



FrontLine Employee

Wellness, Productivity, and You!

Family Communication in Turbulent Times

As the holiday season approaches in the wake of a contentious national election, navigating difficult political discussions with family members might be challenging. But there are practical strategies to maintain peace and harmony. You can stay calm, set boundaries, and focus on connection rather than conflict so you preserve the joy of family time. Key strategies to get through a mixed gathering unscathed include working to steer conversations toward shared values or neutral topics in order to prevent conflict. A key rule is to prioritize your mental well-being and the overall harmony of your gathering. Not every statement needs correction or response, and sometimes the best way to keep the peace is to let an off-hand remark slide. Ask yourself if engaging in a debate will lead to a productive outcome or just more tension. With a bit of mindfulness and focus on what truly matters, be determined to create a holiday experience filled with warmth, understanding, and cherished memories.



Parenting Tips to Help Teens Avoid Sexual Assault

If your kids have started dating, have you had a conversation with them about staying safe and reducing the risk of sexual assault? Don't assume they will come to you after facing a situation they weren't prepared to handle. Even if you believe your relationship with your child is close and trusting, they may be uncomfortable sharing with you because they feel guilt or embarrassment, are afraid of upsetting or angering the assailant and/or fear losing friends, or want to shield you from worry. Proactive communication is essential in ensuring your child understands how to navigate dating safely and recognize potentially dangerous situations. Many advocacy organizations offer parental education and teen guidance for safe dating. Start with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Preventing Teen Dating Violence page at the link below.



www.cdc.gov/intimate-partner-violence/about/about-teen-dating-violence.html

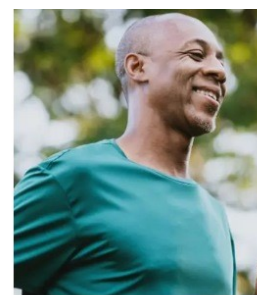
EFAP Help for Coworker Conflicts

Workplace conflicts are normal and can improve productivity when resolved healthfully, but if left unaddressed, they can disrupt workflows and increase stress. Seek help from the EFAP to resolve conflicts more quickly, reduce tension, and restore harmony. Here's a bonus: Resolving conflicts through the EFAP equips employees with vital negotiation skills. So, instead of viewing conflict as a mere annoyance, consider it an opportunity for growth. Anticipate being provided with tools that can be applied in future situations—or even shared with others. You'll know it's time to visit the EFAP if conflict disrupts your focus, increases stress, or produces strain within your team.



Exercise Your Way to a More Positive Mindset

Exercise offers well-known benefits for physical and mental health, but there's another reward worth noting: a brighter, more positive mindset. When you're tired, unmotivated, or tempted to postpone your workout, it's easy to forget how energizing even a short session can be. Regular physical activity triggers the release of endorphins—your body's natural feel-good chemicals—lifting your spirits and reducing stress. The more regularly you exercise, the more likely you are to trigger this effect. Beyond the immediate mood boost, exercise fosters a sense of accomplishment, improving your outlook and building resilience. Remind yourself of this payoff. You may discover that a positive and upbeat mindset is your greatest reinforcement for improving your health through engaging in regular exercise.



Men's Health Awareness Month



Men face unique health challenges, but their behaviors often hinder their own well-being. They are less likely than women to visit a doctor regularly or get preventive care. Additionally, men tend to engage in riskier behaviors, such as smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, and neglecting mental health issues. If you are a man, recognize that societal norms often pressure men to “tough it out,” thereby discouraging them from seeking help or admitting vulnerabilities. Don't fall for it. Make health a priority so those you love—not just you—benefit. Consider: 1) Redefine “strength” as taking control of your well-being. 2) Recognize that detecting and treating health conditions early will help you avoid fear, worry, and expense. 3) Don't view mental health issues like depression, stress, and anxiety as “not physical” and therefore best handled with denial and minimization. 4) Let go of this myth: “Feeling fine means I don't need to see a doctor.” Many serious conditions show no noticeable symptoms until they reach middle or late stages, when treatment becomes more challenging and may no longer be effective. 5) Don't depend on a partner or spouse to track your health needs or schedule appointments. Make it a nonnegotiable part of your life routine, just like car maintenance. 6) Choose a medical doctor you feel at ease with, so you won't hesitate to ask questions about your health, even those that feel sensitive or embarrassing.

