



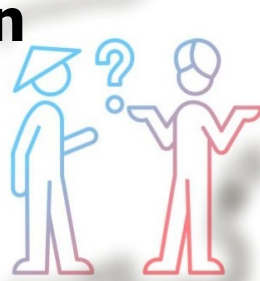
EMPLOYEE & FAMILY
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

FrontLine Employee

Wellness, Productivity, and You!

Preventing Cultural Miscommunication

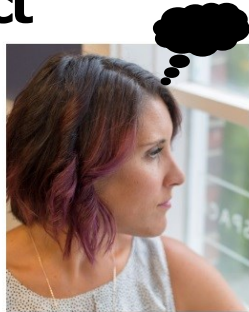
Cultural miscommunication happens when differing norms, values, or communication styles cause misunderstandings or hinder effective interaction at work. It's a growing problem but not a new one. Cultural miscommunication can be reduced with a few practices that deliver huge payoffs for workplace harmony and the bottom line. 1) Educate yourself on diverse cultural norms (see resource below). 2) Practice "active listening" to spot any misunderstandings when they happen—seek clarification quickly. 3) Use simple language to avoid confusion or misinterpretation. 4) Adapt your communication style to match the cultural preferences of others. For example, in some cultures, it is customary to address a new male coworker as "Mr. (last name)" instead of using their first name. Adapting to such preferences can show respect and build rapport. 5) Periodically seek feedback about how communication is working and ask whether adjustments are needed to improve understanding or collaboration.



Resource: "Cultural Intelligence: A Blueprint for 21st-Century Leadership (2025)"

How your EFAP Can Help: Overcome the Emotional Aftermath of Conflict

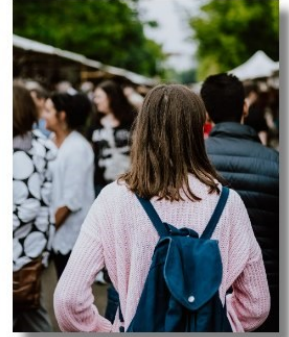
You had a heated exchange with a coworker and have been stewing over it all day, feeling angry and distracted. This lingering stress and negativity are known as emotional reverberation: the emotional aftermath of conflict. If a workplace conflict is weighing on you, consider reaching out to your employee assistance program (EFAP). Chances are you are experiencing reverberation, replaying the conflict in your mind with intrusive thoughts. This can decrease your motivation and productivity and possibly lead to a work-related stress disorder. The EFAP can help you process these feelings and discuss conflict resolution, and with its support you will regain your focus and productivity.



Survive with 'Situational Awareness'

Situational awareness is the practice of being purposely aware of your surroundings and recognizing something that could be a threat, so you are not caught off guard. It's not about living in fear; it's about actively observing your environment so you can act proactively instead of reactively to a threat or disturbing event. Many professions are taught situational awareness—healthcare workers, police officers, airline pilots, school teachers—but anyone can learn this practical safety skill. While the chances of encountering a terrible threat like a terrorist attack are very low, staying alert in crowded or unfamiliar environments can increase your safety and give you an edge of protection. A simple practice like noting emergency exits is a small step, but it will empower you to stay proactive and a bit better prepared.

Learn more: ufpro.com/us/blog/situational-awareness-and-personal-safety-for-civilians



Wake Up Feeling Refreshed

See a medical doctor specializing in sleep disorders if you suffer sleep issues. However, if you sleep well—or think you do—but don't wake with that "refreshed" feeling, experiment with these sleep hacks: 1) Go to bed at the same time every night to prompt your circadian rhythm to produce better sleep. 2) Make your room cool, dark, quiet, and without pets. (Subtle movements may not awaken you but may disturb deep sleep.) 3) Establish a nighttime routine (without technology) to signal your body to prepare for sleep. 4) Don't check the clock in the middle of the night; it can trigger stressful concerns that may delay a return to sleep. 5) Skip the "nightcap." Alcohol sedates and can produce a rebound effect that interferes with deeper sleep. Learn more: www.cdc.gov [search "sleep"]



Easy Ways to Be Kind to Your Heart



Keeping your heart healthy isn't just about intentional exercise and a healthy diet. Consider the following clinically demonstrated and researched tips and practices that have positive effects on heart health; they're all easy and some may surprise you: 1) Think stairs and short walks. Chances are that healthy heart opportunities arise for you daily. Snatch them up. Even a ten-minute walk will add to heart health. 2) Wash your hands. The flu, colds, pneumonia, and other illnesses are hard on your heart, but washing your hands several times a day will reduce your risk of contracting a viral infection by 20%, according to the CDC—by 50% if you work in a healthcare setting. 3) Add one extra piece of fruit to your diet daily. 4) Stay hydrated to help maintain proper cardiovascular function. 5) Limit screen time. All your screen time is probably not work-related. Slice off an hour and you'll improve heart health by sitting less. (Hint: See #1 above.) 6) Listen to more calming music and relax with it. 7) Practice deep breathing exercises a few times a day to help lower blood pressure. 8) Reflect on positive aspects of your life—yes, this is linked to improved heart health.

Learn more:
www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/10-small-steps-for-better-heart-health

Stop Interrupting!

What aspect of workplace communication do you find most annoying? If it's being interrupted, you're not alone. Nearly 30% of employees agree that being interrupted is the most common and frustrating issue in conversations. If interrupting conversations is a habit for you, try applying the principles of "active listening." (Key in active listening is understanding that it is more about behaviors than it is about "hearing." Also critical is avoiding preparing a counter argument or rejection while listening.) Steps: Give your full attention, remove distractions, and make eye contact with the speaker. Next, show engagement by periodically nodding or verbally demonstrating (e.g., "hmm...") that you are "tuned in" to what's being said. This proof of reflection and thinking causes the speaker to feel validated. Then, give feedback by way of asking questions, paraphrasing, or making other comments during a pause (i.e., "Did you say the other driver ran the red light?"). Finally, respond back.



