

Faculty & Staff Living

May 2006

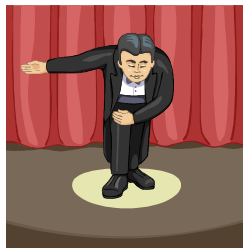
A work and life newsletter



Employee Assistance Program 278-5018

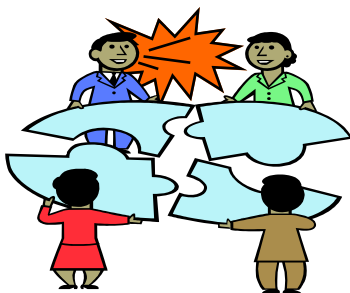
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Secrets of Top Performers



You worked hard to acquire the education and skills to compete in the challenging world of work, but do you also possess the winning behaviors valued by employers (often more than some skills)? Here are five winning behaviors that may help you get that next job or promotion: 1) Showcase your motivation, and how you can muster up your own determination to get things done. 2) Demonstrate your competence by showing that you routinely achieve your employer's expectations. 3) Do more work than required; it demonstrates your ambition. 4) Gain a reputation for owning your mistakes. Stuff happens. When it does, make no excuses. 5) Exhibit your ability to anticipate problems before they occur.

Avoiding A Team Takeover



When one or two members of your team dominate discussions, you risk losing one of the most important reasons for having a team—more ideas and opinions. The solution? Create a time limit on how long someone can talk. The secret: make it a group norm (a rule that everyone agrees to) that tactful reminders about the time limits are acceptable, so the group benefits from everyone's participation.

MENTAL HEALTH FITNESS



You know that physical exercise is important to staying healthy and warding off chronic disease. Well, your mental health is no less important—you just don't hear about it as much. Here are a few "exercises" to help you stay fit: 1) *Emotional Awareness*: Practice being aware of your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. When you experience stressful states, manage them with healthy ways of coping. 2) *Talk about Your Feelings*: Talk about how you feel with someone you trust in order to process difficult emotional events. 3) *Focus on the Positive*: Difficult and distressing experiences happen to everyone. Bounce back faster by practicing letting go, anticipating a positive future, and taking action to shape a desired outcome. 4) *Think Upstream*: Many life struggles are avoidable. Make decisions early that may thwart preventable crises later. 5) *Aim for Balance*: Make time for things you enjoy, and practice renewal by detaching regularly from sources of chronic stress. 6) Count on the EAP to help you with the above!

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Self-help web links

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Keeping Your Hot Buttons on Ice



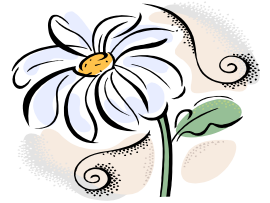
Sometimes the workplace feels like home, especially if the personalities of our coworkers become as familiar as those of family members. We may then be tempted to push colleagues' "hot buttons" and communicate or behave in ways that create annoyance and aggravation, or provoke back-and-forth, less than civil behavior in the workplace. This common struggle among coworkers makes books about dealing with "difficult people" popular. So how do you keep your cool when a coworker knows how to be as annoying as your kid brother? While avoidance works, it may not always be practical. It is better to develop coping skills to help you understand your own behavior in the workplace. Ask yourself: do you act or react? Choosing to respond to toxic communication, rather than reacting to it with a knee-jerk style, empowers you to make personal changes, de-escalate conflict, and reduce feelings of victimization. Getting a grip on what "sets you off" also helps you take back control of your responses and inoculates you against future incidents. Learn to interrupt the cycle of incivility that could one day lead to violence in the workplace. To avoid pushing buttons, say what you mean and be honest, seek more advice than you offer, and avoid making assumptions about your coworkers and their motives.

"LIFTING" Yourself from Depression



Most research points to a combination of medication and psychotherapy as being most effective in treating depression. Does exercise help? The most talked-about research concerning exercise and depression was reported in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* in 1999. Older adults who exercised experienced improved mood equal to the benefits of their antidepressant medications. Always follow your doctor's advice about use of medication. If your doctor recommends exercise, do it. In your fight against depression, research supporting the benefits of exercise is in your favor.

Grief: Many Keys, No Shortcuts



Eventually we all experience the loss of someone or something so important to us that life seems forever changed, and we respond with grief. Nothing prepares us for grief or equips us with ways of avoiding or shortcutting it, but we can learn to cope through understanding. Grief is your natural, normal response to your loss. It is not a mental illness or a psychological problem. There is no "correct" way to grieve and different people may experience grief in individual ways. Moreover, as it is a powerful emotion, grief may eventually result in positive and personal growth. Until then, you cannot simply treat your grief as if it were a minor illness, soon to be gone. "Grief work" allows you to take charge of it and, in time, it will become less painful. If you are struggling with your grief, you may find that support groups and counselors who specialize in grief and bereavement can be enormously beneficial. The EAP can help you find them, as well as offer you other resources.

Assessing Your Assertiveness

You made a commitment to be more assertive, but you still feel guilty and hold back on stating what you want, need, or feel in an honest and clear way. Your struggle with assertiveness could mean that beliefs about your rights being second to others have not changed. Don't get frustrated, get more focused. Choose a few situations that frequently occur at work or home where you want to be more assertive. Practice assertive behavior in these situations. Add more situations later as you become accomplished. Keep a journal of your progress.

