

FrontLine Employee

Wellness, Productivity, and You!

Stress Awareness Month: 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 company's Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP) 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.

What a Small Garden Can Do for Wellness



Spring is the perfect time to explore gardening—for both fresh produce and enhanced well-being. You can start with a single pot or a square foot of space, and with a bit of sunlight seize this wellness opportunity to help manage stress. Gardening promotes relaxation, relieves tension, enhances mood, improves emotional well-being, encourages mindfulness, and gives you a sense of grounding, connection to world around you, awe of nature, and achievement. A larger garden will give you loads of exercise too. Start today—a handful of seeds is only a couple of bucks!

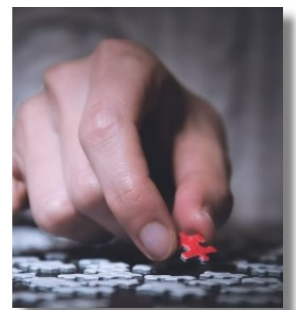
Resource: "Square-Foot Gardening: A Beginner's Guide" Mel Bartholomew

Keep Your Team Aligned, Engaged, & Productive



Don't overlook the importance of your team meeting regularly to deal with issues of communication, productivity, and job satisfaction. Many employees are on teams, but months or years often go by with some teams never taking time to address issues that impact productivity and cohesion. Do you recognize these "overdue for a meeting" signs and symptoms: 1) un-addressed issues leading to misunderstandings or conflicts; 2) cliques forming among like-minded employees to bond, vent frustrations, and protect each other using a "we vs. them" view of the work unit; 3) a perceived lack of trust among team members; and 4) team members demonstrating less initiative than in the past.

Overcome Resistance and Achieve More with Micro Habits



Micro habits are tiny, easily achievable actions linked to goals seamlessly integrated into daily routines. They circumvent resistance to change, offering a pathway past the intimidation of large goals that can keep us from what we desire most. Micro habits wield significant influence due to their cumulative impact. It starts with small manageable tasks. Resistance is almost nil. These behaviors then foster discipline and momentum. And this paves the way for larger successes. For instance, one daily pushup may seem trivial, but starting with just one and gradually adding more can evolve into a robust exercise routine over time. Delve deeper into this potentially life-changing strategy by reading "The Power of Tiny Wins: Building Success Through Micro Habits" (2024).

Reduce Personal Risk When Using Antidepressants

One in eight people takes an antidepressant. Do you or a loved one use an antidepressant? Dozens of antidepressants exist (e.g., Paxil, Zoloft, Prozac), but they are not without risk. Although antidepressants may help patients overcome depression, manage anxiety, and improve sleep, follow your doctor's instructions closely, especially while waiting for a specific medication to take effect and relieve your symptoms. Doctors typically seek to identify the right medication via short trials, and during this time communication is critical. Since 2004, the Food and Drug Administration has required patients to be informed that there is an increased risk of suicidal thoughts in children and adolescents who use antidepressants. Research is mixed about suicidality, but the warning now also applies to young adults who take antidepressants. One study showed more risk during the first week or so, and another study found that supportive psychotherapy was very helpful in reducing such risk. Tips: 1) report any increased agitation or anxiety to your doctor after starting an antidepressant; 2) expect your doctor to follow your reactions to the new medication closely initially—if this communication seems less than you anticipated, reach out; 3) have a thorough discussion with your doctor about the potential risks and benefits of antidepressant treatment but be aware that the benefits can far outweigh the risks; 4) educate yourself about antidepressants and how they work; and 5) discuss with your doctor how adopting a healthy lifestyle—through regular exercise, balanced nutrition, adequate sleep, and enjoyable activities—can complement your medication in treating your condition.

Learn more at clevelandclinic.org/health (search "antidepressants-depression-medication").



Self-Motivation vs. Self-Discipline for Enhanced Success

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. You may know this already if you didn't stick to the action steps of a New Year's resolution. 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; and 5) reward your successes, big and small.



New resource: "Self-Discipline: How to Keep Mental Control to Provide Self-Improvement and Achieve Goals Every Day" (December 2023)

Avoid Couple Troubles Over Money

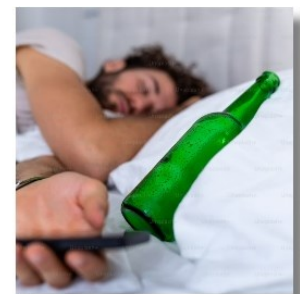
Money troubles among couples are common, but resolving them is possible, or you can try avoiding them if your relationship is new. Tips for couples: 1) Communicate openly and honestly about financial goals, spending habits, and values to reduce misunderstandings and disagreements. 2) Set specific, achievable financial goals together 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) Few things will cause more stress than debt, so create a budget and stick to it to avoid overspending. (Many couples attempt this task, but they are undermined by not starting first with #1 above.) 5) Avoid secrets or hiding financial information. Money has a powerful impact. Don't underestimate it. Secrets can erode the essential trust needed to make your relationship thrive. 6) Turn to expert sources to help guide your financial future.

Learn more: <https://www.investopedia.com> [Search "money marriage issues"]



Understanding Alcohol's Impact on Health Beyond the Hangover

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 cancers of the head and neck (mouth, throat, and voice box), liver, colon, rectum, and breast! Strong suspicions are associated with prostate cancer as well. Is addressing a potential alcohol use disorder a priority for you? Begin with a free, confidential assessment through your EFAP or consult with a professional treatment provider. Learn more at www.cdc.gov (search "alcohol and cancer").



EFAP News

City of Saskatoon Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP) Office

Website—www.cityofsaskatoonefap.com



The EFAP new office is located in the CIBC building Suite 717, 201 21 St. E.

Upcoming Meetings

EFAP Peer Advisor mtg - Next meeting is April 10, 2024, 1:00 pm. EFAP office on the 5th floor, Rm #508 Langham Room. Presenter is Garry Prediger from Penney Murphy & Associates. Topic: Preparation for Retirement.

EFAP Admin Committee mtg - Next meeting is April 23rd, 2024, 2:00 p.m. EFAP office on the 7th floor Toronto Board Room.

EFAP Board of Director's mtg - Next meeting is June 20th, 2024, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. We will be meeting at the EFAP office on the 5th floor, Rm # 508 Langham Room, 201 21 St. E. (The door next to the CIBC bank on the corner of 21st and 2nd Ave.)

[Changes to the EFAP Coverage of Retiree's](#)

The EFAP Board of Directors have made a change to the eligibility of EFAP services for City of Saskatoon Retirees. Effective January 1, 2024 all retirees will be covered for one year after the date of retirement. Going forward, any Employee who retires in 2024 and beyond, will have one year from the date of their retirement to access counselling services. To bridge the change of the policy, any Employee who retired before 2023 will have coverage until the end of 2024.

[Fun Facts April](#)

World Health Day April 7th <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day>

Stress Awareness Month Be Kind to Your Mind:

<https://www.medaviebc.ca/en/living-well-hub/posts/lower-stress-be-kind>

<https://hr.nih.gov/working-nih/civil/national-stress-awareness-month>