

Productivity,
Wellness and You!

The **CONCERN CONNECTION**
Your Employee Assistance Program
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Making "No" Mean "No"

Attempts to stop offensive behavior can be undermined if you are more concerned about hurt feelings or what others might think of your being firm. It's crucial to avoid sending double messages. Apologizing, smiling, or not clearly saying "no" can undermine your goal of having offensive behavior stop. If something concerns or offends you enough to make an offending person stop (e.g., sexual harassment), try the head shake and both hands up to indicate "stop" and say, "Stop. Please." Tell the person you do not feel comfortable with a specific behavior, certain words, or particular actions. Policies and rules that prohibit offensive or hostile behavior work, but they depend on clear and assertive communication, and employee willingness to act on them.



Is There a Bully Online?

Bullying incidents when viewed in isolation may appear trivial or may be unrecognized by others, yet they take a severe toll on productivity. Cyber-bullying is the use of e-mail, cell phones, and the Internet to perpetrate hostile behavior toward another person. Chronic criticism of a competent or popular, yet vulnerable, worker is a common form of bullying, and feelings of inadequacy by the perpetrator drive his or her behavior. As cyber-bullying, or online bullying, gains recognition, it is important to recognize victimization, talk about intervention, and avoid communicating with coworkers in ways that can be perceived as bullying.



Help for Long-Distance Caregivers



The National Institute on Aging has issued a new resource to help long-distance caregivers. *So Far Away: Twenty Questions for Long-Distance Caregivers* is a booklet providing resources and ideas designed to make long-distance caregiving more convenient and fulfilling. For example, question number three covers "What can I really do from far away?" and provides a list of examples and ideas common to long-distance caregivers. *So Far Away* can be viewed online, or you may order a printed copy at www.nia.nih.gov.

Avoid New Grad Mistakes on the Job



If you are a young person or newly hired graduate, take time to observe the corporate culture so you can adapt to it and avoid common mistakes that can interfere with your acceptance, reputation, and productivity. Note what people wear to work. What time they come to work. How late employees stay. How young employees speak to older workers. What values coworkers share, and what slang common to young people is avoided. These observations can also be powerful clues for how to form a satisfying relationship with your employer. Deciding that you will adopt them may be a key to your success.

Should You have a Five-year Plan?



Imagine a large business organization making decisions daily with no idea what will be decided tomorrow. No plan. No direction. To avoid this certain route to business failure, an organization develops a strategic plan covering three years or more. It's not easy, and there is no certainty of the end result, but the ship can't be steered without it. You are making decisions every day, but do you have a plan in mind so you end up where you want to go? A plan will help you feel less restless, more productive, and more in control of your life. The younger you start, the better. Start by putting your imagination to work. Decide upon several long-term personal and professional goals. Divide your five-year plan into one-year blocks with achievable subgoals for each year—your deliverables. Create incremental steps within each year. Put the plan where you can see it often, and keep acting and checking. Make adjustments, stay flexible, and be adaptable as you go—even big businesses do that. (Some companies plan for more than one national disaster per year in their strategic plans.) The key is to stay proactive, not reactive, in your decision making. The goal is to avoid arriving someday at the imaginary crossroads of your life wondering, "Where do I go from here?" Don't fear that the plan for your life will interfere with your enjoyment of it. On the contrary, having a plan will allow you to keep your mind off the end result and enjoy the whole ride.

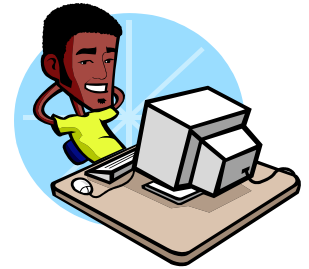
Don't Blow Off the Blues



If chronic stress causes you to hit the snooze button more often, has you feeling apathy for activities you used to enjoy, or has you calling in sick when you just feel down, don't take these feelings lightly if they persist. A research study last month from Harvard Medical School discovered that long-term exposure to the stress hormone cortisol contributes to the development of the anxiety associated with depression, even if there has never been a history of depression in the past. If you suspect you are going through a low point or are experiencing higher than usual anxiety, talk to your EAP or health care provider. Early diagnosis and treatment of minor depression can prevent it from erupting into something unmanageable.

American Psychological Association, Chronic Exposure to Stress, April 18, 2006 Press Release

Guarding Your Teen



The Internet is a great learning tool for teenagers. However, it can also expose them to predators eager to exploit their vulnerability. As a parent, it is important to monitor your teen's online activities. While some teens may feel this is an invasion of their privacy, parents need to be vigilant, just as they do when they allow their teens to stay out late at night with friends. You should know whom your teen talks to and when. Monitor all of your teen's online activity, such as use of chat rooms, blogs, bulletin boards, instant messaging, and e-mail. Predators often meet unsuspecting teens in chat rooms prior to communicating with them via other means. If you find that your teen is receiving inappropriate communications from a potential predator, contact your local law enforcement agency for assistance.

Increasing Your Influence



Employees with influence get their ideas heard and, more importantly, have ideas accepted. You don't have to be charismatic in order to be influential. You simply need to apply principles of influence: 1) Strive to be an authority by staying well-informed about your area of expertise. 2) Plan well-thought-out, logical arguments for your ideas that consider the needs and wants of others so you win their hearts and minds. 3) Develop a genuine interest in others' values, and grow a network of mutually productive relationships. 4) Practice looking, sounding, and acting confident so you are seen as an authority. 5) Observe influential people in your organization, noting their social interactions. 6) Be open to feedback, negotiate with others, and practice self-discipline in managing your emotions in response to disappointments.