

Your EAP News

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Stay Calm Under Pressure



Staying calm under pressure is an acquired skill, but it is unlikely you were taught how to do it. Work deadlines, facing irate customers, family emergencies, and public speaking are all examples of where staying calm under pressure counts. Remain calm under pressure by replacing negative thoughts 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. Don't dwell 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. While solving the problem, practice deep breathing to reduce anxiety. How-to hint: Regularly practicing mindfulness and meditation can help you more quickly switch from panic to calm mode when under pressure because it conditions the part of your brain associated with awareness and attention.

Street Tips from the Field: Mindfulness Meditation

One of the most researched and proven techniques for managing stress – yet one of the least known and least practiced – is "mindfulness meditation." Mindfulness meditation involves paying close attention to your thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations in a calm and intentional way.



Do it by sitting quietly, eyes closed, and gently bringing awareness to your breath. When distractions arise, acknowledge them, but gently redirect your attention. This practice cultivates mental clarity, emotional balance, and well-being. Regular practice may improve concentration, reduce stress, and build emotional resilience. Resource (book):

"Deeper Mindfulness: The New Way to Rediscover Calm in a Chaotic World," May 2023. (2) www.mondaycampaigns.org [search "mindfulness introduction"]

PTSD Awareness Month: Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Affects Millions

PTSD is commonly associated with war veterans, but anyone could suffer from the condition following a traumatic event. About 7%-8% of the population will experience PTSD at some point, and research shows millions of people who suffer symptoms years later may not associate them with a past trauma. Lingering symptoms of PTSD decades later may be blamed on other conditions, like stress, anxiety, or depression. Some of these may include being easily startled, having nightmares, fearing closeness in relationships, or engaging in negative thinking too often. But, it's a myth that traumatic events always cause PTSD. Likewise, you are not "in denial" if you claim to not experience PTSD following a traumatic event. For a full list of symptoms, visit the National Center for PTSD at www.ptsd.va.gov or contact your EAP to learn more.



Myths Keeping You from Psychotherapy

If you ever decided against seeking psychotherapy, was it because of one of these myths? 1) The therapist will examine every detail about my past. Fact: Professional counselors help you decide what you want to accomplish in counseling, and your past may play no role in achieving these goals. 2) Only those with severe mental illness seek professional counseling. Fact: Most psychotherapy clients are not mentally ill. They are seeking solutions for life's challenges. 3) The professional counselor will judge or criticize me. Fact: Professional counselors are trained to be nonjudgmental and supportive so you feel safe and can work through your issues. 4) Seeing a professional counselor means I am weak. Fact: Seeking professional counseling shows a willingness to address problems and work toward a healthier, more balanced life. 5) Therapy takes a long time, and it might change my personality. Fact: Therapy can vary in length, often leading to positive changes in only a few sessions. However, the focus is on coping and solving problems, not changing your personality.



Understanding Cyberstalking: Steps to Protect Yourself and Stay Safe



Out of the blue, you receive an unwanted and intimidating text from an unknown phone number. Cyberstalking involves repeated, unwanted, and threatening behavior over a period of time, but a single intimidating message can be serious and should not be ignored. While cyberstalking can affect individuals of any gender, statistics consistently show that women are disproportionately targeted and experience higher rates of harassment and intimidation online. Digital communication and online social media have increased everyone's vulnerability to cyberstalking. Stalkers can use fake profiles, invade privacy, and even threaten your safety. Here's what law enforcement, related associations, and other professionals recommend: 1) Don't respond to or otherwise engage with the harasser. Doing so can prompt continued harassment. 2) Block the number. 3) Take screenshots of the message as evidence for potentially legal purposes. 4) Although technically cyberstalking is repeated unwanted behavior, if you are concerned, contact the police for guidance and the next steps regarding prevention and safety. 5) Some cyberstalking events are initiated by locating someone's phone number or through public records; review your social media accounts and privacy settings to determine if personal information about you is too easily available. 6) Don't keep your experience a secret. Tell someone like a family member or friend. A single incident of cyberstalking can frighten you and cause you to lose sleep. Sharing your experience with a trusted friend can reduce the distress of the event.



Be a Better Listener at Work



At work, you will build stronger relationships, solve more problems, and help customers feel valued if you practice "active listening." Active listening is a communication technique that demonstrates you are fully and effectively listening to another person. While listening, they know you understand what they are saying because you are reflecting their message and recognizing their verbal and nonverbal cues. Finally, you give feedback that reassures the speaker you have a mutual understanding of the discussion. So, here are the keys: Demonstrate attention, actively show understanding of what is being communicated, respond to nonverbal cues, validate the speaker's feelings by expressing empathy, and paraphrase what you heard.

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COMPASSION FATIGUE?

What is compassion fatigue?

Compassion fatigue is a profound emotional and physical erosion that occurs from exposure or significant emotional distress that occurs when helpers are unable to refuel and regenerate.

What are the symptoms of compassion fatigue?

COGNITIVE
∞ decreased concentration, preoccupation with trauma

EMOTIONAL
∞ powerless, anxiety, guilt, anger, reduced ability to feel sympathy and empathy

BEHAVIORAL
∞ Irritability, withdrawing, poor sleep, impaired

- What are some ways to prevent compassion fatigue?**
- Practice self-care, engage in activities you enjoy
 - Reach out to someone you love every day
 - Exercise and eat properly
 - Get adequate amounts of restful sleep
 - Find reasons to laugh
 - Enjoy quiet time each day to recharge
 - Consider seeing a counselor to help you

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