

Employee Assistance Program

Faculty & Staff Living Newsletter

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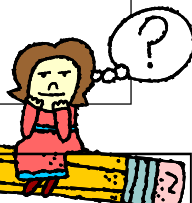
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Wellness, Productivity, & You

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Don't "Write Off" This Skill!



If your workplace correspondence generates more head scratching than head nodding, your writing probably needs some improvement. This is no small problem. Managers often cite poor writing skills as one of their top complaints about employees. Poorly crafted correspondence creates confusion, dilutes your message, and harms your professional image. Managers report that they're more likely to hire and promote those who write competently. Here's how to polish your writing. First, get right to the point. Clarity is more important than style. Do a first draft, and then go back and simplify. Ditch multiple-word phrases like "at this moment in time" in favor of shorter ones like "now." Use positive language like "We're making conservation a University goal" rather than "We need to stop being so wasteful." Use active voice when possible (or appropriate). Active voice means the subject is the doer—"I'm implementing a new policy" rather than "A new policy has been implemented." If you're fumbling for the right words, imagine yourself speaking instead of writing, and then put it to paper. To catch more grammatical mistakes, let correspondence sit awhile, and then do your final proofread. This includes emails. Here's a secret: Read your work out loud away from distractions to catch the smallest errors. A coworker's ear can help ensure that you're using the right tone and that everything makes sense. Remember, mistakes will sneak through, which is why writing is art, not science. As with most skills, practice leads to improvement.

Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month



It's 3-D Prevention Month. Help ensure a safe holiday season out on the roads. Plan a safe ride home before attending events where alcohol is served (have a designated driver). Eat before attending parties (or at least eat before you begin drinking). Slow your alcoholic intake by alternating between alcoholic and nonalcoholic drinks, taking some time between drinks (try going for 15 minutes without any type of drink in your hand). Finally, bring extra cash in case you need to call a cab (allow yourself to spend it on something else if you are able to drive home safely at the end of the night). If you're hosting an event, make sure there are plenty of non alcoholic drinks available and provide a place for overzealous revelers to sleep it off. Don't be afraid to say "no more" to someone who has obviously had too much to drink. Collect car keys at the door so that all drivers have to check in with you before leaving. Ensuring safety is everyone's responsibility.

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E-mail us at: eap@csus.edu

Visit the EAP webpage!

www.csus.edu/eaprogr

Self-help web links

Community referral information

Shared Space Squabble



Working harmoniously in close quarters requires self-awareness and sensitivity toward others because shared space environments naturally magnify minor irritants and disagreements. Getting along with coworkers is a lot like dealing with family, so take the occasional squabble in stride. Squabble busters: Keep a neat work space and wipe down surfaces once per day to prevent spreading germs. Pitch in on maintaining community areas – those microwave splatters won't disappear by themselves. Dispose of your lunch remains in an outside garbage can rather than towering the trash in a tiny wastebasket and fouling the air. Keep noise levels to a minimum and take personal calls someplace private. Tune in to the mood and stress levels of those around you. Down time for you may be crunch time for others.

Teaching Kids Saving Skills



If you're determined to teach your child to save money, start early. Consider the following approach if it fits your parenting style: Start with a short-term, easily achieved goal like saving for a special toy. Establish the relationship between work and money by tying an allowance to small household chores. During each payment, separate spending money and savings in front of your child, and place the savings into a clear container. Seeing the coins pile up will provide visual affirmation of progress. Once a savings goal is reached, make a big event of the purchase. Be sure to let your child carry the money and hand it over to the cashier. As your child grows older, you can create longer target dates for purchases and encourage greater responsibility by replacing mandatory savings requirements with matching funds for each saved dollar.

Holiday Stress Tip Let go and Get Going



It's not the chores, shopping, and Uncle Fred's visit that's stressing you out – it's your anticipation of them! The solution? Get moving! Act now by creating a to-do list. Organizing, planning, and prioritizing tasks will help you to thwart your trajectory of negativity. Stress is a mental state, so tackle the stuff you dread first. If your plans seem doomed to failure, review your expectations to make sure that they are realistic. Forget about possible outcomes that are outside of your control. When lapsing into catastrophic thinking, ask yourself, "So what?" Is serving a dry turkey the end of the world? Probably not. Planning (and acting) ahead is often the best solution for anxiety. Even small steps taken today will help decrease the stress you feel tomorrow.

Children and Online Photo Safety



Kids begin socializing on the Internet long before they're old enough to be aware of its dangers. Make sure they're interacting only on age-appropriate sites, and review all photos before allowing your youngster to share them online with friends. Examine each photo closely for school names, monogrammed clothing, house numbers, and unique personal effects. These elements are used by online predators to gain access and trust. Children often think if someone knows their name, school and some of their favorite activities they aren't really a stranger. The idea that an adult (often posing as someone different than they are) is actively seeking children out to harm them is foreign to most kids, especially if the person is "nice" and "friendly" and appears to share many of the same interests and beliefs as the child.