



Your **EAP** Newsletter!

Mental Health Awareness Month What's Normal, What's Not?

Could you spot the difference between someone who is simply disappointed or sad versus someone depressed enough to take their own life? What about being very happy, excited, and restless versus having bipolar illness? Over-drinking versus alcoholism? Identifying mental illness or addictive disease is not as easy as physical illness, but there is one indicator worth paying attention to, and that is your concern—for yourself, a friend, or loved one. Early identification of mental illness often means better treatment success. Mental illness affects how one thinks, behaves, and/or feels—and safety, health, relationships, communication, wellbeing of others, and occupational functioning may be at risk. So, if you're "concerned," take the next step—speak with a doctor or a mental health professional. Still not sure? Speak with the AEAP, and you will know what to do next. Also use national resources for information. <https://www.mhanational.org/>



Not Enough Feedback?

Not getting enough feedback from one's supervisor is a common complaint. One solution is to ask for it. Set a time for a feedback meeting in an environment without distractions. Come with two or three observations about your work that you judge as positive and also a couple that focus on areas where you need improvement. Discuss the items, and ask whether your supervisor has anything to add. This exercise will achieve maximum engagement, and you'll feel closer to your supervisor, feel less stressed, and feel better about your job. Be proactive with communication at work. It can be its own stress reliever.



Time for Stroke Awareness

Do you know the signs of someone having a stroke and how to act? Most people don't. Here's what you should know. Remember "FAST." F stands for "face drooping." A stands for "arm weakness." S stands for "speech difficulty." And T stands for "time to call 911." T might be the most important. Research shows calling 911 as being the fastest way of getting help, not driving a stroke victim to the hospital, which delays treatment crucial to survival. Other symptoms include the following: sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance, and lack of coordination.



Learn more at www.heartandstroke.ca and www.stroke.org.

Stop Procrastinating with the Five-Second Rule

The "five-second rule" is a mental tactic conceived of by attorney and author Mel Robbins. Its purpose is to stop procrastination in its tracks and help you accomplish more. The science of the approach is sound. Here are the steps: When you become aware of a need to take some action, count down "5-4-3-2-1" and immediately, *physically*, move to action before the desire to procrastinate takes hold. Don't wait for an excuse to delay action. The left side of the brain controls logic, direction, and math. This technique allows this side of your brain to take control before the right side jumps in to undermine you.



Learn more: "The 5-Second Rule" by Mel Robbins.

Be a Self-starter to Attract More Opportunity

When you are sufficiently motivated and show a strong desire and determination to succeed, you are demonstrating the traits of a self-starter. Self-starters are obviously desired workers because of their ability to get things done. However, just as valued is how much easier they make life for their supervisors: Self-starters free up a supervisor to feel less anxious about the need to follow up and micromanage. Also, when anxiety levels are reduced, fewer conflicts are likely between the manager and employee. Consequently, self-starters may have faster paths to promotion or recognition. To become a self-starter, meet with your boss once per year for an “overview meeting.” Discuss goals that both of you agree are rewarding but that will also advance the organization. Then meet with your boss for a few minutes four times a year to discuss your progress. This will also allow you to showcase (promote) your accomplishments. Avoid the mistake of engaging in exciting goals and spending most of your time on those while overlooking or falling behind on the essential functions of your position. Your initiative may be overshadowed by your lack of success doing what counts most.



Do You Have “Smiling Depression?”

Symptoms of depression may include, among others, sleep disturbances, appetite changes, crying, low energy, sadness, and difficulty feeling pleasure or participating in hobbies or activities that were once valued. Like other health problems that can affect behavior and are obvious to others, those with depression may mask their symptoms at work in order to appear engaged, in control, and happy. On the surface some depressed people may appear fine, but denial and fear of being seen and identified by others as being depressed are covered up because of fear of the repercussions on their employment. Embarrassment may also cause some persons with depression to mask their true experience. Some medical professionals have referred to this as “smiling depression.” Are you showing a smile on the outside while feeling miserable on the inside and keeping depression a secret? Speak to the AEAP (x8720) or a mental health professional and get real happiness back.



Your First Back to Work Team Meeting

It is coming someday: a genuine in-person meeting at work with your team. Perhaps a year has gone by without all team members being in the same place. To reinforce or reestablish team cohesion, have a “remote working lessons learned” discussion. What did you learn about each other’s work style?



What positive and constructive feedback can you give each other? What new communication issues became obvious among the group? How can you leverage your experiences for greater productivity going forward? During the meeting, share what each person felt was the upside to the adversity. Hint: Commit to group confidentiality with meetings of this type. The result will be a heartfelt and bonding experience during a time when we are truly appreciating the importance of social connections for health and well-being.

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

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