



THE EMPLOYEE ENHANCEMENT NEWSLETTER

Public Employee Benefits Alliance

HELPFUL RESOURCES FROM YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

MAR
19

March Online Seminar

Interpersonal Communication - Social Skills for Success

Explore verbal and nonverbal communication to better understand how interpersonal communication may be interpreted by others.

Available on-demand
starting March 19th at
www.deeroakseap.com

About Your EAP

Life Can Be Hectic. The EAP Can Help You Find Your Balance.

Deer Oaks, your EAP, is always available to you and your household members. If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline. Counselors are available 24/7 to provide you with immediate care.

Work-life Services

Need to delegate items on your “to-do” list? Your EAP can help. Our work-life consultants are available day and night to assist you with locating nearly endless resources such as finding care for your pets, personal care, travel, home improvement contractors, education, and managing your day-to-day responsibilities at home, and work.

Helpline: 866-327-2400
Web: www.deeroakseap.com
Email: eap@deeroaks.com

March 15th is World Sleep Day and March 3-10 is National Sleep Awareness Week. According to the National Sleep Foundation, adults (ages 26-64) need between 7-9 hours of sleep each night. How do you stack up? If you are falling short, talk to your EAP. They can help you to develop healthier habits and reduce stress in order to get a better night's sleep.

Getting a Good Night's Sleep

Being older doesn't mean you have to feel tired all the time. There are many things you can do to help you get a good night's sleep. Here are some ideas:

- Follow a regular sleep schedule. Go to sleep and get up at the same time each day, even on weekends. Try to avoid napping in the late afternoon or evening, as it may keep you awake at night.
- Develop a bedtime routine. Take time to relax before bedtime each night. Some people watch television, read a book, listen to soothing music, or soak in a warm bath.
- Keep your bedroom dark, not too hot or too cold, and as quiet as possible.
- Have a comfortable mattress, a pillow you like, and enough blankets for the season.
- Exercise at regular times each day, but not within 3 hours of your bedtime.
- Make an effort to get outside in the sunlight each day.
- Be careful about when and how much you eat. Large meals close to bedtime may keep you awake, but a light snack in the evening can help you get a good night's sleep.
- Stay away from caffeine late in the day. Caffeine found in coffee, tea, soda, and hot chocolate can keep you awake.
- Drink fewer beverages in the evening. Waking up to go to the bathroom and turning on a bright light break up your sleep.
- Remember that alcohol won't help you sleep. Even small amounts make it harder to stay asleep.
- Use your bedroom only for sleeping. After turning off the light, give yourself about 20 minutes to fall asleep. If you're still awake and not drowsy, get out of bed. When you feel sleepy, go back to bed.

Safe Sleeping

Try to set up a safe and restful place to sleep. Make sure you have smoke alarms on each floor of your house or apartment and lock the outside doors before going to bed. Other ideas for a safe night's sleep are

- Keep a telephone with emergency phone numbers by your bed.
- Have a good lamp within reach that turns on easily.
- Put a glass of water next to the bed in case you wake up thirsty.
- Use night lights in the bathroom and hall.
- Don't smoke, especially in bed.
- Remove area rugs so you won't trip if you get out of bed in the middle of the night.
- Don't fall asleep with a heating pad on, as it may burn you.

Sweet Dreams

There are some tricks to help you fall asleep. You don't really have to count sheep, but you could try counting slowly to 100. Some people find that playing mental games makes them sleepy. For example, tell yourself its 5 minutes before you have to get up, and you're just trying to get a few extra winks. Other people find that relaxing their body puts them to sleep. You might start by telling yourself that your toes feel light as feathers and then work your way up the rest of the body saying the same words. You may drift off to sleep before getting to the top of your head.

If you feel tired and unable to do your activities for more than 2 or 3 weeks, you may have a sleep problem. Talk to your doctor about changes you can make to get a better night's sleep.

Source: U.S. National Institutes of Health National Institute on Aging. (Updated 2015, December 22). A good night's sleep. Retrieved February 22, 2016, from <http://www.nia.nih.gov>

Where's the Sodium?

Over 75% of dietary sodium (salt) comes from eating packaged and restaurant foods. But only a small portion (11%) comes from salt added at the table or in cooking. Too much sodium can raise blood pressure and lead to heart disease.

These 10 types of food are the greatest sources of sodium in the American diet:

1. Breads and rolls
2. Cold cuts and cured meats
3. Pizza
4. Fresh and processed poultry
5. Soups
6. Sandwiches (hot dogs, hamburgers, subs)
7. Cheese
8. Mixed pasta dishes (spaghetti with meat sauce, for example)
9. Mixed meat dishes (such as beef stew)
10. Savory snacks (the ever-popular chips, pretzels, popcorn)

Because so much of our sodium is already added to food, it can be challenging to significantly reduce your sodium intake. The FDA offers some advice on how you can reduce sodium when making daily dietary choices.

