

TEAMWORK

A publication of



Total Employee Assistance & Management, Inc.

A T.E.A.M. NEWSLETTER FROM YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Family

When Your Adult Child Moves Home

One of the factors of living in the 21st century is the re-introduction of extended families living together. As costs of college, cars, insurance, and housing continue to skyrocket and wages do not keep up, we are finding that more and more of our children are returning home to live, or that they are reluctant to leave the nest. The idea of children staying with us for indefinite periods of time presents real challenges. Issues with privacy, self-reliance, care taking, and shared responsibilities arise during this time. It is difficult for parents *not* to be parents of their adult children, and it is equally as difficult for the adult child to *not* become a child again.

How can this situation be dealt with so all parties are comfortable for the duration of the stay for the adult child? Here are some tips to address the situation.

- 1 Establish time frames for when the living situation will be reviewed and alternative plans can be addressed.
- 2 Establish how things are going to get done around the house as well as tasks for each family member. A chore list worked before and it can work again.
- 3 Engage in a discussion about privacy and how everyone will be able to respect each others privacy, as well as what activities will be tolerated.
- 4 Make sure there is an understanding that adult children are expected to contribute in a meaningful fashion to household finances.
- 5 If the adult child is bringing children into the situation, discuss parenting techniques and how parenting will be handled. How often the parents will be baby sitting is an issue to be addressed and firm rules established.

As parents, we are caregivers for our children. As they come home or as they stay home, it is difficult to assume a different role. There is the tendency to expect mom and dad to continue to cook the dinners and pay the bills. The children often assume the role of permanent house guests, with limited responsibility and maximum freedom from mundane tasks. This gets complicated if the adult child is bringing children with him/her. Then the parent gets a dual role, taking care of the adult child and his/her children. These issues can lead to conflict and resentment by both parties.

The key is to talk about the situation and not leave things unstated. Understanding that this is not an optimum situation for either party is important, but trying to make it the best possible situation through open communication is imperative. □

Health

Improving Your Sleep Performance

The effects of sleeplessness are cumulative. Without sleep, physical, mental and emotional functions are impaired. Changes occur gradually at first and may not be noticed. People might feel cranky, irritable and find it harder to deal with the normal stressors of their day. Severe insomnia can be very detrimental to our quality of life. Some people may experience diminished mental alertness and memory as well as slower reaction times which can affect their job performance and other daily activities. Individuals suffering from insomnia also increase their risk of experiencing disorders such as major depression, anxiety disorder and substance abuse.

Following are some suggestions for improving your sleep performance!

- ◆ Maintain normal sleep patterns (i.e. go to bed and wake up at the same time). Relax your body by exercising during the day. It is preferable not to exercise right before bed however.
- ◆ Make a "to do" list well before going to bed so you can relax mentally when you're ready to fall asleep.
- ◆ Use meditation and progressive relaxation when you're ready for bed.
- ◆ Unwind mentally a half hour before going to bed by enjoying a low key activity such as reading or listening to music.
- ◆ Sometimes it helps to put a pen and paper next to your bed in case you wake up at night thinking of something you need to do. If you write it down immediately, you can then relax and go back to sleep without worrying that you might forget.
- ◆ Avoid caffeine in the afternoon or evening.
- ◆ Alcohol may help you fall asleep, but it disrupts the second half of your night's sleep.
- ◆ Nicotine is a stimulant, so avoid smoking cigarettes up to 6 hours before going to bed.
- ◆ Naps can interfere with a good night's sleep as well. Excessive liquids increase the need to get up and urinate during the night.
- ◆ Eating too much too late in the evening may make you feel physically uncomfortable while lying down causing indigestion, thus impacting your quality of sleep.
- ◆ Trying too hard to fall asleep can also be a problem as it can cause excessive worrying.
- ◆ Too much noise and light can affect our sleep patterns, as can the temperature of the room.

- ◆ Our sleep can also be affected by other family members, including a new baby or a sleep partner who snores or has sleep problems as well.

Remember, be proactive with your health by maintaining a consistent sleep schedule and avoiding behaviors which inhibit or interfere with quality sleep. If your sleep problem persists, consult your family physician or a sleep specialist. □

Emotions

Childhood Fears: A Guideline for Parents

Children, as well as adults, have fears. This is normal. So, if your child is fearful, don't be alarmed: You may have a few surprises, but you and your child will get through it. . Just as you are ready to relax at the end of the day, your child may fear going to bed because of the dark, or the noise of a storm, or the "monster under the bed". Or, he may be worried about going to daycare tomorrow and being separated from you (Oh! Here comes the guilt). Or, he may fear animals, toilet training problems, doctors, the sense of falling, or just about anything that is new to him.

Your child may be too young to verbalize his fears, and may act them out with behaviors that are frustrating to you. You may feel a loss of control. What can you do? Your busy schedule won't give you more hours in a day, but you can carefully observe your child's fearful behaviors and then verbalize for your child what it is you think he/she is struggling with. This tells him that you understand and will help him. To help your child realize that he can outgrow his anxiety, you can read a book on childhood fears such as *When I Feel Afraid* by Cheri Meiners, and talk about what you have learned. Some fears are real and sensible, such as fear of heights and

continued ▶

Welcome to the Team

Total Employee Assistance and Management, Inc. continues to grow. We would like to welcome the following organizations that have recently become part of our team.

