

TEAMWORK

A publication of



Total Employee Assistance & Management, Inc.

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

Relationships

Too often we have a tendency to meet everyone else's needs before attending to our own. Perhaps you need to complete a work assignment instead of going to lunch or stay up past your bedtime to help a family member or friend. Although single acts of kindness may not have a significant toll on us, repeated acts of placing personal needs second can result in stress and exhaustion. In fact, those that are asking us to help are probably unaware of the impact of their requests.

In order to oblige the demands of others, while still finding time for ourselves, we must have balance between the two. While that lunch break or much-needed rest may not happen immediately, we must still take the time to address our personal needs. This time may be spent later on an enjoyable activity, such as taking a walk, or a relaxing moment, such as a bubble bath. Without these moments of personal time and self-maintenance, our whole day may be occupied tending to others.

If this pattern continues, we may find ourselves so worn out that we are no longer able to adequately meet the demands of ourselves and others. In order to maintain healthy relationships, we must be healthy people. Part of being a healthy person may entail occasionally saying "no" to requests and maintaining that much needed personal time. If you find yourself overwhelmed and unable to establish healthy relationships, please contact T.E.A.M. for assistance. □

Family Mom Mania

Do you know women who are so consumed with being the "perfect" mother that they run themselves to near exhaustion? Most of us can answer yes, and we may even be referring to ourselves. Across our nation, a recent trend has emerged.

Women have proven that they are completely capable of success in every occupation under the sun. And now, as these women enter into motherhood, various circumstances have created a paradox for them. Expectations of being

able to "do it all" as well as the current social norms about motherhood contribute to a growing number of women feeling so overwhelmed by the pressures of being a mother that they can't even enjoy it!

It's not only affecting women who are balancing work with motherhood. Even full-time moms are experiencing the crunch—worrying that someone is outdoing them in the race to be the best mother. This fear leads women to abandon their own needs in order to devote every ounce of themselves to being the "perfect" mother—enrolling their children in all the "right" activities, using all the "right" parenting techniques, planning the "best" birthday parties, etc. At the end of the day, these moms are so spent, there is nothing left to give to themselves or anyone else!

How many moms got to this point is a complex combination of learned personal expectations and social pressures. What we have to remember is that ultimately, striving for this unattainable state of "perfection" is obviously not good for the moms and is not good for their families—particularly the children they are so feverishly trying to raise "perfectly". Our children see much more than we give them credit for and watching their mothers deplete themselves so completely is not the lesson most moms hope to teach. There are no easy answers to this predicament but mothers need to dismiss the idea of being a "perfect" mom, in control of everything. Mothers need to focus on what they want their children to learn from them and remember that their *behavior* is the most influential method of teaching! □

Life Issues "I Hate Change!"

Do you find yourself wishing for "the old days" where things were more stable? Do you come into work hoping for a "normal" day, just to find out that 5 more things have changed since yesterday?

Occasional changes, in work or personal life, are exhilarating and challenging. Past that point, rapid, unpredictable change is simply wearing and stressful.

The past ten years have been, to say the least, "interesting" for companies and government agencies around the world. In this period: nearly half of all firms were restructured; many were merged; others divested or downsized whole departments. Some simply ceased to exist.

Richard Earle, Ph.D., of the Canadian Institute of Stress, has studied stress and coined the term "hyper change." He finds there are some "personal best practices" for thriving in hyper change.

1 Accept that rising stress is the totally normal response in the early stages of turbulent change. Difficulty concentrating, the inability to "shut down" on weekends, being impatient, or boiling over at a tiny irritant are biochemically inevitable (if you're human). The high octane hormones that fuel the stress response are triggered automatically when we encounter too much uncertainty.

2 Carefully choose, and write down your answer to: Who, specifically, do I want to be (and be known to be ... by family as well as by co-workers) when times are tough and turbulent?

3 Review and reaffirm the unique strengths you bring to your work, especially in the changing situation. In the face of firefighting and related time pressures, many of us lose sight of what our past successes have taught us about ourselves.

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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.

Coroplast
Intier-Ontega
AssureCare

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

4 Practice a simple method for breaking free of wheel-spinning worry. Target one of your recurring worry situations and honestly answer these four questions. Can I change it? Will I change it? (How?) If the situation goes badly, what's the worst realistic effect on me?

