



Volume 26, Issue 2

Balance

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



Acentra HEALTH

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 resonant with you, consider contacting your EAP for more information, including referrals for local EAP counselors.

HOW TO FIX YOUR DAY

Experiencing a negative event can disrupt your day, causing your previously uplifted mood to seemingly vanish. Take these actions to restore your positive mindset:

1. Admit that things have gone off track and validate your feelings.
2. Attempt a short “geographic” change (like a walk outside to change visuals away from the scene of the event).
3. Identify negative thoughts reverberating from the event.
4. Challenge the negative thoughts to disrupt their effects.
5. Identify positive thoughts to make #4 a speedier step.
6. Focus on what you can control—reaction, perspective, prevention, improvements, boundaries, self-care, etc. This gives you a constructive outlet to match your need to respond.
7. Plan a positive thing or two—events, experiences, and treats—to rebalance the day.
8. Need support? Reach out to a friend to vent.
9. Find the lesson. Discover or consider what positive outcome exists indirectly or directly because of the event.
10. Celebrate that you fixed your day!

MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE—FINDING QUIET TIME

Recent studies show that taking time for silence restores the nervous system, helps sustain energy, and conditions our minds to be more adaptive and responsive to the complex environments in which so many of us now live, work, and lead.

1. Start your day with five minutes of quiet time. If you're able to close an office door, or find another quiet hideaway, it's possible to hit reset by engaging in a silent practice of meditation or reflection.
2. Take a silent afternoon in nature. Immersion in nature can be the clearest option for improving creative thinking capacities.
3. Go on a media fast. Turn off your email for several hours or even a full day or try “fasting” from news and social media.

STAY CALM UNDER PRESSURE

Staying calm under pressure is a skill that takes practice and intention. If you notice negative thoughts bubbling up, try replacing them with positive affirmations. Say to yourself, “I've done this before and will do it again this time.” Focus on action steps to solve the problem or situation. Avoid dwelling on the magnitude of what you face. This practice reduces panic and emotional stress, and it reinforces a feeling of empowerment to help you feel in control. Practice deep breathing to reduce anxiety. Regularly practicing mindfulness and meditation can help you more quickly switch from panic to calm mode when under pressure.



Acentra HEALTH

MENTAL DECLUTTERING— A DIFFERENT KIND OF SPRING CLEANING

Mental clutter is overpowering stress created by the daily demands of modern life, our multiple roles, to-do lists, thoughts, emotions, responsibilities, and the constant influx of information. Decluttering can reduce stress, improve concentration, enhance creativity, and cultivate a greater sense of well-being. Mental decluttering is about creating space for what truly matters and letting go of what no longer serves us mentally and emotionally. You may want to consider decluttering if you are having difficulty concentrating, experiencing a lack of creativity, and feeling disconnected from a positive sense of well-being. The practice of mental decluttering may involve various techniques, such as mindfulness meditation, journaling, prioritizing tasks, setting boundaries, and letting go of negative thoughts or emotions.

ENHANCED SUCCESS THROUGH SELF-DISCIPLINE

Self-motivation is the inner drive to achieve a goal, but self-discipline is what makes things happen. Self-motivation is easier to come by than self-discipline. Self-discipline includes consistently resisting distractions, frequently delaying gratification, and adhering to routines or plans, even in the face of challenges. To improve self-discipline:

1. Decide on—and visualize—a goal.
2. Divide the goal into small tasks.
3. Repeat #2, with the tasks made even smaller.
4. Fit the tasks into time slots of an existing daily routine—a key point because a routine pulls you along with less reliance on willpower to act.
5. Reward your successes, big and small.

COUNSELING FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT

Despite the many stress management tips that exist, not everyone can decide which ones will work best or how to apply them consistently for the desired impact. This is where professional counseling can help. Consider seeking support when faced with persistent, overwhelming stress that you believe interferes with your daily functioning. Physical symptoms of stress like headaches, gastrointestinal issues, or consistent sleep problems are also indicators that it is time to seek support. Typically, when stress is unmanageable, it will negatively affect your relationships with your family, friends, and colleagues. Based on the signs mentioned above, it may be beneficial to reach out to your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or seek additional support and resources. Doing so can provide you with the necessary help and tools, including lifelong skills, to better manage stress both now and in the future.

UNDERSTANDING ALCOHOL'S IMPACT ON HEALTH

Acetaldehyde is a toxic substance produced by your liver when alcohol is metabolized (and is a main contributor to a hangover). But acetaldehyde is also considered a carcinogen. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that consuming three or more alcoholic drinks daily raises the risk of stomach and pancreatic cancers, but heavy alcohol use is also a risk factor for many other cancers. If you are concerned about your alcohol use, begin with a free, confidential assessment through your EAP or consult with a professional treatment provider. Learn more at www.cdc.gov (search “alcohol and cancer”).



Acentra HEALTH

HOW TO AVOID RELATIONSHIP TROUBLES OVER MONEY

Conflicts around money are quite common in relationships, however resolving them is possible and can also be avoided in new relationships by following these tips:

1. Communicate openly and honestly about financial goals, spending habits, and values to reduce misunderstandings and disagreements.
2. Together, set specific, achievable financial goals so you work toward a common financial future.
3. Avoid resentment and imbalance in your relationship caused by unequal contributions to your shared financial responsibilities.
4. To avoid debt, create a budget and stick to it to curb overspending.
5. Avoid secrets or hiding financial information. Secrets can erode the essential trust needed to make your relationship thrive.
6. Turn to expert sources to help guide your financial future. Contact your EAP today to set up a no-cost consultation with a Money Coach.

Employee Assistance Program

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a complimentary service available to you through your employer. The EAP provides counseling sessions at no cost to you, as well as offering a wide variety of services to enhance overall wellbeing and support healthy work/life balance. The program is completely confidential and available to you, your household family members, and dependents.

Access the EAP anytime for free, confidential support from a master's-level counselor or visit the website tools and information designed to address life's pressing concerns.

 **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. Acentra Health 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. Acentra Health, McLean, VA. All rights reserved.