeling frustrated at being unable to relax because of unfinished work only steps away, and parenting conflicts with guilt at being unable to attend child needs. Source: www.academia.edu [Search "psychological, teleworking"]

Boredom and the Pandemic

Boredom may be the least discussed experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. The international response has affected where we go and what we can do, who we can be with or even hug. Restaurants are closed or stark and bare, and more movie theaters shutter every day. Boredom is normal, but pandemic-related boredom is a bit different. Research shows it can have health effects, as it did during the 1918 Spanish flu. These can include behavioral issues, relapse of health conditions, worsening of compulsive-behavior disorders, negative thinking, depression, and even suicide. (Suicide rates increased during the 1918-19 Spanish flu.) Source (1): www.news.columbia.edu [search "why being bored"]; Source (2): www.academic.oup.com [search "covid suicide"]



5 Strategies to Enjoy the Holidays this Year

So often, the holidays are depicted as a time of blissful good cheer and family connection. Why do so many of us feel busy, pressured, or lonely each year instead? You have the power to do it differently this time around, no matter what the holidays hold for you. All you need is a strategy—one that actually works. This seminar will share 5 tips to enjoy the holidays this year and will guide you in creating a customized plan to apply them to your personal holiday situation.

Log-in any time this month to watch the webinar and ask the expert questions!



College Corner

If you are concerned about the high cost of college and college related debt, imagine if you could lower your college costs by \$5,000 or \$10,000 per year or more. The key to an affordable, successful college experience is an age-old statement: proper prior planning prevents poor performance—the six P's of success.

Early planning, starting sophomore or junior year, is better than late, or no planning. Still, if your student is already a senior, help is still available. But now it is crunch time.

As with most big ticket items, a counselor/coach is a necessary component of proper planning. A good college coach has the knowledge to find schools you might not have heard of, or considered, especially if you want to lower or avoid college related debt, and pay the least for the best possible education. You want a school that fits academically, socially, and financially. It takes expertise to find the best fit schools.

Contact your EAP or visit the college planning site <https://my.timetrade.com/book/N62GH> to arrange your free 15 minute consultation.

Don't Forget Flu Season

With all the attention on COVID-19, don't overlook getting a flu shot. Flu season usually starts around October and can run until the following May. It peaks in December and January. Fact: 35.5 million people got sick with influenza in 2019 and 34,200 died. 188 were children. You can discover locations and organizations that offer free flu shots by visiting www.health.com and searching "free flu shot." Source: CDC.gov [search "the flu season"]

National Caregivers Month

November is National Caregivers Month. It's a time to recognize, support, and empower family caregivers. One of the most comprehensive sources of help is www.caregiver.org, the website of the Family Caregiver Alliance. It is an online service that provides quality information, support, and resources for family caregivers of adults with chronic physical or cognitive conditions such as Alzheimer's, stroke, Parkinson's, and other illnesses. Sixty-eight percent of caregivers are women (aarp.org) who spend an average of 20 hours per week caring for a loved one. Whether you are a caregiver or in a relationship with a caregiver, do you know the signs and symptoms of caregiver distress? These symptoms may include feeling overwhelmed or constantly worried, feeling tired often, getting too much sleep or not enough sleep, gaining or losing weight, becoming easily irritated or angry, losing interest in activities you used to enjoy, feeling sad, having frequent headaches, bodily pain, or other physical problems. These symptoms can also give way to burnout. Caregivers need physical help with tasks, decisions, meal prep, errands, and chores. They especially need emotional support to help them deal with the stress of caring for an elderly person or other loved one with special needs. Most people do not know that caregiving is one of the toughest and most stressful jobs. This is because it is characterized by high levels of "job strain." Job strain includes having high levels of stress with low levels of control over how much, how often, and when caregiving will next be required. Source: www.unhealthywork.org/job-strain/definitions-and-formulations-of-job-strain/

Alcohol and Prescription Drugs Don't Mix

Do you take medication for a medical condition like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, migraines, anxiety, arthritis, sleep problems, or a heart condition? The Centers for Disease Control is growing more concerned about the risk associated with drinking alcohol while taking prescription medications. More people are aging, many are taking more medications, and thousands of the new drugs have adverse effects if you use them in combination with alcohol, even a little bit. Pay attention to warning labels about alcohol. Hundreds of medications do not mix with alcohol. Over 22 medications for high cholesterol may cause liver damage if combined with alcohol. Discover whether the medication you are taking has a side effect with alcohol at www.niaaa.nih.gov. [Search "harmful interactions pdf"]

Election Anxiety and Stress

If you've been feeling anxious and stressed about the upcoming election, remember that you aren't alone. In addition to using your EAP services, here are a few ways you can turn election stress into courage and compassion: **1) Do Something.** Think about what matters most to you post-election and decide how you can participate to further that cause. **2) Look for the Good.** One antidote to moral distress is moral elevation: witnessing the good in others. **3) Be the Good.** Look for ways to make an immediate difference in your community.