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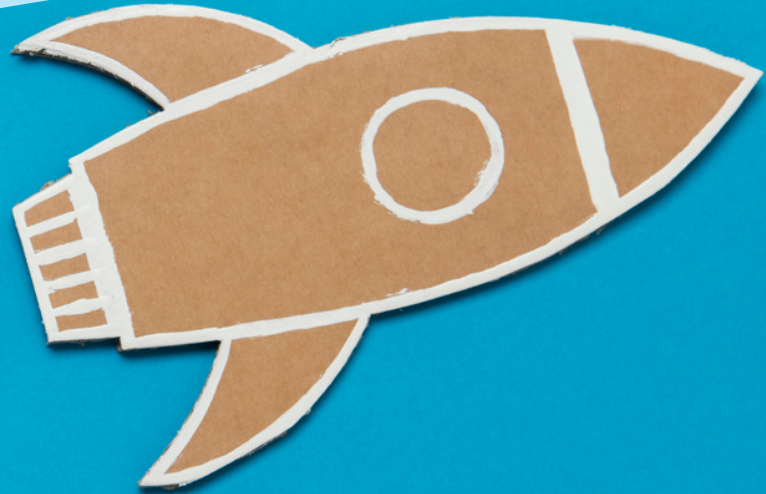
Volume 25, Issue 3

Balance

A newsletter to help employees maintain a healthy work-life balance

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Balance is a newsletter produced by your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that spotlights relevant issues related to personal and professional wellness. The EAP is a confidential and free resource, available to you to help manage life's various challenges. If any of the topics below resonate with you, consider contacting your EAP for more information, including referrals for local EAP counselors.

BOOST YOUR MOOD THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Set yourself up for a more positive day at work by experimenting with these positivity strategies and see if they develop into a habit, leading to a more productive day.

1. Be intentional about making your day positive by reminding yourself about the things you appreciate about your job.
2. Set achievable goals each day. Don't just "let things happen".
3. Prioritize tasks associated with these goals.
4. Practice time management during the day.
5. Initiate positive interactions with others and nurture these relationships to maintain a positive and enjoyable workplace.
6. Consciously practice gratitude for a minute or two during the day to reflect on what you like about your job. This will cultivate a positive mindset and build resilience for when the going gets tough. Incorporating these strategies into your daily routine will empower you to navigate challenges that may arise, ensuring a fulfilling and resilient journey in your professional life.

STAYING PROACTIVE WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE

Many studies have shown men to be less proactive than women regarding preventative healthcare. If you're a man, avoid falling prey to societal or cultural influences that can shorten your life:

- ◆ "Powering through illness" — feeling pressure to display toughness and self-reliance;
- ◆ "Dismissing the small stuff" — ignoring minor symptoms of health problems;
- ◆ "Fear" — delaying preventive healthcare to avoid bad news, embarrassment, invasive procedures, or discussion of "sensitive" topics;
- ◆ "Lack of health curiosity" — not being savvy about men's health issues, getting the right information, and understanding your susceptibility to illnesses, which often are curable in the early stages.

Source: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22081983/



USING CORE VALUES TO SHAPE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance is often treated as a mere afterthought, with people acknowledging its importance only when they are overwhelmed and desperate. However, Dr. J. Gerald Suarez, an esteemed educator, consultant, and executive coach at the University of Maryland, emphasizes that work-life balance should be viewed not as a luxury but as an essential element crucial for achieving success in our professional lives. His position is that work-life balance does not guarantee success, but without it, failure is almost inevitable.

To enhance work-life balance, it is vital to resist the allure of relying solely on coping mechanisms to manage stress that provide only temporary relief. Doing so can become a habit of coping that only facilitates increased deterioration of your equilibrium between work and personal life. A more intelligent approach starts with introspection and decisions. You can't do everything well, so be deliberate and identify the core values and experiences that hold the utmost importance in your life. Next, embrace these core beliefs and principles as the foundation of your life. Let them shape your decisions and establish priorities for achieving work-life balance. Take a proactive approach by scheduling a balance of work-life activities on your calendar. Instead of trying to fit them in or treating them as secondary to other commitments, make them a nonnegotiable part of your available time. Using this approach will be more likely to contribute to stability in your life and help you maintain mindful choices that add to success in work and beyond.

