

## For Your Information

### BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY

To change counterproductive habits that influence work/family balance, ask yourself these questions and then strive for improvement:



1. Where do I begin to change things that negatively impact my work/family balance?
2. What do I need to do to clearly draw the line between work and family?
3. What habits can I change?

### WALK AWAY THE BLUES

Take a walk or exercise to lift a bad mood. Doctors at Duke University say taking regular walks will help lift depression, lessen tension, increase optimism, boost self-esteem and increase energy.



### TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS

- Be willing to sacrifice "perfection" to get things done.
- Learn to say "no" to demands that don't benefit you.
- Arrange your work time to keep interruptions to a minimum.
- Be realistic about what you can accomplish during a given time period.

## LIVING WELL

### How To Break The Grip Of Unbearable Stress



Somehow your life has gotten out of control. Stress has its grip on you. You lie down to sleep at night and it feels like your heart is going to pound right out of your chest. You just can't relax. You get through the night but awake in the morning still feeling terrible, "overwhelmed" by life, anxious and exhausted. What can you do to break the grip of stress?

Stress becomes a problem when the pressure from stress exceeds your ability to cope. If you are feeling overwhelmed by stress, you can start taking control of the stress in your life by following the suggestions below:

#### 1. Ask yourself: What specific problems or conflicts are troubling me and how can I deal with each of these problems effectively?

Rather than focusing on how to cope with stress, answering this question will put you on course to prevent or eliminate much of your stress by helping you determine the root cause(s) of your stress. To lower the amount of stress in your life, become aware of your stressors and your emotional and physical reactions to stress. Notice your distress. Don't ignore it. Determine how your body responds to stress. Do you become nervous or physically upset? If so, in what specific ways? Think about when, and why, you feel stressed. Devise ways to change, manage or avoid the problems that trigger your stress.

#### 2. Practice deep breathing.

Give your body and mind the break they need from stress by practicing slow, deep breathing. Here's what to do: Close your eyes and inhale slowly and deeply through your nose (approx. 7 seconds), then exhale slowly through your mouth (approx. 8 seconds). If you prefer, say "relax" or "calm" or another soothing word as you exhale. Do this for 5 minutes, 3 times a day. This technique, known as the "relaxation response," will calm your brain, relax your body and help bring your heart rate and respiration back to normal.

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#### 3. Identify the ways you "think" yourself to higher levels of stress.

Stress is a product of the mind and therefore something you can control. Stress isn't something that happens to you, but rather how you think about what is happening, or what has happened. Are you viewing your stressors in exaggerated terms and/or taking a difficult situation and making it worse? Are you overreacting and viewing things as absolutely critical and urgent? Do you worry about things that are out of your control? Do you feel you have to be perfect all of the time? Simply put, stressful thoughts cause stress. Work at adopting more moderate views. Put stressful situations in perspective.

## Break the Grip of Stress...

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### 4. Increase your ability to cope with stress.

A healthy lifestyle is your best defense against stress. Stress experts recommend the following:

- Avoid using alcohol, caffeine or nicotine as a means of alleviating stress.
- Exercise regularly to dissipate stress energy and lift your mood.
- Unleash tension or worry by sharing your feelings with a close friend, family member or counselor.
- Practice relaxation daily. Try deep breathing, yoga, meditation, imagery, listening to quiet music, being in nature, or prayer.
- Get at least 7 hours of sleep nightly.
- Eat well-balanced, nutritious meals. Reduce consumption of refined sugars, which cause frequent fluctuation in blood glucose levels, increasing your stress.

### 5. Seek professional assistance.

How do you know when it is time to get professional help? According to the American Psychological Association, here are a few indicators:

- You feel trapped, like there's nowhere to turn.
- You worry excessively and can't concentrate.
- The way you feel affects your sleep, your eating habits, your job, your relationships, your everyday life.

### Stress Causes Brain Malfunction

*The latest medical research reports that overstress can cause physical changes in the brain. What happens? Brain cells "talk to each other" by means of chemical messengers. When a person is exposed to too much stress, chemical communications in the brain begin to fail. When these messengers fail, a person suffers from sleep disturbance, aches and pains, depression and anxiety.*

### YOUR EAP IS HERE TO HELP

If you're having difficulty coping with stress, call your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for confidential counseling, referrals or information. A professional EAP counselor can help you address the cause(s) of your distress and help you learn effective ways to deal with stress. Why not call an EAP counselor today? We're here to help you.

# Relationships: Secrets Of Happy Couples



Although more than 50% of all marriages end in divorce, many couples defy these odds and maintain lasting, healthy relationships. What makes these relationships endure? Psychologist Florence Kaslow offers the following:

- Healthy couples see themselves as strong individuals, but they find that being a couple makes them happier. They believe that by acting together they are stronger than they would be as separate individuals.
- They share power. Sometimes one partner takes charge, and sometimes the other, depending upon who is more suited for the situation.
- They are not afraid to quarrel because they have the confidence that their relationship can survive occasional outbursts.
- They try to take a positive attitude toward conflicts. When interests diverge or clash, they negotiate a solution that benefits the couple, without taking the attitude that one person is giving up something for the sake of the other.
- They accept the fact that there will be some areas of disagreement, and they try to live with these differences.
- They give each other some independence and privacy, allowing each other to have outside friendships and activities without jealousy.
- They take interest in each other's jobs and activities.
- One person does not fear that the other will change. In fact, they view personal change as good for the relationship because it keeps things interesting.
- Their relationship is independent of their relationships to their parents and their children. They do not allow their feelings for other family members to impact their relationship.
- They share all emotions, sorrow as well as happiness.
- They don't assume that life has to be rosy all the time.

### Your EAP is here to help

If you need help with a particularly difficult marriage, relationship or family issue, your EAP can assist you with FREE and CONFIDENTIAL counseling, referrals or information. If you need help, why not call a professional EAP counselor today? We're here to help you.

## Employee Assistance Program Services

### PROVIDED BY YOUR EMPLOYER FOR YOU AND YOUR DEPENDENTS

Your **E**mployee **A**ssistance **P**rogram is a prepaid and confidential program designed to help employees and their dependents resolve problems which may be interfering with their personal, work or home life. EAP Consultants offers help for marital and family issues, substance abuse, job concerns, emotional problems, life adjustments, legal issues, financial matters, and elder care and child care referrals.

If you're experiencing problems which are causing concern, you and your EAP Counselor can work as a team to find solutions.

For assistance, call EAP Consultants Inc. at:

**800-869-0276**