



Helping Hands

District Lodge 141

Employee Assistance

Program www.iam141.org/eap



October 2009

Your Role in a Drug-Free Workplace

Drug-Free Workplace Awareness Week



is October 19-25, 2009. It promotes drug-free workplaces and encourages employees with alcohol or drug problems to seek help. Here's how to contribute: 1) Discourage use of the phrase "functional alcoholic." It's an enabling term that minimizes the seriousness of alcoholism. It means "His or her drinking doesn't bother me." 2) See alcoholics or drug addicts as having responsibility for getting treatment, not guilty for having the illness. This approach hastens an addict's admission to treatment. 3) Ask, "Am I enabling?" Covering for the addict who can't do the job, has behavioral issues, steals property, or shows up late for work is almost equal to buying that person their next drink or "use."

Internal Stress

Everyday stress that people talk about usually includes traffic jams, work pressure, demands of the employer, parking tickets, and things that "happen" to us. We can manage the stressors, but their elimination is not likely. What about stress that you can control or eliminate, such as fear, unhelpful attitudes and beliefs, and unrealistic expectations? These real stressors compound other types of stress. Deal with them to improve your sleep, quiet your mind, and better shield you from the external stress you can't eliminate.



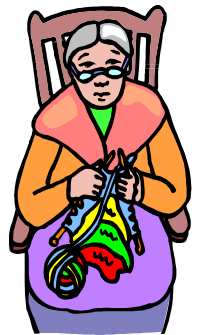
Reduce Blood Pressure



You inched your way through rush-hour traffic, caught the employee bus, walked a half mile through the airport terminal, and suddenly realized your I.D. badge is sitting at home on the kitchen table. Of course your blood pressure is going to go up. It's a natural body response to stress. Try these tips to stress less and stay healthier: 1) **Lose the extra weight.** The more body fat you carry around, the harder it is for the body to normalize blood pressure after stress. 2) **Exercise.** Blood pressure returns to normal more quickly after a stressful event if blood vessels are toned. And the (good) stress of building muscle through exercise tones blood vessels. 3) **Let go.** Forgiveness for actual or perceived slights is a simple way to reduce stress and make you healthier without a prescription. (Source: "The Examiner" - September 13, 2009)

Accidental Elderly Neglect

Have a plan to manage your stress and get periodic relief from the responsibilities of taking care of an elderly loved one. Accumulated stress (if you lack a relief plan) increases the risk that you may postpone care, overlook medication needs, fail to check in to see how things are going, or dismiss safety concerns in the home. This can happen to the most well-meaning family members. Plan ahead so you don't place your loved one at risk, experience burnout, or wind up being accused of neglect.



Stopping Victimization by Online Sexual Predators

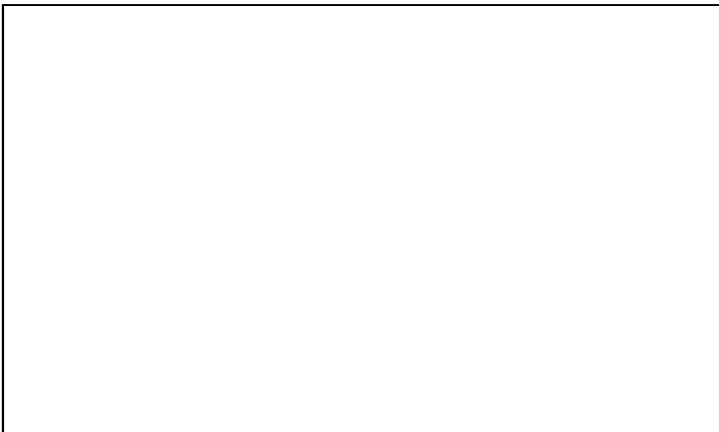


A missing piece of the puzzle when it comes to stopping Internet predators is having frank discussions to discourage teens from having romantic relationships with adults. Studies show that Internet sexual predators pose as adults, not teens, 95% of the time. They typically do not target young children. Instead they target teens and try to develop trusting relationships. They then engage in face-to-face meetings that victims perceive as romances and sexual adventures. Teen victims are more likely to have histories of physical or sexual abuse, family problems, and risky behavior. Most victims, perhaps as many as 75%, meet with the perpetrator more than once.

Source: American Psychological Association, Press Release, February 8, 2008

IAM-EAP Peer Coordinators

The mainstay of the District 141 EAP is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer much of their personal time to assist our brothers and sisters who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations. However, coordinators are trained to make a basic assessment of the situation and then refer to a professional resource for a more detailed evaluation and course of action. A complete listing of IAM EAP local and regional coordinators, including phone numbers, can be found on the District 141 website at www.iam141.org/eap.



Bad Mood at Work?

Having a positive attitude in the workplace isn't always easy but moods matter at work. While the implications of an angry outburst--or even a sarcastic eye roll--can have a long-lasting impact on a single employee, it can also affect the entire workforce. The ability to manage your emotions is an essential skill and responsibility because a sour mood can have a ripple effect on others. Expressing positive emotions and moods at work tends to enhance performance at individual, group and organizational levels. People generally experience a bad or angry mood as a response to fury, fear or failure--real or perceived. So what do you do when a phone call from your spouse reporting that your twins just flooded the bathroom--again--strikes just as you're heading into the employee parking lot? The first step is self awareness followed by self control. Some people think, "This is just my thing--I cry, I scream, I get moody," but that excuse alienates people and erodes your credibility. Admit to yourself that, yes, you're in a bad mood, and then make sure you keep your crabbiness under wraps. **Be Here Now.** When you're feeling cranky, it's often easy to pinpoint (or point fingers at) the problem: your employer, your spouse, traffic. But while any one or all may be a problem at the moment, they are not in control of your reaction to them. You are. **Get Grounded.** To short-circuit those recurring negative thought patterns, Place your feet firmly on the floor (either standing or sitting--and it's OK to stomp each foot just once) and feel the sensation of the soles of your feet pressing on the surface. This will help get you out of fantasyland and onto solid ground. **Take a Deep Breath.** A foul mood may start in the brain, but it also has a physical effect--calling for a physical solution. Proper breathing techniques can help keep a bad mood from turning into a raised voice or nasty comment. To get the most out of deep-breathing strategies, practice them for at least 10 minutes each day; otherwise it will be very difficult to access that relaxation state in a moment of crisis. **Hit the Pavement.** Exercise is another very simple, effective way to check out of the brain and into the body. Unfortunately, when your assigned trip is scheduled to depart in 15 minutes, you can't exactly duck out of work for a Pilates class or a five-mile run. Fortunately, you don't have to. Mood improves dramatically after a brisk walk of only about 10 to 15 minutes and it has an immediate and positive effect. It both releases tension in the muscles and energizes the body. Bad moods are inevitable, but there are ways to work past them.

