

September 2020

EAP NEWS

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



NEW! COVID-19 Action Center for Employees

To get guidance on COVID-19 related questions and assistance with challenges in your work and daily life go to the COVID-19 Action Center at ibhworklife.com. Find tools and resources to help you handle the new normal, cope with pandemic related stress, and keep your family healthy during the pandemic.

Suicide Awareness Week is September 6-12

Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in our country. This statistic demonstrate the seriousness of suicide, which is often linked to untreated depression. Clinical depression affects more than 19 million adults every year. Depression and suicide have many common warning signs including: sadness or anxiety, feelings of guilt, helplessness or hopelessness, trouble eating or sleeping, withdrawing from friends and/or social activities, loss of interest in hobbies, work, school, increased use of alcohol or drugs and anger. Any talk of suicide by a friend or loved one should be taken seriously and help should be sought immediately. Call 911 in the event of an emergency or immediate crisis. Remember the EAP is here to help. Resources include confidential counseling by phone or video, 24/7 telephonic crisis support and online peer support groups for depression. Learn more about what to do if someone you know is suicidal: suicidepreventionlifeline.org/

Challenge Yourself to be Calm

There is another kind of distancing worth knowing about: "distancing" as a job skill, and a means of functioning well under pressure. Distancing is the mental task of separating oneself emotionally from severe interactional stress (e.g., a verbally irate customer) so you maintain focus on a task. (Navy Seals learn this skill.) To develop the distancing skill, take a deep breath when under pressure; acknowledge the situation ("Okay, the pressure's on. I can do this."); challenge yourself to be calm and visualize calmness; and focus on positives and the temporary nature of the event. Employers value workers who can perform well under pressure. Now you know how to do it.

Kid Solutions to Coping with COVID-19's New Normal

"Back-to-school" means something dramatically different this fall, but coping well with changes requires discussing them together as a family. After school, ask the kids how things are going, but expect the usual "hmm ... fine." To identify hidden worries, like bullying or social skills gaps that are causing distress, use open-ended questions that can't be answered with yes, no, or fine. Work on solutions together. Try brainstorming as a family or a group, or one on one with your child. You'll be surprised at the solutions kids imagine for solving their problems, ones that fit perfectly with their circumstances.

Practice Resilience to Overcome “Quarantine Quarreling”

Working remotely is the new normal for many employees. This change is requiring millions of workers to adapt. However, when family time increases, so can domestic stress. Add social isolation mandates, and you have a recipe for increased bickering and family squabbles. Have you experienced this “quarantine quarreling”? Has it affected your work productivity? We’re all familiar with bickering. It’s about the small stuff: “Whose turn is it to walk the dog?” and “How come no one put the wet laundry in the dryer?” Reducing bickering begins with understanding it is normal. Feeling less guilty about it can help you focus on intervention strategies. The inevitable is fewer incidents of its occurrence, fewer interruptions of your job, and more instances of members of your family communicating healthily. Even children can learn conflict resolution skills, and all can build the resilience necessary to cope with twists and turns in how the world responds to the pandemic. To these ends: 1) Have regular family meetings to discuss the need for a private, quiet workspace. Refresh and reinforce agreements about the rules to keep your remote workspace a productive one. 2) Take planned breaks to attend to family needs, which don’t vanish while you are working. Even 30 minutes spent attending to chores will reduce frustrations or resentments attributed to your being “always unavailable.” 3) Decide on definite work hours, if possible. Inertia often makes it easier to keep working after hours than to switch gears in favor of work-life balance. 4) Plan events on a family calendar so that everyone can look forward to and anchor themselves on them. This increases resilience and the ability to be more patient in the present. 5) Exercise with family members. The positive effects of exercising together are well documented in research. There is perhaps no more efficient way to accomplish three important goals at once—improving health, managing stress, and building bonds with those you love. Source: nih.gov [search “PMC4552681”]

Mental Health Benefits of Brisk Walking

“Walk faster and live longer” is a popular health tip. Now, research seems to support it. A three-year study of 92,000 people found that those who walked briskly for seven minutes daily within a 12-minute walk had a 30% lower likelihood of death. A two-minute brisk walk within a 35-minute stroll lowered risk of early death by 21%! If you don’t have an easy exercise program, it’s likely not a problem of capability. Instead, it is a problem of motivation. Overpower your resistance by identifying something you truly enjoy, and combine it with the exercise routine—music, books on tape, or mind-blowing educational content you’ve always wanted to hear or study. Let your doctor approve any exercise program, but find one that makes an impact like this one! Research: www.nature.com [Search [s41591-020-1012-3]

Tips for Coping with Tragedy at Work

There are best practices for coping with tragedy in the workplace, and communication is crucial for all of them. 1) Share all appropriate information. It facilitates healing discussions among workers. 2) Don’t judge others’ reactions. There is no “correct” way of reacting to tragedy. Each person is unique, and the reasons why are complex. 3) Use counseling resources and self-help groups. They can speed your way to a healthful return to your pre-tragedy emotional state. 4) Even if you feel no support is needed, consider a “check-in” that can ‘help keep you from overlooking a reaction that later interferes with social or job functioning. 5) Because tragic events can adversely affect focus and performance, give it time, and be patient with people.

(Future written communications may be in English only.)

Information in FrontLine Employee is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health or legal professional. For further help, questions, or referral to community resources for specific problems or personal concerns, contact a qualified professional. “The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America”, New York, NY (2020-107402 exp. 8/22). Integrated Behavioral Health, Laguna Niguel, California 92677”



Fixing Our Broken Sleep

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted many aspects of our lives, including how well we sleep at night. In this webinar you will learn techniques for overcoming common sleep problems. You will hear about the latest population studies and the latest scientific discoveries of the foundational relationship between sleep and all areas of health and learn helpful guided relaxation techniques for initiating sleep and returning to sleep.

Log-in any time this month to watch the webinar and ask the expert questions!



College Corner

Want an opportunity to save thousands per year off your college bills? October 1 launches Financial Aid filing “season” for high school seniors. Regardless of income, assets, and “perceived eligibility”, colleges recommend all families submit the FAFSA.

Submitting the FAFSA generates your Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which is the minimum you should expect to pay for college, and the basis for need-based aid packages. The Cost of Attendance (tuition, etc.) minus EFC equals need. Most packages only include a portion of your need. Add the shortfall to your EFC to determine your actual/net cost.

Parents of younger students should start their planning now to minimize out of pocket expenses and maximize need and aid! Financial aid packages vary greatly from between schools. Some schools have lots of free money for your student, others have little or none. You should know the financial fit before you apply. We can help you find the most free money available, and help avoid the dreaded “got in but can’t afford it” scenario.

Arrange your free 15 minute consultation with our college planning specialist at:

<https://my.timetrade.com/book/N62GH>

Maximize your student’s FREE money, minimize your college costs and debt. PS - Already have College-related Debt? We can help lower that too!