



Office of
Employee Relations
Work-Life Services

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FrontLine Employee

Wellness, Productivity, and You!

Stress Awareness Month: Managing Stress with Mindful Walking

Walking is a great way to manage stress, but many people carry their stress with them while walking. They replay conversations, worry about what's next, or try to solve work problems. In doing so, they undermine the benefit they are seeking. Instead, learn the skill of "mindful walking." Mindful walking combines movement with present-moment awareness. This means observing your environment, noticing your senses, and limiting stressful thoughts. In essence, it allows the mind and body to work together rather than cancel each other out, maximizing stress relief. How to do it: Start by noticing your breathing, the rhythm of your steps, and how your body feels. Pay attention to your surroundings—the sounds, sights, and air on your skin. When your mind drifts, gently redirect it without judgment. This is meditation in motion. Even a 10–15-minute mindful walk can lower tension, improve focus, and refresh productivity.



Vaping Prevention Resource New Guide for Parents

Across the United States, roughly 5–6% of minors (middle and high school students) currently use e-cigarettes, according to recent national surveys—that's about 1.6 million youth. In Canada, about 7-8% vape. Research has shown that youth who vape risk chronic nicotine addiction, lung damage, and an increased risk of heart damage and stroke, and later, they're more likely to smoke cigarettes and use marijuana. New information from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to help you understand vaping, its harms, and how to prevent and intervene in its use is now available for parents and educators at: [DEA Vaping Resources](#)



Psychological Safety Rules for Your Team

You'll maximize the productivity, cohesiveness, and creativity of your team if everyone feels psychologically safe. Psychological safety means you can offer ideas, challenge, or correct without worrying about rejection or ridicule. Use the mnemonic "S.P.E.A.K." with your team. S.P.E.A.K. means it is safe to surface problems early without being accused of rocking the boat; push back by disagreeing respectfully without fear of retaliation; expose mistakes openly by admitting when you're wrong; ask "any" questions without embarrassment; and kick up ideas without fear of being mocked. Developing psychological safety isn't easy, but with reinforcement, you'll build a more productive team and a better work environment.



Better Work-Family Balance

Work can feel all-consuming. At the same time, doing right by your family isn't easy—and when you can't be there, guilt may show up. The good news is that you can improve work and family balance with focus and a little effort. Consider these work-family balance hacks.

The Carve Out: Block just 5-15 minutes of fully present time each day. For example, walking a dog together, making tea and chatting, or playing checkers. Loving Chores: You must do chores, so invite family—cooking, grocery shopping, or yard work. Love Messages: When you can't make it to an event, instead leave a note, send a caring text, or record a voice mail. These are also called "micro-rituals." Each creates emotional togetherness—that's your goal. Make these hacks a habit.



What Women Should Know About Alcohol



Men have higher rates of alcohol-related hospitalizations and deaths than women do, but unfortunately, these statistics overshadow alcohol's *disease effects* on women: Illnesses associated with alcohol use claim more lives of women than of men. Women who drink alcohol face a higher risk of alcohol-related problems than men do because women, on average, weigh less and have less water in their bodies than men, so their blood alcohol concentration will be higher after the same number of drinks. Because most women do not metabolize alcohol as quickly as men do, they also are more susceptible to long-term health problems. The risk of alcohol-related liver disease, brain shrinkage, heart damage, and breast and other cancers are all greater for women, even if they consume less alcohol over a lifetime than men.

Learn more at: www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/women-and-alcohol and <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/alcohol-related-deaths-increasing-united-states>.

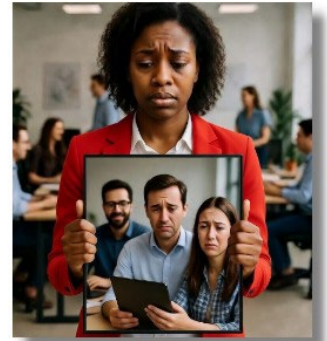
Depression at Work: What It Feels Like

Symptoms of depression are easy to list, but here's behaviorally what they can feel like to help you identify it easier. You're at your desk, but not present. You read the same paragraph repeatedly and retain nothing. Simple decisions feel exhausting. You've felt in the dumps for months, and everything seems flat. You smile when you should, say the right things, but it feels like you're only 80% present. At home, the couch owns you. Screens become a refuge not because they're interesting, but because they require nothing. Dishes pile up. Texts go unanswered. You cancel plans, feel guilty, and that guilt makes everything heavier. You tell yourself you're just tired. Monday comes and nothing has changed. Sleep isn't restful. Appetite shifts. At work, projects you once cared about collect dust. You do just enough to get by, feeling ashamed as the cycle continues. You know something is wrong. You remember feeling motivated. But knowing doesn't fix it—and that gap is its own suffering. It's time to call your EAP coordinator.



Contagious Energy: Your Mood Matters

Emotional contagion is the process by which people unconsciously absorb and mirror the emotions of others through social interaction and observation. In marketing applications, ads with emotional content is proven to be shared more quickly.



Research also shows that emotional states spread faster than information. This has important implications for workplace productivity, team morale, and work climate. Use this knowledge by managing your emotional state, recognizing how it can influence others. Your tone, facial expression, and attitude may affect peers more than you realize. If you practice staying calm and solution-focused, you will positively shape the workplace climate. Also, protect your well-being by appreciating the emotional contagion dynamic. The next time you are exposed to negativity, remind yourself: "This is their stuff, not mine." This prevents you from absorbing others' stress, and like putting your hand in a line of falling dominoes, you become the stopgap interrupting the spread of negativity.

Yes, the EAP Can Do That!

Remember, EAPs can help with concerns you might think aren't serious. A few examples: 1) Career issues: looking for a new job or career? EAP can assist with various resources (e.g., career mobility office, or tuition reimbursement).

2) Substance use screening: Are you or someone you know concerned about your drinking or drug use? Maybe they're right. Either way, participate in a quick screening. You'll know for sure and what to do next. 3) Chronic low-grade tension with a co-worker? It can drain your energy and focus. EAP can connect you with ways to learn communication strategies, boundary setting, and conflict resolution skills.