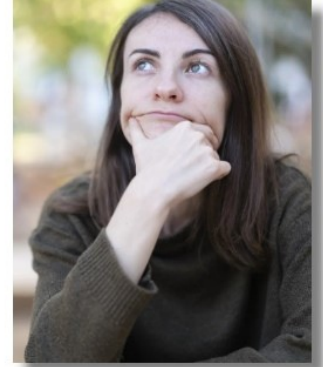
Stress Tips from the Field: Manage Stress with the 24-Hour Rule



The “24-Hour Rule” is one of the most powerful stress management techniques. When stress is overwhelming, this mindset encourages you to focus only on what you can handle or control right now and avoid focusing on worries until tomorrow. This approach allows you to compartmentalize your concerns, giving your mind the space to process immediate challenges without the added burden of future uncertainties. By limiting your worry to a specific timeframe, you create a psychological buffer that can significantly reduce anxiety and improve your overall well-being. Consider your past; how many times have you experienced extreme worry over a moment or set of circumstances about which you had no solution or control? And still, here you are today with those things now in the distant past—many of which you can't even recall! In the moment, it is easy to forget this stress management technique that relies on the reality that circumstances change, solutions emerge, and perspective shifts. And if one day at a time feels too tough, try taking it one hour at a time.

Get Unstuck from a Rut

The majority of employees feel secure in their jobs but also stuck and unable to move up. Feeling stuck can be emotionally draining, reduce productivity, and negatively affect your life outside of work. Don't stay in this indeterminate state, because it can lead to long-term dissatisfaction and even health consequences. Take proactive steps to get some happiness back and overcome your feelings of stagnation. Set goals for yourself despite your current status. Identify what part of your job you like best and focus on building your expertise there, or even focus on courses to develop additional skills, volunteer opportunities, and mentorship. Connect with coworkers with whom you have good chemistry. These positive interactions can give your job more meaning. Pursue hobbies, side projects, or community involvement initiatives that bring joy and a sense of achievement. Don't just leave work, go home, and hit the couch. Instead, take action to cultivate a fulfilling and more dynamic life. This includes reaching out for EFAP help.

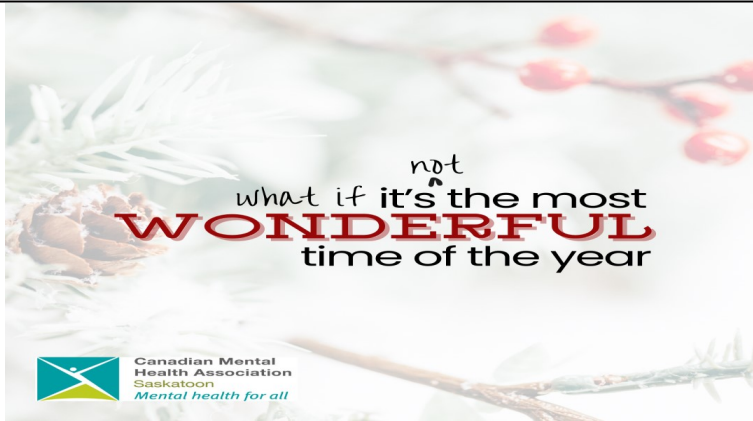


Source: www.glassdoor.com/blog/worklife-trends-2025/#Trend1

Breaking Free from Holiday Perfectionism Stress

It's impossible to avoid images of holiday perfectionism—Hallmark® movies, flawlessly decorated homes, stacks of presents, idealized family gatherings. If you are looking for less stress this year, the secret is redefining what perfect means. Shift your focus from flawless decorations, meals, and gifts to meaningful connections and personal joy. This means asking yourself what truly matters this season and letting go of the rest. Instead of that holiday dinner that takes three days to prepare, plan something manageable and delegate it. Resist the pressure to attend every event. Go for the experiences, not the things. Instead of focusing on picture-perfect moments, consider the perfectly joyful ones that don't come wrapped in a bow—laughter, connection, and some moments of peace.