Huron Valley School District

Grosse Pointe Public Schools

Incoe Corporation

Welcome aboard! We look forward to working with you. Thank you for joining T.E.A.M.

dark streets. Others are just false evidence appearing real. You can guide your child to realize the difference between the two and help him master his fears. The process is very important and requires patience, gentleness and open communication. Allow your child to work through his fear at his own pace, which may be slow.

If the care of your child is entrusted to others during the day, talk to his caregiver about his fears and how you have been working with him. Be specific, and clearly describe to the caregivers how you expect them to interact with your child should he become fearful. Childhood fears are fluid—when one is worked through another may appear. This means ongoing observations and communications with daycare workers and preschool and elementary teachers.

Your child may be one of those children who have more difficulty working through normal childhood fears. If you are feeling overwhelmed, or are at a difficult spot and would like assistance, please call TEAM at 1-800-448-8326. You can talk through your concerns or ask to make an appointment with a counselor. □

Life Issues

Aging Gracefully

Aging is a part of everyone's life. How we deal with aging can make a difference in our quality of life. We can choose to age with grace and dignity, or with distress and discomfort.

"Live forever or die in the attempt," said the author Joseph Heller. Most people want to live a long life, but they may not want to think about the idea of getting old. Current statistics for life expectancy at birth in the United States today is 80 years for females and 75 years for males.

The 'anti-aging' industry perpetuates a culture that views aging and the aging process as negative and undesirable. The U.S. market for anti-aging products and services in 2004 grew to \$45 + billion.

Your perspective about aging can have



Your T.E.A.M. EAP benefit is a counseling, coaching and referral service provided by your employer to you and the members of your family. This is a free benefit, and it is strictly confidential!

Neither your employer nor your coworkers will have any knowledge of your use of the EAP.

We have offices conveniently located to serve you. No matter how big or small the reason is for calling us, give us a call and let us help. We assist people every day with a wide variety of personal problems, including marital difficulties, financial or legal concerns, emotional problems, family difficulties, grief, loss, death and personal or work crisis.

If you have a problem with which you need help, please give us a call.

We are only a phone call or mouse click away!

1-800-448-TEAM
www.team-eap.com

~QUARTERLY QUOTE~

"Real strength is not just a condition of one's muscle, but a tenderness in one's spirit."

~ McCallister Dodds

an impact on how gracefully you age. Some factors of the aging process cannot be controlled, such as our genetic makeup and the onset of physical signs of age. For example, no one can control when their hair starts to gray. A person can still age gracefully in spite of physical limitations or chronic disease if they have healthy ways to cope and a positive outlook on life. By definition, "grace" means confidence, elegance, and moral strength. In the context of aging, grace means acceptance, humor, and making the best of your situation.

Successful aging may depend more on a person's attitude and coping style than with avoiding disease or disability. A new survey of older adults over age 60 shows nearly three-fourths felt they were aging well, despite often having physical illness or disability. Researchers say the results suggest that the self-perception of the aging process relates more to attitude than physical health.

Following are some things that can be done to plan ahead for more graceful aging.

- * Live in a one-story or structurally modified home where you can function and remain independent if your mobility is compromised.
- * Maintain a healthy lifestyle in order to avoid chronic disease as much as possible.
- * Maintain a social network.
- * Contributing your time and resources whether it is to family, community or work helps improve quality of life for older people.
- * Talk to others in your family and support network about your wishes for care and decision-making as you get older.
- * Put your wishes in writing so that you know how your medical care, finances, and other important aspects of your life will be handled.

Aging gracefully can be accomplished by anyone who has a positive outlook on life and prepares both physically and mentally for their future care and well being. □

For help with these or any other issues, call your T.E.A.M. counselor at 800-448-TEAM (8326).

It's Been Studied!

Misuse of the Internet

Organizations are becoming more and more cognizant of the losses they can incur when employees utilize company technology. Misuse of computer technology and the processes it affords an employee, have become increasingly scrutinized.

There are a variety of ways companies are affected. The technology of the Internet, and the vast wonderland of "reality to fantasy traveling", as well as everyday modes of communication that electronic mail provides, presents an enticing and sometimes illegal portal for an employee's pleasure. A study by Drs. Case and Young, note that "computer misuse is becoming problematic". They identified companies that have been affected in the past by employees distributing offensive emails; spending time surfing pornographic websites; visiting sites that involve violent subject matter. SmartFilter states that the American Management Association reports "27 per cent of Fortune 500 companies have battled sexual harassment claims stemming from employee misuse and abuse of corporate e-mail and Internet systems."

Companies are also affected by employees' wasted time and loss of productivity.

The statistics indicate that the greater majority of employees use workplace technology to send personal emails, job search, make personal travel arrangements, and do their personal shopping. Many employees find surfing the web and playing games, an acceptable distraction during the workday. This time has been coined "cyberslacking", and it is costing businesses time and money.

There are not only the issues of legal risks from misuse of the internet, or productivity losses, there are also risks of reducing "a company's business throughput, as bandwidth", which can also be costly to a company.

In order to minimize their risks, companies are developing corporate policies which define and document appropriate use of company technology and resources, as well as the consequences of misuse. There are many new software tools on the market, as well as companies offering options for monitoring technology use in the workplace.

Controversy between employee privacy and employer protection consequently arises from the discussion of Internet misuse, and it will be ongoing throughout labor law and human resource fields. Yet, companies will, and should, continue to implement policies and procedures to address the technological and human side of this issue. □