

Workplace Employee

March 2018

Testimonials

Here are some quotes from employees who recently called on CONCERN for a Counseling Consultation:

"This has been hands down the easiest health benefit I have ever used at any job. I received help quickly, the counseling is of high quality, and the absence of tedious and unnecessary paperwork is awesome."

"I was aware of the services and had referred others to the EAP before using it myself. I was blown away by the support and care of the call center staff who helped me find the perfect provider for my needs."

"Everyone I've encountered, particularly my counselor, has been professional, helpful, knowledgeable and kind."



Tips for Success

Are You Getting Your ZZZ's?

Sleep is often one of the first things to go when people feel pressed for time. Many regard sleep as a luxury and think that the benefits of staying awake longer outweigh the costs. But a good night's sleep is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle. In fact, sleep is as important to our health as eating, drinking and breathing. Yet according to the National Sleep Foundation, 40 million Americans suffer from sleep disorders such as sleep apnea, insomnia and restless leg syndrome, and 60 percent of adults report having sleep problems a few nights a week or more. Over time, that sleep debt can profoundly affect memory, learning, creativity, productivity and emotional stability, as well as your physical health. While everyone's individual sleep needs vary, research shows that most people require seven or eight hours of sleep to function optimally.

Sleep Awareness Week (March 11 to 17) might be a good time to stop tossing and turning and kick-start your commitment to getting the restful sleep your body craves. For tips and tools that will help you improve the quantity and quality of your sleep, check out the sleep toolkit on CONCERN's Resilience Hub at <https://www.concernresiliencehub.com/toolkit/get-your-zzzs>

60-Day Checkup!

How Are Your New Year's Resolutions Progressing?

Have you gotten off track or allowed your New Year's resolutions to slip to the wayside? Here are some ways to stoke your enthusiasm and get back on track: 1) Forget the guilt; instead, jump back in to working toward your goals. 2) Do a check: Was the goal too big or was it unrealistic? If so, pare the size or degree of required effort. For example, instead of exercising every day, make it your goal to exercise three or four days per week. 3) Journal about your progress. These written reflections are proven devices to help you maintain momentum. 4) Record your voice on a small, inexpensive pocket recorder enthusiastically and excitedly acting as though you have accomplished your goal. Play this recording regularly, and use it to motivate yourself to remain in a state of anticipatory excitement about achieving it. 5) Get going!

Why So Defensive?

Workplace communication sometimes includes receiving negative feedback or being confronted with a problem related to our work. Automatic reactions of defensiveness then follow. Remaining unruffled—staying composed and receptive even while feeling reactive—is a learned skill. Feeling defensive is natural when we feel a threat, but it has drawbacks in the workplace. Typically, it is a no-win response that keeps us from hearing others, interferes with solving

problems, and sours relationships with those we depend on. Ultimately, defensiveness gives away your control and ability to shape the outcome you want from a difficult interaction. To reduce defensiveness at work, challenge yourself to pause before you react. For example, count to 10 in order to spend some time regaining control, which will help you avoid lashing out. For speedier results, use a mini-diary to track how well you stayed composed, what went well, and what you will do better next time.

Counseling for Procrastination

Many people who struggle with procrastination find it mind-boggling to try to self-correct this habit. Despite having access to a world of tips on how to overcome their tendency to put things off, deadlines still challenge them. Don't keep fighting with your inability to get started on tasks and to stick with them. Procrastination is a symptom, usually of another issue undermining your ability to "just do it." Depression, fear of success, fear of failure, or even addiction and other health issues can undermine the ability to self-motivate—leaving the "victim" immobilized until the fear of a deadline forces them to act. If this sounds like you, begin today to track your procrastination, make notes, and take your personal experiences to a mental health counselor or your EAP—you can slay this saboteur of productivity.

Hugging in the Workplace

A number of magazines including Forbes and Inc. have examined the appropriateness of hugging in the workplace. It's highly controversial, with no universal opinions. Plenty of do's and don'ts, and dozens of online legal opinions exist about who, what, when, where, and how long to hug or not hug. In 2017, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit stated that hugging can contribute to a hostile workplace if it is unwelcome and pervasive. Although it's not a prohibited behavior, it appears that you probably should avoid a reputation for expressing affection in this way at work—and most experts agree that you should avoid hugging those you supervise. If you are the hugging type, be aware that some people do not like to be touched. And if your organization has rules or policies regarding hugging (some, like many educational schools, do), follow them.

A Little Taste of Alcohol

Tasting and sipping alcohol in childhood with adult permission is associated with more frequent drinking and more "drinks per drinking episode" later on in teen years. Although addiction professionals have long discouraged the practice of introducing children to alcohol ("the European model"), they now have research backing them. Similar studies have shown earlier drinking leads to a higher likelihood of alcohol problems later. Know your family history (genetics) as well, because it's also a strong predictor of substance addiction later in life. Research: <https://www.buffalo.edu/news/releases/2018/02/003.html>

Is Social Media Changing You?

Are you aware of social media's effect on you? Does it interrupt your activities, consume too much of your time, adversely affect your mood, keep you inside on sunny days, cause you to be late, distract your driving, or put the kibosh on your to-do list? Social media platforms make their money based on usage and seek to have you spend more time online. Some studies have shown a little shot of dopamine—a hormone that creates a sense of pleasure—is released when we engage on social media, get a response back, or gain any satisfaction from the clicks, likes, and entertainment we experience. This leads to escalating use, and it's a powerful distraction when we are attempting to be productive. When our brains seek relief from stress or boredom, we reflexively turn to social media for a "pick me up." Many studies link social media use with depression and alienation from others. Gain more time in your life by reducing your social media use with the help of one of the many free apps that measure, control, and discourage use. They will tell you everything you want to know, including your accumulated hours from your days and weeks of social media engagement. Imagine what you will do with free time back in your life. <https://www.ama.org> [Search: social media dopamine]

Employees and eligible dependents can request
CONCERN: EAP counseling and work/life services
24/7 by calling or visiting our website.

Call: 800.344.4222
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