

BALANCE

NEWSLETTER

Information and resources to support a healthier, more balanced life.



Volume 28, Issue 3

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.

BRIDGING DIFFERENCES IN EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS

Differences in opinions, backgrounds, and perspectives are a natural part of any workplace or community, but they don't have to lead to negative interactions or harmful conflict. Building understanding starts with small, intentional actions.

- Listen to understand, not just to respond.
- Stay curious about others' experiences and viewpoints.
- Look for shared goals or common ground.
- Pause before reacting, especially in emotionally charged moments.
- Be willing to adjust your perspective when new information emerges.

These skills can strengthen relationships, reduce tension, and create more respectful, productive conversations. Even small shifts in how you approach differences can make a meaningful impact over time. Remember that understanding someone else's perspective does not require you to agree with it. Instead, it creates an opportunity for mutual respect and more effective communication.

Reference: https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/six_techniques_to_help_you_bridge_differences

WHEN COPING BECOMES SELF-MEDICATING

Everyone experiences stress, anxiety, sadness, or difficult life challenges from time to time. In an effort to feel better, some people may turn to alcohol, medications, food, or other substances to manage uncomfortable emotions. This behavior is commonly known as self-medicating. While these choices may provide temporary relief, they often make problems worse over time and can contribute to increased stress, health concerns, relationship difficulties, or dependence.

Common signs of self-medicating include:

- Regularly using alcohol or drugs to cope with stress, anxiety, or low mood.
- Needing more of a substance to feel the same effect.
- Noticing that substance use is creating new problems in your life.
- Friends, family members, or coworkers begin expressing concern about your drinking or substance use.



Sometimes those closest to us notice changes in our behavior, mood, or habits before we recognize a problem ourselves.

The good news is that healthier coping strategies can make a real difference. Staying connected with supportive friends and family, exercising regularly, practicing relaxation techniques, prioritizing sleep, and maintaining a balanced diet can all help improve emotional well-being and resilience. If you find yourself relying on substances to cope, remember that support is available. Your EAP offers confidential resources and guidance to help you address life's challenges in healthy, effective ways.

Reference: <https://www.helpguide.org/mental-health/addiction/self-medicating>

SMALL WINS: THE SECRET FUEL FOR MOTIVATION

When big goals feel overwhelming, focusing on “small wins” can provide the momentum you need. A small win is any manageable step forward such as clearing one cluttered spot, sending the email you’ve been putting off, taking a quick walk, or choosing a healthy lunch. These successes activate the brain’s reward system, giving you a natural boost of motivation and confidence. Tracking small wins can also shift your mindset from “I’m behind” to “I’m making progress,” which reduces stress and strengthens resilience. Try ending your day by listing three small wins, no matter how minor they seem. Over time, these tiny victories add up in powerful ways.

Reference: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/empower-your-mind/202406/from-small-steps-to-big-wins-the-importance-of-celebrating?msocid=3111b4f6bd536be33939a1fab416a4c>

THE BENEFITS OF A PERSONAL “RESET RITUAL”

A reset ritual is a short routine that helps you transition from one part of your day to another, like ending work, starting your morning, or calming down before bed. This can be as

simple as a five-minute stretch, a quick tidy of your desk, making a cup of tea, or stepping outside for fresh air. Reset rituals signal to your brain that you’re shifting gears, which reduces stress and prevents the feeling that your day is one long, uninterrupted task list. These rituals also create a sense of control and stability, especially during hectic times. Choose something simple, enjoyable, and repeatable so it becomes a grounding anchor in your daily routine.

Reference: <https://www.healthline.com/health/stress/how-to-decompress-after-work#Building-your-after-work-routine>

WHY PLAY ISN'T JUST FOR KIDS

Play, activity done simply for enjoyment, has powerful mental health benefits for adults. Whether it’s solving a puzzle, tossing a ball with your dog, trying a new game, dancing in your kitchen, or being silly with friends or coworkers, play reduces stress hormones and boosts creativity and problem-solving. It also strengthens relationships by encouraging joy and connection. Many adults stop engaging in playful experiences because life feels too busy or serious, yet even a few minutes of play can reset your mood and increase energy. If you’re not sure where to start, return to something you loved as a child or explore low-pressure hobbies just for fun.

Reference: <https://www.helpguide.org/mental-health/wellbeing/benefits-of-play-for-adults/>

FUEL YOUR PRODUCTIVITY WITH SMART NUTRITION

Did you know that what you eat can directly impact your focus, energy, and productivity at work? Research suggests that employees who maintain a healthy diet are more likely to feel engaged and productive, while foods high in sugar and saturated fat can contribute to energy crashes, brain fog, and reduced concentration.



To stay energized throughout the day, choose foods that provide steady fuel, such as whole grains, lean proteins, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and foods rich in omega-3s. Eating balanced meals and healthy snacks every few hours can also help maintain consistent energy levels

and support mental performance. Don't forget to stay hydrated. Even mild dehydration can affect memory, attention, and focus. Small changes to your daily eating habits can make a big difference in how you feel and perform.

Reference: <https://www.nutritioned.org/food-effects-productivity/>

ACENTRA HEALTH PODCASTS

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 highly qualified counselor or visit the website for tools and information designed to address life's pressing concerns.

 **Phone: 1.800.833.3031**

 **Website: EAPHelplink.com**

 **Company Code: IOWA**

