

May 2021

# EAPNEWS

A worksite newsletter for employees provided by your Employee Assistance Program.



## EAP Support for Employees

Life presents us with challenges at work and at home on a daily basis. You do not have to face these challenges alone. The EAP offers confidential advice, support, and practical solutions to real-life issues.

### Emotional First Aid

Frightening accidents and crimes in the workplace, often with serious injury or death, do happen. Although you are unlikely to witness such an event, realize that in addition to what transpires for the victim(s), your experience constitutes traumatic stress—something considered by experts as a nonphysical “assault” to the brain. This type of stress is best managed with education, guidance, and a few important self-care practices that you will be given following such an incident. The goal is to help you manage the normal physical and emotional health effects of traumatic stress. These may include severe anxiety, replay of the event in your mind, panic attacks, and nightmares, among other impacts. Feeling guilt and wondering how you could have prevented the tragedy, even if there is absolutely nothing you could have done, is common. Follow the guidance of mental health professionals and the EAP if you ever experience a traumatic stress incident. These professionals can help you assess any emotional impact, offer interventions, and help you recover both your feelings of safety and the passion for your job.

### 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.

### 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 your EAP or a mental health professional and get the real happiness back.

## 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.

## Is Absenteeism a Symptom?

Some absences from work are unavoidable, such as those due to a sudden illness or a crisis at home. Intentional absenteeism, on the other hand, is often a symptom of solvable personal problems. Have you intentionally missed been absent after conflicts at work the day before; for feeling disengaged and needing a mental health day; after an emotionally upsetting incident with a customer, a bad performance review, or not feeling appreciated or being acknowledged for one’s work; or after being bullied or harassed in the workplace? Intentional absenteeism might feel like a short-term fix to manage problems or frustrations, but it usually postpones important interventions and decisions while problems grow worse. Absenteeism cost well over \$17 billion to Canadian companies and over \$250 billion in the U.S. Your EAP can help. Source: [www.blog.tracksmart.com/why-it-matters-the-direct-and-indirect-costs-of-absenteeism/](http://www.blog.tracksmart.com/why-it-matters-the-direct-and-indirect-costs-of-absenteeism/)

## 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.



## May is Mental Health Awareness Month

You are not alone. Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental illness. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the mental health of people of all ages. Now, more than ever, it is critical to reduce the stigma around mental health struggles, because that stigma often prevents individuals from seeking help. Find information and resources: <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Mental-Health-Awareness-Month>

## May Webinar:

### Sexual Harassment: Building a Culture of Workplace Respect

Sexual Harassment is a universally recognized issue of concern in the workforce. Many people do not recognize that their actions could be hurtful or hurting someone. Teasing or joking can have damaging effects on co-workers, bystanders and the organization. This session will challenge employees to examine their own behaviors, assumptions and biases regarding Sexual Harassment. **Register** for this month’s webinar.

## College Corner

Once your college student turns 18, you will not automatically have access to their academic, medical, or financial records. Once they become an “adult” in the eyes of the law, without these precautions taken, you may find yourself unable to help or intervene on their behalf should something happen.

- FERPA - grades and other academic information
- HIPPA - medical information
- Medical Power of Attorney (Health Care Proxy) - act on their behalf in the event they can’t speak for themselves
- Durable Power of Attorney - financial and bank account information if they can’t speak for themselves

Arrange a free consultation with a college planning specialist: <https://my.timetrade.com/book/N62GH>.