



Volume 27, Issue 4

Balance

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



Acentra
HEALTH

Welcome to Balance, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) newsletter. Balance highlights important topics related to personal and professional wellness, offering tips and resources for managing life's challenges. Your EAP is a confidential, free resource designed to help you navigate a variety of issues. If any of these topics resonate with you, consider reaching out to the EAP for further information, including referrals to local EAP counselors.

FINDING BALANCE DURING THE HOLIDAYS

The holiday season can bring joy, but it can also come with stress, pressure, and feelings of loss. Between busy schedules, family expectations, and financial demands, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. If this season feels more draining than uplifting, remember you are not alone. The EAP is here to help you manage holiday-related stress, anxiety, or sadness in a safe and supportive space. Together, an EA professional can explore ways to set boundaries, practice self-care, and make room for moments of rest and connection. With the right support, you can move through the holidays with greater balance and start the new year feeling more grounded and hopeful.

LESS IS MORE: SIMPLIFYING YOUR LIFE

Modern life often feels overwhelming, with demands coming from every direction. Simplifying doesn't mean doing less of what matters, it means creating space for what's truly important. Practicing mindfulness, like slowing your breath and staying present, can help you feel more centered and less rushed.

Cutting back on unnecessary clutter, distractions, or commitments also frees up time and energy. At home, that might mean decluttering a drawer or room that causes stress each time you see it. At work, it could mean setting priorities at the start of the day or limiting how often you check emails and messages. Small changes like these can reduce the sense of being pulled in every direction. By focusing on what counts most, you can bring more balance, clarity, and calmness into your daily routine.

GOOD NIGHT, SLEEP TIGHT

Getting enough sleep is essential for your health, mood, and focus, but many of us struggle to fall or stay asleep. Small changes can make a big difference, helping you enjoy deeper, more refreshing sleep and wake up ready for the day ahead. You can improve your rest by practicing these healthy bedtime habits:

- **Keep a routine:** Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day
- **Wind down:** Clear your mind of stress and try deep breathing or relaxation exercises
- **Limit stimulants:** Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol close to bedtime
- **Control your environment:** Dim lights, reduce noise, and keep your bedroom comfortable
- **Move mindfully:** Finish exercise a few hours before bed and avoid screen time



JOURNALING FOR EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Many of us kept diaries as teenagers, finding comfort in writing down thoughts and feelings we didn't want to share with anyone else. As adults, journaling can serve a similar purpose, helping us process emotions, reduce stress, and gain clarity in a safe, private way. Regular journaling can be especially helpful when dealing with anxiety, stress, or depression. It allows you to recognize patterns, identify triggers, and reframe negative thoughts with more compassionate self-talk. Writing can also make problems feel more manageable by helping you sort out what's most important and where to focus your energy. The best part? Journaling doesn't need rules. Whether you write a few sentences each day, keep notes in your phone, or even sketch and doodle, the key is consistency. To get started, set aside just a few minutes daily. Find a quiet spot, let your thoughts flow freely, and don't worry about grammar or structure. Think of journaling as self-care, a chance to slow down, tune in, and give your mind space to breathe. Along with other healthy habits like sleep, balanced nutrition, and regular movement, journaling can help you feel more grounded and resilient in the face of life's challenges.

MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BETTER WELL-BEING

Social media helps us stay connected, but it can also leave us feeling drained, overwhelmed, or discouraged. If scrolling doesn't feel uplifting, it may help to curate your feed so you're engaging with content that supports your well-being.

Muting or unfollowing accounts that spark stress, and choosing not to engage in heated online debates, can create a healthier online space. Finding small ways to unplug, like taking breaks before bedtime or swapping screen time for a book, walk, or conversation, can also make a big difference. Even short breaks from social media can improve focus, sleep, and peace of mind.

POSITIVE WAYS TO ACCEPT CRITICISM

Receiving criticism is rarely easy. It can stir up defensiveness, frustration, or even embarrassment. Yet feedback, when handled well, can be a powerful tool for growth. One helpful approach is to pause and ask yourself, "What can I learn from this?" This simple shift turns criticism from something to fear into something useful. A few strategies can make the process easier. Ask clarifying questions to better understand the feedback. Look for at least one part you can agree with, even if you don't see eye-to-eye on everything. Then, give yourself time to reflect before deciding what changes to make. These steps help you stay calm, focused, and open to learning. By approaching criticism with curiosity rather than defensiveness, you can reduce tension, strengthen communication, and demonstrate professionalism. And if you'd like support in building resilience at work or managing difficult conversations, the EAP is here to help.



Acentra
HEALTH

THE POWER OF RESILIENCE

Life has its ups and downs, and challenges are inevitable. Resilience, the ability to bounce back from setbacks, is a skill anyone can develop, and it helps us face difficulties with hope and a positive mindset. Being resilient doesn't mean you won't feel stress or pain; it means you can navigate those moments while staying grounded and solution-focused. Resilient people are often able to:

- Stay calm:** Manage emotions in stressful moments
- Think positive:** See obstacles as opportunities
- Be flexible:** Adapt to change and unexpected situations
- Solve problems:** Focus on practical solutions
- Connect:** Lean on friends, family, or community for support

AVAILABLE
NOW



Acentra Health produces podcasts covering a variety of well-being topics. Listen to this month's podcasts by visiting: eap.acentra.com/podcast/

Employee Assistance Program

Your 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 well-being 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 no-cost, 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:** EAPHelplink.com

 **Company Code:** IOWA

Balance is a newsletter produced by your EAP that spotlights relevant issues related to personal and professional wellness. 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.