

# eap newsletter

FrontLine *Employee* worksite newsletter provided by your EAP.



## Taking Care of Yourself at Work

Combat workplace stress throughout the day with regular interventions. Whittle away at stress rather than doing something about it only when you hit the wall at day's end. Think "preventive maintenance."

The goal: leaving work feeling less exhausted. Target four areas: 1) The Body – Create means of stretching, moving, and exercising during the day. 2) The Mind – Practice mindfulness, meditation, or breathing exercises that produce calm. 3) Diet – Consume energy-giving foods. See a list at "bit.ly/hi-foods". 4) Shift Focus – Practice focusing on enjoyable pursuits or distractions unrelated to work. These self-care interventions will increase productivity and your resilience.

## Benzodiazepine Addiction: It's Still Here

Addiction to benzodiazepines (benzos) could become a national crisis because anxiety disorders, often treated with benzos, are also increasing. Klonopin, Valium, and Xanax are examples of benzos. Sleep problems and panic attacks are also treated with benzos. One in 20 people are prescribed benzos in the U.S., and addiction is possible, even when they are used as prescribed. Withdrawal reactions make benzos the most dangerous drugs to quit unsupervised. If you are using benzos and experience sleep problems, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, goose bumps, uncontrollable leg movements, and muscle pains, see your doctor and follow his or her instructions.

## Helping Kids Avoid Peer Pressure

Help your child explore what it takes to be successful at thwarting peer pressure. With the start of school again, there's no time like the present for this information. Try some fun role plays and skill builders. Circumventing peer pressure has five key components: 1) Saying "No" – Learning how and meaning it. 2) Situation Avoidance – Taking action to steer clear of events likely to include peer pressure. 3) Understanding Consequences – Accepting that giving in to peer pressure has consequences and effects. 4) Valuing Self-worth – Having confidence and valuing self-worth over peer approval. 5) Resilience – Learning to recover from disapproval by peers (including bullying, which often accompanies peer pressure) for making the right choice. To find more information about helping kids to avoid peer pressure [www.yourlifecounts.org/blog/20-ways-avoid-peer-pressure](http://www.yourlifecounts.org/blog/20-ways-avoid-peer-pressure).



## Take Your First Step Toward Financial Wellness

Are you "financially well"? Financial wellness means having control over day-to-day and monthly finances; having the ability to absorb a financial shock or major expense; enjoying life without living beyond your means; and being on track to meet your financial goals (e.g., retirement.). Unfortunately, a majority of people can't say they are financially well in one or more of these areas, and many struggle with all of them. Do you need to take the first step toward financial wellness? You may be procrastinating, using denial, and practicing a bit of fantasy in thinking to postpone this decision. Start with an appointment to see your organization's EAP, or search for free financial counseling assistance in your community. Once you take even the smallest step on your journey to financial wellness, you will experience relief because you will know you are steering this process rather than allowing the problem to steer you toward a larger crisis.



Integrated Behavioral Health



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## Wellness and Prevention for Isolated Jobs

Whether you are a seafaring mariner on a cargo ship or a telecommuter who enjoys a job with less structure, lots of alone time, and little contact with others, take an inventory of your health habits. Isolated workers are at risk for sitting longer, skipping meals, suffering from substance abuse, eating more junk food, and having irregular sleep patterns. Greater incidences of heart disease, periodontal problems, alcoholism, kidney stones, and cancer are all potential consequences. You may love the minimal structure of your position, but structure is good for people. Establish a routine so you not only are productive, but also remain healthy. Source: [www.teleworkrecruiting.com](http://www.teleworkrecruiting.com).

## What Assertiveness Can Do for You

Here are eight benefits to motivate you to be more assertive: 1) Deciding to be assertive can raise self-esteem because you pat yourself on the back for speaking up or taking action. 2) Assertiveness increases self-awareness by helping you identify your feelings and clarify your needs more quickly. 3) Assertiveness is a proactive behavior. Rather than wait for something to affect you, you act to effect change. As a result, you get more of what you want out of life instead of waiting for it to come to you. 4) Assertiveness allows others to learn more about you and understand your needs. 5) Assertiveness allows you to take more risks, be more creative, and have less fear of failure. 6) Assertiveness is self-reinforcing. When you are assertive, you empower yourself. You reduce the natural desire to hold back, postpone a project, not take credit, or fail to test your ideas. Rather than err on the side of caution, you act, knowing that it is better to fail as a step toward success. 7) All decisions are rooted in assertiveness. Making faster and more effective decisions is a by-product of an assertive person. 8) At work, knowing what your needs are and acting to get them met improves job satisfaction. This affects your desire and willingness to engage, and this behavior is something employers value because it raises productivity.

## Empathize Without Becoming a Counselor

Empathizing is how we form meaningful relationships. With empathy, we don't just recognize a person's feelings and experiences—we move closer to them by causing them to feel as though they are deeply heard. This creates bonding. Do you have a knack for being a good listener and empathizer? If so, remember to quickly refer a friend or coworker to the next step, such as the EAP or another helpful community resource. Spending time engaging with the problems of others is generous and may offer relief, but too much involvement can often cause delay or decrease the motivation to take the next step necessary to finding a lasting solution. All of us should try to help others, but professional counseling is an applied sciences occupation. You may not mind lending personal time to offer support as a good listener, but taking on this role for too long could facilitate a crisis if the problem requires specialized help and help is not acquired soon enough.

## Mental Health at College

Responsibilities faced by college students can be exciting but also stressful. Even well-adjusted students can feel overwhelmed. When fear, depression, or anxiety hits, smart students seek help from college mental health counseling services. Seeking help does not mean a student is unable to handle the rigors of college life. Discuss college resources with your student, including where to seek help. Be positive, upbeat, and optimistic, and de-stigmatize the idea of seeking help. Depression and suicide-related issues are serious ones for young people, and are part of why counseling resources exist. Federal privacy laws may prevent colleges from notifying you that your student has sought help, so if it is important to you, inquire about arranging permission in advance. This does not make you an overbearing "helicopter parent." Do what makes sense for your family. Learn more: [[www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com); search "Suicide college students"].



## Managing Negative People

Negativity in one employee can spread, affecting the climate of the entire workplace and increasing the emotional burden of your job. While managing negative people is tough, there are methods which enable you to keep your cool, defuse employee negativity, and create a positive culture in your workplace.

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



## IBH's College Corner

Knowing the "percentages" will have a BIG impact on your student, and your wallet. This addresses two key benchmarks that should concern all parents. These are:

- 4 year "graduation" rates (and 5 & 6 year rates)
- Average time it takes to graduate with a Bachelor's degree
- Public schools = 59% for 6 year grad rates
- Privates schools = 66%
- Sophomore year "retention" rates
- Who returns for Sophomore year
- National average is 75%

Old school thinking was that kids should (BETTER) graduate in 4 years. However, only about 50% will. If your kid doesn't graduate in 4 years, it may not be his/her fault. But it will end up costing your family significantly more money.

The US Department of Education cites changing majors and transferring as 2 of the main reasons behind this. By finding the best college based on academic, social & financial fit, BEFORE YOUR STUDENT APPLIES, you can increase the chances of YOUR student graduating in 4 years!

Let our team help you. Want to save time, effort, frustration, and MONEY?!? Call the EAP to arrange a free 15-minute consultation, and review your college plan. This call may save you thousands of dollars.

(Information provided by the National Center for Education Statistics and US Department of Education)