- Buy fresh or frozen meat and poultry instead of canned, smoked, or processed meats.
- Choose fresh, frozen, or low sodium or no-salt-added canned vegetables.
- Flavor food with herbs and spices instead of salt.
- Choose unsalted snacks.
- Consider sodium when dining out. Request nutrition information or check the restaurant's website in advance, and choose lower sodium options. Also, ask for your meal to be prepared without salt and order sauces and salad dressings on the side and use less.

Health-e headlines™



Understanding Stress and Building Resilience

What is stress?

People experience stress as they adjust to a continually changing environment. Stress has physical and emotional effects; it can create both positive and negative feelings. Positive stress can energize you and help you reach your peak performance. However, too much pressure turns into negative stress. Prolonged exposure to stress can be harmful to your physical and mental well-being. One of the first steps to managing stress is to understand what causes it.

Sources of Stress

There is a wide range of sources of stress. These include daily hassles, major life events, home, and work. What are the things in your life that cause you stress?

Home

Stress factors can include

- Relationships
- Money problems
- Children
- Sickness
- Housework

Work

Work stress factors include

- Overload
- Relationships
- Pace of change
- Deadlines
- Unrealistic workloads or demands

Did you know?

- Over 80% of the world's technological advances have occurred since 1900.
- A newspaper today contains more information than a person would see in his or her lifetime in the 18th century.

Stress Management and Prevention

In addition to managing your response to stress, it is helpful to identify ways to prevent harmful levels of stress and build stress resilience.

Prevention

- Look at root causes of stress.
- Focus on building resilience to stress.

Prevention Ideas

- Keep a stress log—identify the sources of stress in your life.
- Identify your signs of stress—be aware of your stress level before it is unmanageable.

Building Stress Resilience

- Exercise three to four times a week to reduce muscle tension.
- Minimize intake of sugar, caffeine, and other artificial stimulants.
- Get enough rest.
- Practice at least one relaxation exercise.

Stress Signs

Know your stress signs. A second step to managing stress is to understand how you react to it. Which of the following signs of stress do you experience?

Common stress signs include

Muscle tension	Tearfulness
Headaches	Depression
Indigestion	Boredom
Dry mouth	Apathy
Diarrhea or constipation	Changes in sleep patterns
Anxiety or excessive worry	Withdrawal
Difficulty concentrating	Accident proneness
Forgetfulness	Reduced sex drive
Irritability	Increase in use of drugs, smoking, or alcohol

Some of these signs may have causes other than stress. Check with your doctor if symptoms persist.

Stress Relievers

- Get up 15 minutes earlier in the morning (making morning mishaps less stressful).
- Listen to music.
- Make time for fun.
- Unplug your phone.

Stress Strategies

Step 1: Awareness

In order to manage stress, it is helpful to understand what causes your stress and how you react to stress. Ask yourself these questions:

- What are the sources of stress in my life?
- What are my emotional and physical reactions to them?
- What are my strengths in dealing with stress? (e.g., "I delegate well.")
- What are my limitations in dealing with stress? (e.g., "I sometimes have difficulty saying no to work requests.")

Step 2: Plan

Develop a plan of action by asking yourself these questions:

- What sources of stress can I eliminate or avoid?
- What sources of stress are changeable?
- What one change could I start with that would make the most difference in my life?
- Who can I enlist in helping or supporting me with this change?
- How can I include taking care of myself in my plan?

Step 3: Action

Put your plan into action:

- Choose one new strategy to add to or change about your current strategies for dealing with stress.
- Practice a relaxation technique (breathing is one of the most effective ways of reducing tension).
- Identify what you do well at in managing your stress (use your past experience as a resource).
- Deal with the sources of stress that you can change (create a plan to eliminate, reduce, or avoid these sources).

Stress Tips

- Share your concerns—talk to someone.
- Do something you enjoy.
- Take a brisk walk.
- Exercise.
- Take a break.
- Get a change of scenery.
- Set aside time for yourself.

Relaxation Technique

- Find a comfortable place to sit, close your eyes, and begin to pay attention to your breathing.
- Take a deep breath in, and exhale slowly.
- Continue breathing deeply, and imagine a relaxing holiday spot.
- As you continue to breathe slowly, look around at the sights, imagine the sounds, the smells, and the like.
- See yourself relaxed in this place.
- As you bring your attention back to the room you are in, remember that you can visit this place again anytime.

Other Ideas

Additional ideas to reduce or combat stress include

- Counseling
- Yoga
- Meditation
- Hypnosis
- Biofeedback
- Relaxation CDs
- Massage
- Complementary medicine

Action Planning

- Set short and long-term goals.
- Plan to make one change at a time.
- Check that your goal is specific and measurable.

Source: Workplace Options. (Revised 2018). Understanding stress and building resilience. Raleigh, NC: Author.