Source: www.rhsmith.umd.edu/research/pursuing-work-life-balance-isnt-want-its-need-success

BUILD A TRANSITION RITUAL FROM WORK TO HOME

If you find yourself worn out after a day at work, you might benefit from a "transition routine" for when you go home so you are more emotionally available to family members or roommates. This might include structured relaxation exercises, listening to calming music, or engaging in a mindfulness exercise. When you do these routinely, you can develop a habit signal that helps you shift your focus more quickly. You'll be more naturally responsive with less effort, both in conversation, active listening, empathy, and eye contact with those at home. If you need some support in this area, talk to your EAP, and don't rule out counseling to help make it happen. Be cautious about alcohol use, as it can relax you temporarily but can lead to larger problems and strained relationships, or it can interfere with a truly beneficial transition routine.

MODERATE DRINKING AND RISK OF CANCER

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the American Cancer Association, and the International Agency for Research on Cancer recognize that regular or heavy alcohol consumption raises one's risk for at least six types of cancer: breast, colorectal, liver, neck, esophageal, and pancreatic. Use of alcohol exposes your body to a toxin called acetaldehyde when the liver does its job of breaking down alcohol. Like tobacco smoke, acetaldehyde is classified as a Level 1 carcinogen. It can damage DNA. So, the more exposure, the higher the risk. It's why several years ago, these organizations agreed that more than one drink per day for a woman and more than two drinks per day for a man is considered risky or heavy drinking. Genetics and other factors may contribute to the risk of cancer as well. The EAP is a resource for you if you are struggling with healthy alcohol consumption or looking for other ways to cope.

Source: www.cancer.org [search alcohol, cancer, acetaldehyde]



BACK TO SCHOOL WITH SUCCESS

Set yourself up for success this year. Try these tactics to reduce stress and feel less overwhelmed.

1. Plan ahead. Go back to school shopping early to check school supplies and other essentials off the list.
2. Complete paperwork and add important dates to the family calendar before the start of the year.
3. Address your child's anxieties about going back to school. Take a trip to the school, walk around a bit, talk about expectations and fears, and offer reassurance.
4. Ease into the school year routine. Gradually adjust bedtimes a week before school starts to make settling into the new routine easier.
5. Attend school orientations and open houses. These events provide valuable information you will be chasing down for weeks if you don't attend. They also help ease anxiety.

USING YOUR EAP AS A RELEASE

Don't hesitate to use your organization's EAP as an outlet to vent your frustrations. Venting your emotions to a trained professional can be helpful and allow the release of pent-up feelings that may have been building up over time. Expressing your emotions can be cathartic and provide a sense of relief. The EAP is confidential and offers a safe, nonjudgmental space for you to express yourself. Being heard and understood validates your feelings and experiences. The EAP can also help with identifying any underlying issues and presenting solutions. Discuss what's on your mind now which can avoid a crisis call to EAP down the road.

Kepro Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The Employee Assistance Program through Kepro assists organizations and their workforce in managing the personal challenges that impact employee well-being, performance and effectiveness. Kepro's life management consultants employ a comprehensive approach that identifies issues impacting the employee and assists them in developing meaningful solutions.

The Employee Assistance Program can be accessed anytime, for free, confidential support from a professional consultant or online resource. Call or log on today.

 **Phone: 1.800.833.3031**

 **Website: www.EAPHelplink.com**

 **Company Code: IOWA**

Balance is a newsletter produced by your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that spotlights relevant issues related to personal and professional wellness. Kepro EAP services provide assistance and guidance to supervisors dealing with workplace performance issues. This newsletter is intended for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional. Individuals should follow the policies and procedures laid out by their human resource management department concerning use of the EAP. Some articles reprinted with permission from DFA Publishing and Consulting, LLC. Kepro, Harrisburg, PA. All rights reserved.