



Your **EAP** Newsletter!

Tips for Post-Election Holiday Gatherings

It might be a challenge to safely host a holiday gathering this season—The best advice is to hold virtual events until COVID numbers improve. But whether virtual or in person, always, look to CDC recommendations and follow local official guidance. Are you determined to curtail political talk in order to reduce conflict, especially among family members? If you believe the tension of political bickering will undermine the enjoyment of your event that you've worked so hard to arrange, consider these tips: 1) Speak with each of your guests separately beforehand and request a commitment to avoid political discussions. 2) Ask these same guests if they can play a monitoring role to help change the subject if conversations steer into a political realm. This turns each guest into both an ally and a gatekeeper. 3) Consider inviting a guest having difficulty following your rules to help with a task at your event that will occupy them in a different way.



Yes, That's Emotional Abuse

Emotionally abusive relationships are full of confusion and denial for victims. Delays in seeking help are influenced by cycles of abuse followed by remorse, stigma and fear about leaving, damaged self-esteem, blaming yourself, questioning your sanity, and telling yourself, "Deep down he/she really is a good person (or doesn't mean it)." To get traction on change, examine an awareness checklist from an authority website like WomensHealth.gov. It will help you move along the decision path to reaching out for help, like the AEAP.



Source: WomensHealth.gov [search "emotional abuse"]

COVID-19 Prevention Tip: Mouthwash

Washing your hands when you come home from work, school, or the store is strongly recommended to reduce risk of coronavirus infection. But what about adding gargling with a mouthwash? Researchers demonstrated that an extra layer of protection might be afforded by this practice. They found a routine 30-second oral rinse using an over-the-counter antiseptic mouthwash to be 99.99% effective in killing the coronavirus. Remember additional safety measures don't replace what we're doing.



Source: onlinelibrary.wiley.com [search "lowering transmission mouthwash"]

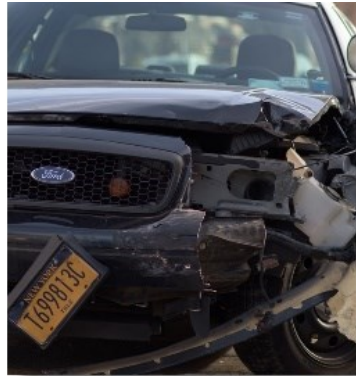
Alone, In a Relation-

Loneliness is a national health crisis experienced by one-third of the population across all generations. You are "hard wired" for close emotional connections. Without them, you can suffer high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, a weakened immune system, anxiety, depression, and cognitive decline. Research shows the same negative effects can extend to couples who have grown apart emotionally due to unresolved marital or couple conflicts but who still live under the same roof. You don't have to live alone to be lonely. Exploring professional counseling to resolve couple conflicts that have lingered for years can be difficult, but reversing the effects on your health is new motivation for doing so. Contact the AEAP for help.



National Impaired Driving Awareness Month

Will you soon find yourself on the road trying to get home safely this holiday season? You'll of course want to avoid impaired drivers. Do you know the warning signs of a drunk driver? Spotting these signs—the same ones taught to law enforcement—could save your life. They include making turns too widely, veering to the side of the road, hugging the center line, almost hitting objects or other vehicles, driving on the wrong side of the road, driving too slowly, sudden stops without cause, braking erratically, not moving when the light turns green, illegal turns, and driving after dark with no headlights. So, what about your ability to resist drinking at a social event? Are you frequently prodded and elbowed by family or friends to cut back and avoid alcohol when you walk into a party? Social pressure can be a challenge for anyone. But is the inability to say no to a drink a symptom of an alcohol use disorder? Fifteen million Americans have this health condition, according to National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Alcohol use disorders are easily diagnosed, but overcoming denial and getting a five-minute assessment is not so easy. Still, don't wait for a crisis to motivate you to take this step. Talk to the AEAP or a health provider. Within minutes you'll know what to do next, and you'll be given a plan to end the confusion and bewildering tussle you experience with alcohol.



Learn more: foundationsrecoverynetwork.com [search: "peer pressure drinking"]

The EAP Can Do That

Mental health might come to mind when you think about your employee assistance program, but this is only scratching the surface. There are numerous ways EAPs can help, so never dismiss the program as an avenue to resolve a problem you face. Ways EAPs help that are often overlooked: 1) Acting as a sounding board when you face a tough decision. 2) Help for deciding whether you need a professional counselor or a completely different type of resource. 3) Problem solving about how to help a friend who won't get help or admit they have a problem. 4) Guidance on handling a personality clash with a coworker or boss. 5) Help to rule out whether you are depressed, burnt out, or experiencing signs of any other condition.