Learn more:
preply.com/en/blog/bad-communication-habits/

Don't Erode Your Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage our emotions and the emotions of others in our interactions. EI is essential for building strong relationships and driving sustained productivity. However, EI is not a fixed skill and, without practice, can gradually decline over time. This loss of EI can happen if you spend excessive time online at the expense of real-life interactions, says research. Do you spend hours a day on social media or is it your primary means of interacting with others? If you're substituting social media for healthier ways of bonding with others, recognize that your EI is underutilized and it might be reflected at work or home with poor communication, inability to empathize, more conflicts, and problems working collaboratively with others. Source:

pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11321225/



Be Your Best Valentine

Self-love is valuing, appreciating, and taking care of oneself.

It's essential for personal growth and happiness and crucial for having satisfying relationships with others. But it's often misunderstood. Do you have a strong sense of respect and acceptance for who you are? There are five elements of self-love: *self-compassion*: You're kind to yourself when things don't go right and avoid harsh self-criticism; *boundaries*: You set limits to protect your time, energy, and emotional well-being; *positive self-talk*: You replace negative thinking with positive thinking, recognizing the harm negative self-talk can cause to your mental health; *acceptance*: You accept your imperfections and don't label or view them as detractors that make you less worthy of love and respect; and *priorities*: You don't feel guilty for taking care of your needs, even if others disagree. Learn more with over 60,000 related book titles on this topic!



Meet your EFAP Peer Advisors

Hi, I am Jocelyne Page and I have been working for the City Parks Division, since April 2007. First as a seasonal employee for 6-10 months each year until I became full time in April 2015.

The division I work at Parks is Urban Forestry and currently I am a supervisor of thirteen seasonal people who arrive between April and May and eventually all leave by end of October. Those months are very busy as I manage 3 programs - tree planting, tree watering and stump grinding.

I have been a peer advisor since January 2016 - Judy Krause, a fellow peer advisor encouraged me to become one. What I enjoy about being an advisor is the learning experiences that I can share with others. And sometimes it may not help the person I am sharing with, but maybe it will help someone they know. Sort of like - and they told two friends, etc., etc.

I have struggled most of my adult life with some level of mental illness, from depression in my late teens, to a full breakdown in 2020 (a lot happened beginning of that year besides COVID that changed my life.) Where I work 'mental illness' is not well understood and I feel that to some it does not seem to be a real problem . That can make it a struggle to get support. I judge / blame the generational and gender beliefs that limit the ability of some people to understand and be compassionate. I am working on that!

I will always support and fight for anyone who struggles with mental health. I could probably mention all the years I received therapy, but that would take another page. Needless to say I have no shame in sharing that information as every time I went it was a learning experience— even when one therapist fell asleep while I was sharing some childhood trauma stuff. I knew I had the wrong therapist for me. It is important to find the right fit!

On a personal level, I am not shy about sharing that journey with anyone who listens. I am an open book in hopes it will help others. June 2021 I was diagnosed with breast cancer and completed chemo and radiation by mid-April, and I was able to share some of that experience with my fellow peers and had no problems speaking. This is huge win for this shy girl and I appreciated the opportunity.

Looking to my future, I am a creator - I love to build with lumber and I enjoy crochet and gardening with quiet spaces. I am a proud grandmother to Chloe 7 (8 in May) and Carter 2.5 who live in Alberta, so keeping me busy are my two pets, cat Artie and dog Cesar who are both so needy they drive me nuts! But, I live alone so we have great conversations.

I am hoping and working towards retirement this year. I believe my skills and talents will open doors for me for other opportunities outside of the corporate world. Until then I continue to look forward to our meetings and learning more!!!



Coming Up:

Peer Advisor Meeting
February 12, 2025

Rusty McDonald Library, 225 Primrose Drive—located in the Lawson Civic Centre
1:00 PM

Presenters: The Canadian Mental Health Association & Clint Moroz from The Shift talking about
Anxiety and Mood.

We made it through January!

I have officially surpassed the one-month milestone! I have been busy doing a deep dive into all things EFAP, meeting as many employees as possible and exploring all the resources available. It's heartening to hear the strong support for the EFAP program and its positive impact over the years. The commitment to mental health and well-being is crucial, especially in such complex and demanding work environments.

Peer Advisors are an important part of the City EFAP program. They are program advocates, and have been since its start in 1990. In each Newsletter we are going to introduce a Peer Advisors. These mental health advocates work in all divisions of the City, and would be eager to talk about the City EFAP. If you have any questions, just reach out to them.

In January the Peer Advisors had the opportunity to take in a presentation from the Canadian Blood Services. Here are some interesting facts:

- Canadian Blood Services send Saskatchewan hospitals more than 450 units of blood every week to treat patients.
- When a patient needs blood, there no substitute.
- There are roughly 699,000 eligible blood donors in Saskatchewan but only 2% donate...That's just 14,000 donors.
- Every month in Saskatoon there are 2,100 appointments that need to be filled to help meet the needs of Patients.

If you have every thought about donating blood, platelets or plasma and would consider giving the gift of life, reach out to the Canadian Blood Services.

Lastly, good mental health is your personal journey. Small intentional acts throughout the day can lighten the load on anxiety and stress, such as making time for quiet or music, making decisions to eat well or going for a walk. The commitment that is required to change behavior is also more stress, so just be intentional by putting yourself first for one moment in a day.

Warm regards,

Tracy



EMPLOYEE & FAMILY
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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