5 Reacquaint yourself, in very concrete terms, with your work "satisfiers". For you as a unique person, what are the specific work experiences that might leave you saying to yourself as you drive home, "That was a good day"? Write down your answers. Then plan for and take several simple actions to get one of your satisfiers more frequently into your work day.

Mr. Earle's clients report that these and related steps have yielded 30 to 50% increases in their work satisfaction. □

Health

Healthier You

While it is a sign of the times, and a noticeable change in our nation's focus, we have been overwhelmed with information from television, talk radio, and the internet on our national crisis of excess weight. The problem is that with so much information, it is hard to know just what steps each of us can take in order to improve our physical and emotional health. After you get medical clearance from your physician, here are some specific and behavioral steps that many researchers have found that can effectively lead you to lose weight:

All successful weight loss programs include both dietary changes and exercising. Contrary to some advertiser or infomercials, there are no magic pills.

Always have healthy snacks, such as carrots, apples, or some other fruit with you at all times. The research suggests that



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~

"It is easier to act your way into a new way of thinking than to think your way into a new way of acting ~

Anonymous

It's Been Studied!

IDENTITY THEFT

Technology has enhanced our lives in many ways but it has also resulted in other issues that are a sign of the times. One major issue that is being given a lot of attention is identity theft which the General Accounting Office estimates affects 750,000 Americans every year. It has become very important to learn how to protect personal and financial information in order not to become a victim of this crime.

Listed below are basic ways to help prevent your private information from getting into the wrong hands.

- ❖ **Safeguard your Social Security Number** – Do not carry your Social Security card in your wallet; do not write your SSN on checks and do not give your SSN to anyone unless you initiated the transaction;
- ❖ **Destroy records and statements** – tear up or shred documents that contain financial account information;
- ❖ **Don't leave a paper trail** – never leave ATM, credit card or gas station receipts behind;
- ❖ **Never let your credit card out of your sight** – keep an eye on who is handling your card; when that's not possible, pay with cash;
- ❖ **Know who you're dealing with** – do not reveal personal information to anyone without knowing who they are, what company they represent and the reason for the request;

if you have a healthy alternative available you will eat it, even when there are unhealthy ones available.

Consider increasing your level of walking in your daily activity. When parking your car, choose a parking spot that is further than you normally park. If you have a dog, take more frequent walks. Your dog will love you for it, and your body will slim down in the process.

Weather permitting, ride your bike, and/or walk to do errands that are around your neighborhood. If stores are too far away from your home to walk to them comfortably, consider parking your car at one store and walking to your other destinations if there are in the same general area.

Find an exercise partner whom will commit to regular physical activity. Having supportive people involved in your plan will help you keep these habits going over the long term. Consider joining a health club.

When going out to eat, choose healthier foods that are baked, broiled, and or grilled. Also ask for a "doggy bag" when your food arrives, so that you can place ? of your order away for later. Most restaurants give Americans more than two servings for every meal.

Eat with the goal of being "satisfied" not "full". There is a significant difference in these two goals. If you eat to be satisfied, you will notice that you are no longer starving, but you are also not uncomfortably "stuffed" either.

The most important piece of advice that the experts have found is that once you reach your goal, in order to keep the weight off, you need to make your weight loss program into a lifestyle change. What this means, it is that you find a program that you feel comfortably doing that you can make it a permanent part of your life. □

- ❖ **Be more defensive with personal information** – ask whether your SSN or driver's license number is absolutely necessary for the transaction and refuse to provide it if you are not comfortable that your information will be kept safe;
- ❖ **Secure your mail** – never mail outgoing bill payments and checks from home where they can be stolen from your mailbox. Mail them from the post office or another secure location;
- ❖ **Monitor your credit report** – review your credit report annually for any unusual activity. Obtain a yearly report free from Annualcreditreport.com or by calling 877-322-8228. Alert your credit card company immediately if you see any transactions you did not authorize.
- ❖ **Review credit card statements carefully** – make sure you recognize the merchants, locations and purchases listed before paying the bill. Consider closing any accounts that you do not use.

If you discover that your private information has been used illegally, respond immediately. Contact the fraud departments of each of the three major credit bureaus (see below) and request that a "fraud alert" be placed in your file. Ask creditors to call you before they open any new accounts or change existing accounts. File a police report in the community where the identity theft took place and keep a copy of the report for your records. Also document all efforts to clear up the fraud including copies of written correspondence and records of telephone calls.

For further information, visit www.idtheftcenter.org. □