

Employee FRONTLINE

A newsletter from the WA State Employee Assistance Program

Improve Your Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions and to use this understanding to have more satisfying and productive relationships. Anyone can have a better "EI" by practicing a few skills. Here are some: (1) Try encouraging others to speak first and give them your full attention; (2) Eliminate the idea of good and bad personality types at work. Instead, look for the part of their personality that represents positivity and is well-meaning; (3) If there's friction between you and a coworker, look at where you may be coming up short in communicating, and address that first; (4) The next time you find yourself focused solely on winning or on retribution, take a step back and look for ways to achieve your goal that also benefit others.



Don't Let Mental Health Get Flabby



Without physical exercise, physical health suffers. Symptoms might be weight gain, heart disease, or a host of other maladies such as diabetes. Don't let your mental health get flabby either. The symptoms include negativity, fear, and overreaction to

unpleasant daily stressors or undesirable events. Mental health fitness isn't a willpower thing. It's the result of engaging purposefully in positive thinking exercises for improved mental health. What cognitive exercise or uplifting activity for a positive mental attitude will work for you? "Just do it!"

Multitasking Versus Chunking

The younger you are the more unlimited time seems. Appreciate the finite nature of time and you'll achieve goals faster and more abundantly. "Chunking" is one way to do it. Chunking is a time management tool for getting more done with fewer interruptions, starts, and stops, and without the requirement to repeatedly refocus your efforts on competing tasks - which are multitasking's flaws. Chunking focuses on completing one thing and then moving onto the next. Its impact may astonish you. Google "chunking time management" to learn more.



Myths about Tolerance in Workplace

Tolerance of others' beliefs and backgrounds is rapidly becoming more important because of cultural changes within a broadening and diverse workforce population. Failure to practice this principle creates conflict and a host of counterproductive and undesirable effects on productivity and workplace harmony. Overcoming natural resistance to practicing tolerance is everyone's responsibility, but the key to success is understanding common myths about tolerance. One myth is that tolerance means giving up what you believe, or that you must feel guilty or challenged for not accepting or understanding another's point of view or set of beliefs. Another myth is that workplace tolerance is easy to practice. Tolerance is the social skill of separating a person's beliefs or values from the dignity to which they are unconditionally entitled. Draw this distinction, teach it to others, and you'll play a powerful role in helping create a positive work culture where everyone feels respected.



Medication Reminder Systems

If you or a loved one has difficulty remembering when to take medications, there are many low- and high tech reminding systems and devices available online and elsewhere. The simplest and most common is an inexpensive pill box with slots for different days and/or time of day. It's available at most drug stores. There are also electronic reminder systems including watches, clocks, and pagers – some of which are covered by insurance - that vibrate or emit signals to remind the user that it's medication time. Medication reminder systems allow users to experience more independence managing an illness or condition. A Google search will bring up a number of options.



The Performance Conversation



Being happy on the job and engaged, productive, and feeling “at one” with your supervisor is about as good as it gets. One more thing will make it perfect—no surprises at your annual review. Plan upstream to prevent this problem by having a conversation about

your performance. The “Performance Conversation” is about getting feedback on how well you’re doing your job, but you don’t have to wait for your supervisor to initiate it. It can start with you. If you’re beginning to feel unsure about your performance and a little detached and can’t say for certain what your supervisor thinks about how you’re doing, you’re overdue for a performance conversation appointment. Don’t forget to discuss when the next one will be.

Date Rape Drugs Still a Hazard

In July 2013, 32 Styrofoam cups with residue of the date rape drug Gamma HydroxyButyric acid (GHB) were found in Racine, Wisconsin—about two miles from the University of Wisconsin. In June 2013, a man was arrested in Williamsville, New York, after giving GHB to a college intern. Also in July, Canadian police in Alberta found 10,000 doses of GHB in a raid. Think twice before heading off to “raves” or wild dance parties, particularly at college.



These events are ground zero for the use of predator or date rape drugs such as Rohypnol, Ketamine, and GHB. If you suddenly feel unexplainably ill or dizzy at a party, call for emergency help. Don’t take a drink from another person, lose track of your drink, or allow someone to go get you a drink. When in doubt, dump it. Learn more at <http://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/date-rape-drugs.cfm>.

Subtle Clues to Suicidal Risk

A depressed friend who talks about “ending it all” isn’t being secretive about the desire to commit suicide. However, would you recognize more subtle signs of suicidal risk in a friend who isn’t as open about thoughts and feelings or who feels it’s a sign of weakness to ask for help? Untreated depression is the most common cause of suicide, so the more you know about it, the easier it is to spot. You don’t have to be a mental health professional to notice the signs of depression. Recognizing the signs of depression can guide you whether to ask your friend if he or she is feeling suicidal. (Don’t shy away from this question. It’s the #1 rule in helping prevent suicide.) In today’s information age, it’s easy to find this information. Go to <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>, and search for signs and symptoms of depression. You’ll see there are many signs—not only deep sadness, but also changes in eating, sleeping, or working habits, severe weight loss or gain, changes in mood or self-image, or recurring talk about guilt or other negative feelings and thoughts. Having a greater knowledge of depression symptoms will help you gauge your concern so you can urge your friend to consult with a medical doctor, mental health professional, or the EAP.