



Your **EAP** Newsletter!

December 2019

Making Holiday Family Conversations Merrier

The annual Stress in America survey consistently reports strain among families caused by their ideological differences, and the holidays have a keen reputation for these conflicts, even at the dinner table. Try the following tips to help make your get-togethers a little merrier: 1) steer conversations that appear to be drifting into conflict toward those things you can agree on; 2) if you are angry about what's in the news, avoid displacing this tension onto loved ones; 3) challenge yourself to be a tension de-escalator, not an aggravator; and 4) rehearse how you might respond to conflict because doing so will dramatically improve your ability to act calmly while avoiding hair-trigger reflexes.

Source: apa.org [search "stress-conversations"]



Moving Beyond "Just Coping"

We are all different psychologically, so an event that creates acute stress for one person may not affect another. Don't be fooled into thinking that your crisis requires toughening up or "pressing on" like you imagine others might. Stigma against asking for help can lead to needless suffering. Fact: Getting help earlier shortens the period of distress and solves problems faster, and most counseling is not long term. One or two sessions may be all it takes to resolve the problem you face. Get started by calling the EAP.



Use the EAP for Acute Stress

EAPs do more than help employees solve problems. They also possess serious listening and empathy skills, and emotional support that offer relief from the anguish you may be feeling, caused by a life crisis, difficult time, or even grim personal circumstances. Don't dismiss asking the EAP for help, even if you believe "the EAP can do nothing to help me in this situation." Don't live in fear, lose sleep, feel physically ill, or experience a constant sense of foreboding doom by "going it alone." Instead, partner with the EAP for support that can help you through a difficult period.



December is 3D Month

December is Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Awareness Month. Drinking and driving don't mix, but the public's perception of marijuana as a safety hazard is not as universally accepted. After using marijuana, risk of a motor vehicle crash increases. Using both alcohol and marijuana risks an even higher likelihood of a crash. Perhaps no state tracks this correlation more closely than Colorado. Its sixth annual report on the impact of marijuana legalization includes death-related car crashes where the driver tested positive for marijuana. The trend has been up, and today, 23%-25% of fatal car crashes statewide now involve a marijuana-positive driver. In 2009, this figure was 10%.



Source: RMHIDTA.org

Master Your Self-Care Strategy



Self-care is not just about getting enough sleep, eating well, or taking time off for a massage. Rather, it is a conscious process of being attentive to your physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, but with a goal in mind—to build resilience that allows you to be more capable of bouncing back from adversity and managing stress better. To practice this strategic form of wellness, focus your attention on: 1) physical fitness and emotional wellness (how you manage thoughts, feelings, and beliefs so you engage in positive thinking); 2) being aware of your emotions and the emotions of others with whom you interact, and use this awareness to make better decisions and communicate more effectively; 3) knowing how to create positive emotions. Does walking outside for 15 minutes improve your mood? Does taking five minutes to tidy up your office lift your spirits? When you arrive home after work, does sitting down to play the piano inspire you? Know your “go to” natural, healthy, and positive mood enhancers and use them routinely; 4) having someone with whom you can confide in and process challenges. Your EAP can be a source for this support; 5) eating right and getting enough sleep; and 6) having constructive ways of dealing with emotional stress—a hobby, spiritual practices, networking, leisure activities. Examining this list, do you see opportunities to improve upon your self-care strategy?

Helping to Prevent Suicide



Experts in suicide prevention will tell you that “a suicidal person doesn’t ‘want’ to commit suicide—they just want the pain to stop.” It has also been observed that when a suicidal person makes a decision to act, their perception of pain may disappear. They become calm. Their decision provides relief because the suicidal person has found “a solution” to their problem. Family and friends can fulfill a powerful intervention role if they witness this change of mood or frame of mind, and they should inquire about self-harm if this change happens alongside severe personal problems, victimization, or serious illness. If asked, most people considering suicide will not hide it from you—they’ll talk about it. And that’s exactly what you want. For guidance, turn to the EAP, or in an emergency, call 911 or 1-800-SUICIDE.

Overcoming Money Fears



Worrying about money is common, but if you feel overwhelmed, tackling this fear is a priority. Most money fears—financing a child’s college education, retirement, paying taxes, late bills—lack a commitment to a definite plan, budget, and host of tools, advice, and interventions that can turn your life around. This plan should energize you, cause a renewed sense of control, and give you the ability to track progress toward your goals. Feeling empowered by these proactive steps is what returns the peace of mind you’ve been missing, and it also gives you a better night’s sleep. The path begins with a first step. Visit the EAP to learn about resources and other help.

Commit to your Health for the Holidays!

Plan time for self-care.

Physical and emotional well-being are equally important.

Stay tuned for February Mindfulness classes.

YOUR! EAP NEWSLETTER is published monthly by the Arlington Employee Assistance Program (AEAP). It is intended for general information purposes only. For help with personal or professional concerns, contact the Employee Assistance Professional staff. The EAP operates under provisions of Federal confidentiality laws and EAPA Core Technology. The office is conveniently located in downtown Clarendon, at 2847 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA 22201. To speak with someone, please call the main number **(703-228-8720)** during business hours (8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m.)

EAP Professional Staff

Tara Wooldridge, LCSW, CEAP, SPHR-Director 703-228-8721
Kathy Young, LCSW-C, CEAP 703-228-8727

EAP Support Staff

James Parker 703-228-8724
Ashim Barua 703-228-8728