Helping a Loved One Cope with Chronic Pain

Over 40% of households have a family member who experiences chronic pain. However, when pain experts focus on helping victims, family members are often overlooked. Family members have a powerful role in helping, but they need support. Do you feel helpless not being able to comfort a family member in chronic pain? You are not alone. Frustration, stress, anxiety, depression, anger—and guilt for being angry—are common family experiences. Your household may feel toxic, cycling between conflict, isolation, and the inability to be an effective and willing support for your loved one. Read the insightful handout "Ten Tips for Communicating with a Person Suffering from Chronic Pain" at www.practicalpainmanagement.com/Handout.pdf. It hits every key point from how their pain affects you to communication, taking care of yourself, what you can do, reading nonverbal cues, and more. Talk with your AEAP professional about your unique situation.



Learn more: www.practicalpainmanagement.com [search "family role impact"]

Pandemic Pain and Young People

Teens need peer interaction and emotional validation to grow mentally healthy. So, isolation for teens during the pandemic is difficult. It's not just a drag, it's a risk issue because over one-third of teens periodically have suicidal thoughts. Not knowing when "normal" will return adds to their anxiety. As a parent, trust your gut. If your teenager demonstrates agitated behavior, moodiness, problems with self-motivation, disinterest in school, or is apathetic with unusual sleeping and eating patterns, talk to a professional counselor. A simple assessment may help identify a mental disorder and prevent self-harming behavior or even suicide. Your school social workers and psychologists are great resources.



Source: Rutgers.edu [search "teens, pandemic"]

Meet the AEAP Professional Team

Lisa Cooper-Lucas, Ed.D., LPC, MAC

Lisa is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Master Addictions Counselor, SAP, with a doctorate of Education in Counseling Psychology. She has an extensive work history as a clinician and program administrator with government and educational institutions. Lisa particularly enjoys work with emergency responders and helping employees address addiction and trauma.

Deb Gilman, Ph.D.

Deb is a licensed clinical psychologist with a doctorate in Clinical Psychology and a bachelor's in Psychology and Dance. She has over 20 years of experience providing consultation, behavioral assessment, counseling, crisis intervention, case management, and referral. Before joining the AEAP, Deb worked in a variety of settings including many years as a school-based clinical psychologist in Arlington Public Schools.

Nina Lovelace, MSW, LMSW

Nina holds a Master of Social Work from the University of Maryland, Baltimore with a focus on mental health and a sub-specialization in Employee Assistance Programs and received her undergraduate education from Bowie State University, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology. Several years ago Nina interned with the AEAP.

Sharon Williams, LCSW

Sharon has a Master of Social Work and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. She has been practicing social work since 1997 in a variety of settings with a wide range of populations, including adults, couples, families, parent coaching, youth, and children. Sharon is skilled in developing and leading groups, mental health and wellness presentations, individual counseling, and crisis intervention. After almost a year as a contractor, Sharon transitioned to AEAP employee.

Kathy Young, LCSW-C, CEAP

Kathy is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, a Certified Employee Assistance Professional, and a qualified Substance Abuse Professional (SAP) evaluations. Kathy served as the Coordinator for Arlington County's EAP before its collaboration with the APS EAP. She is certified in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and has worked extensively with CISM teams and first responders. Kathy enjoys helping employees with a variety of personal and professional issues, like grief/loss, substance use concerns, and work stress.

Tara Wooldridge, LCSW, CEAP, SPHR

Tara is a licensed clinical social worker and holds certifications as an Employee Assistance Professional, Senior Professional Human Resources, and Mediator. She has a Masters degree in social work and a Bachelors in English. Tara has over twenty years of EAP experience. She also has expertise in drug testing, work/life, and wellness. Tara appreciates the opportunity to lead the Arlington EAP team in supporting employees and their families in pursuit of personal and professional well-being. She believes the AEAP plays a critical role in workplace wellness, providing a safe place for employees to tackle the challenges that may impact quality of life.

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 AEAP staff. The AEAP operates under provisions of Federal confidentiality laws and EAPA Core Technology. The office is conveniently located in downtown Clarendon. To speak with someone, please call the main number (703-228-8720) during business hours (8:00am–5:00pm)

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Visit the AEAP website to learn more, register for webinars, access tools and resources:

<https://eap.apsva.us/>