The holiday season can be both joyful and challenging, especially for mental well-being. Here's a guide to help you navigate the season while prioritizing your mental health.

Source: [Holiday Mental Health Guide: Staying Well and Centered This Season - Canadian Mental Health Association - Saskatoon Branch](#)

1. Evaluate Family Dynamics and Your Coping Strategies

The holidays can bring us close to family, which might mean spending more time with loved ones whose company is comforting — or complicated.

- **Take Stock of Family Dynamics:** Acknowledge which relationships are supportive, and which may create stress. Prepare for different dynamics that could arise.
- **Strengthen Your Coping Tools:** Bring along strategies that help keep you calm and grounded — breathing exercises, a quick walk outside, or a friend you can text for support.

2. Focus on Wellness Basics

With shorter days and limited sunlight, the foundation of our well-being can slip without us noticing. Even if you're enjoying the holiday spirit, make time to return to the basics of mental health.

- **Sleep:** Stick to a consistent sleep schedule to help keep energy and mood stable.
- **Nutrition:** Balanced meals support energy and mental clarity, with a sweet treat or two!
- **Movement:** A daily walk, stretching, or any form of exercise that you can manage.
- **Sunlight and Fresh Air:** Seek out daylight when you can — bundle up and take a brief walk outdoors to soak up sunshine and fresh air.

3. Make a Plan in Advance

If holidays are hard for you, it can be helpful to create a plan for the days that feel the most challenging.

- **Social Plans:** Reach out to friends who may be free to get together, or consider traveling to be with a friend or chosen family.
- **Create a Personal Wellness Package:** If travel or social plans aren't possible, curate a few comforts for yourself: a favorite book, some cozy socks, a journal, soothing teas, and your favorite movies. This kit can help you stay occupied and bring comfort during any tough moments.

4. Practice Acceptance

The holidays don't have to be perfect or filled with "magic." Some years are quieter, more reflective, or just downright hard, and accepting that can actually ease stress.

- **Embrace Reality:** Remind yourself that it's okay if things feel different this year. Take note of any small, meaningful moments instead of focusing on expectations.
- **Release Pressure for Perfection:** Perfection isn't the goal. The holidays can be whatever you need them to be. Redefining your expectations can make room for a new kind of peace.

5. Set Boundaries with Social Media

Social media can sometimes heighten feelings of comparison, especially during the holidays. People often post the highlights, making it easy to feel like others are having a picture-perfect season.

- **Set Limits on Screen Time:** Consider setting specific times for social media and logging off when scrolling starts to affect your mood.
- **Focus on Reality, Not Highlights:** Remember that what people post is often a curated version of their lives. Celebrate your own moments, however small they may feel.

The holiday season doesn't have to be a picture-perfect experience to be meaningful. By focusing on these principles, you can protect your mental health and find moments of joy, peace, and gratitude throughout the season. Remember, taking care of yourself is always in season.

The Time has come to Say Goodbye



As I started to write this, I find I am filled with mixed emotions. Excitement for what's to come, and sadness for what I am leaving.

It has been such a blessing in my life to have worked for a Program that I believe has been instrumental in changing many lives for the better. But the time has come to say goodbye. Over the last 32 ½ years I have met many wonderful, creative and caring people who worked for the City of Saskatoon, Boards and Commissions. Over the years many of you have trusted me and confided in me when things were not going well for you. For that, I feel honored that you shared, and hoped you found the support you needed.

To the Unions, Associations and the Management of the City of Saskatoon, I thank you for the support that you have given to the Program. The EFAP has assisted Employees and their families in times of their greatest need. You worked together to build a program that is an award winning model of joint cooperation and is a success not only to all involved, but to the international world. The successes of this program that we have celebrated, and the obstacles we have faced together have taught me invaluable lessons that I will always carry with me. Please accept my deepest gratitude for the opportunities you have provided me, for believing in me, and for your unwavering support. I am immensely proud of what we have achieved together and I'm grateful together we have been a part of the success of this program.

It is with a heavy heart that I bid farewell to you and an environment that has been more like a family and a home to me. Even though I will miss all the friends I have made, it is time to begin a new chapter in my life.

Wishing you all continued success, well-being and prosperity in the years to come.

Warmest regards

Maria Besenski



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