



# Your **EAP** Newsletter!

## Three ‘To-Do’s’ with Your New Boss



**M**aking a good impression in a new job and with the boss is everyone’s goal. Unfortunately, being a new employee means missteps are going to happen, so focus on gaining an overall view of your job, the work culture, and especially patterns of communication. That’s a lot to handle the first week, so set the stage for a positive relationship with your boss using these three quick tips. Observe which workplace issues create unease and concern for your manager—you’ll gain empathy for what they face and potentially understand their priorities. Ask your manager the form and frequency of communication they prefer. And show positivity. Managers live for it and feel validated when they experience it from those they supervise.

## You’re Committed, So Show It



**E**mployers know what a committed worker looks like. It’s not those who simply perform duties and assignments well. Committed workers bring something extra that helps advance the work unit’s mission. 1) They solve problems; they don’t just point them out. 2) They show enthusiasm rather than casual acceptance. 3) They are proactive in reporting progress on what they are doing. 4) They demonstrate initiative—they act on perceived needs that fit with their duties before being asked. If you want to show you are a committed worker, walk the talk with these distinguishing work habits.

## Protests and COVID



**Y**our stress and anxiety levels may have started rising with your awareness of the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic. You may have felt an even greater level of both, with the widely publicized and protested death of an unarmed man. Those reactions are normal. The traumatizing video has played over and over on national news. Two autopsies determined that George Floyd was murdered. While widely different opinions exist about why events unfolded as they did, just as opinions differ about the impact of COVID and the appropriate response, it’s safe to say that these last months have affected the national’s mental health. The AEAP continues to be a support for those who want to talk about their feelings, improve their self-care strategies, process ways to be part of solutions, prepare for returning to onsite work, learn how to better support people you care about, and understand how to build community bridges.

## Avoid Aggressive Driving



**C**elebrate National Safety Month by putting the brakes on aggressive driving. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration research shows that aggressive driving plays a role in 56% of fatal crashes. Aggressive driving is “operation of a motor vehicle that endangers or is likely to endanger persons or property.” (Road rage is a criminal form of aggressive driving.) Riding bumpers, using your vehicle to “teach someone a lesson” (like blocking their ability to pass you), zooming around a slow driver, laying on the horn, using hand gestures—these behaviors point to how your driving practices may be influenced by anger. Learn about triggers, behaviors, and prevention at [bit.ly/aggressive-driver](http://bit.ly/aggressive-driver).

## Lessons from Social Distancing: Loneliness as a Health Concern



**“Flattening the curve”** with social distancing is the worldwide intervention being used to reduce coronavirus infections and death, but it has also created social isolation. For millions, social isolation is a risk factor for loneliness, and loneliness is a demonstrated health concern. Are you feeling the effects of loneliness? We’re not talking about “Zoom fatigue” but symptoms like low self-esteem, depression, anger, nightmares, anxiety, and easily triggered anger at loved ones, to name a few. Humans are hard-wired to be social creatures, so when they are deprived of this innate biological need to engage with others, physical symptoms result. Symptoms of loneliness feel as if they are of mental origin, but they are physiologically driven, according to researchers. Before the coronavirus pandemic, loneliness was hot research news. Medical researchers call it the “new smoking” because of its adverse health effects. Note that loneliness is not equal to being alone. Loneliness is your body saying, “Find people with whom to socially interact!” The inability to get to your favorite gym, gather with friends at a favorite hangout, or mingle with coworkers who bring meaning to your life can have natural health consequences. Learning about loneliness is a key lesson of our collective experience with the coronavirus. Social distancing is likely to end in the future, but connecting to a mental health counselor now—even if it means one more Zoom session to do it—is worth the effort if it can help you lessen the impact of loneliness. Learn more at

**Gratitude Group** ~ Wednesday’s at 12:00 PM on these dates: **6/24, 7/1, 7/8 & 7/17**. Obtain more info and **RSVP**. Contact [Grace.Belew@apsva.us](mailto:Grace.Belew@apsva.us) to receive the Zoom link and password.

Weekly **Mindfulness Sessions** offered in June and July are great tools for well-being that can be particularly helpful in managing stress effectively. We invite you to try the experience with us. For more info and to **RSVP**, email [Grace.Belew@apsva.us](mailto:Grace.Belew@apsva.us) to receive the Zoom link & password.

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## Stress Management for Pandemic Heroes

**If** you are an essential service employee and working face-to-face with the public during the COVID-19 pandemic or you are in a job placing you at higher risk of contracting COVID-19, you can count yourself among the heroes. (Loved ones who support you and worry about you—they’re heroes, too.) It’s likely your employer has striven to reduce the risk of your contracting COVID-19, but it’s not a 100% worry-free time. You’ve answered a higher calling so others can live as normally as possible during this time. If worry, anxiety, exhaustion, sleeplessness, family stress, and fear affect you, contact a professional, a support network, or your EAP for help. Tips like getting enough sleep, avoiding alcohol before bedtime, and practicing relaxation exercises are verified ideas for reducing stress and remaining resilient. They work, and you can learn more about them at [heart.org](http://heart.org) [search “stressed essential workers”].



## Curb Impulse Purchases to Save Money

**If** the household budget is stretched, cutting costs without added hardship can be difficult.

Consider curbing impulse purchases as a path to finding more dollars. You could save over \$5,000 a year by decreasing this behavior. Impulse purchasing is the tendency to engage repeatedly in spontaneous, on-the-spot purchases without consideration of the potential consequences. Sixty-four percent of us do it. The risk of an impulse purchase begins as soon as you enter a store, not when you see the item of interest. Most impulse purchases are groceries, not clothing. Try these tips: 1) Shop with a buddy. 2) Use cash (exact change minimizes the need for contact). 3) Gain control and insight from two studies:

- A) [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc) [search “eyes wide shopped”] and
- B) [www.slickdeals.net/corp/impulse-spending.html](http://www.slickdeals.net/corp/impulse-spending.html).

