

June 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.

Lessons from Social Distancing: Loneliness as a Health Concern

"Flattening the curve" with social distancing is the worldwide intervention being used to reduce coronavirus infections and death, but it has also created social isolation. For millions, social isolation is a risk factor for loneliness, and loneliness is a demonstrated health concern. Are you feeling the effects of loneliness? We're not talking about "Zoom fatigue" but symptoms like low self-esteem, depression, anger, nightmares, anxiety, and easily triggered anger at loved ones, to name a few. Humans are hard-wired to be social creatures, so when they are deprived of this innate biological need to engage with others, physical symptoms result. Symptoms of loneliness feel as if they are of mental origin, but they are physiologically driven, according to researchers. Before the coronavirus pandemic, loneliness was hot research news. Medical researchers call it the "new smoking" because of its adverse health effects. Note that loneliness is not equal to being alone. Loneliness is your body saying, "Find people with whom to socially interact!" The inability to get to your favorite gym, gather with friends at a favorite hangout, or mingle with coworkers who bring meaning to your life can have natural health consequences. Learning about loneliness is a key lesson of our collective experience with the coronavirus. Social distancing is likely to end in the future, but connecting to a mental health counselor now—even if it means one more Zoom session to do it—is worth the effort if it can help you lessen the impact of loneliness. Learn more at news.gallup.com/poll/311135/adults-report-less-worry-happiness.aspx

Stress Management for Pandemic Heroes

If you are an essential service employee and working face-to-face with the public during the COVID-19 pandemic or you are in a job placing you at higher risk of contracting COVID-19, you can count yourself among the heroes. (Loved ones who support you and worry about you—they're heroes, too.) It's likely your employer has striven to reduce the risk of your contracting COVID-19, but it's not a 100% worry-free time. You've answered a higher calling so others can live as normally as possible during this time. If worry, anxiety, exhaustion, sleeplessness, family stress, and fear affect you, contact a professional, a support network, or your EAP for help. Tips like getting enough sleep, avoiding alcohol before bedtime, and practicing relaxation exercises are verified ideas for reducing stress and remaining resilient. They work, and you can learn more about them at heart.org [search "essential advice"].

Bounce Back Stronger

There is no playbook for maintaining emotional health during a pandemic, and everyone is struggling. We anxiously follow social media updates on containment of COVID-19, at the same time we are worrying about job loss, caring for our families, finances, and uncertainty about what the future holds. Resilience is the ability to bounce back when faced with stress or pressure. Some people in life show exceptional resilience. They have the strength and passion to go on, even in the face of tragedy. Below are 5 habits of extremely resilient people. 1) *Get the Support You Need*. Having others who accept you for who you are and who are there for you during good and bad times strengthens your resilience. Get out there and join an online group, schedule a zoom meetup with friends, or contact the EAP to schedule a confidential counseling session by phone or video. 2) *Make Healthy Choices*. People who are extremely resilient typically take care of themselves. They exercise daily, get enough rest, address their own needs and feelings regularly, and make an effort to eat healthy. Even walking 20 minutes a day can take your stress down a notch. 3) *Remember To Laugh*. Even during the worst times, exceptionally resilient people still laugh and find joy. Laughter can reduce the pain you feel, both body and mind, and help to minimize the issue at hand. Yes, bad things will still happen, but you can lighten that load by finding your sense of humor. 4) *Realize It's Just Part of Life*. Resilience comes with knowing that life isn't perfect and that, yes, there will be drama and trauma in your life at one time or another. Your ability to view a tragedy as an isolated event instead of what your future has in store for you is what will set you up for success and greater resilience in the future. 5) *Look On the Bright Side*. Resilient people have a knack for always finding the silver lining. Even though they are not immune to pain and anxiety, their eyes are open—they are able to see the good even during the worst times. Resilient people literally see each moment in life as another opportunity and another chance. Their glass is definitely half full. Remember, the EAP is here for you. We can help you build resilience skills and bounce back stronger as you transition to your new normal.

You're Committed, So Show It

Employers know what a committed worker looks like. It's not those who simply perform duties and assignments well. Committed workers bring something extra that helps advance the work unit's mission. 1) They solve problems; they don't just point them out. 2) They show enthusiasm rather than casual acceptance. 3) They are proactive in reporting progress on what they are doing. 4) They demonstrate initiative—they act on perceived needs that fit with their duties before being asked. If you want to show you are a committed worker, walk the talk with these distinguishing features.

Three "To-Do's" with Your New Boss

You may be a new remote employee, but making a good impression in a new job and with the boss is still everyone's goal. Unfortunately, being a new employee means missteps are going to happen, so focus on gaining an overall view of your job, the work culture, and especially patterns of communication. That's a lot to handle the first week, so set the stage for a positive relationship with your boss using these three quick tips. Observe which workplace issues create unease and concern for your manager—you'll gain empathy for what they face and potentially understand their priorities. Ask your manager the form and frequency of communication they prefer. And show positivity. Managers live for it and feel validated when they experience it from those they supervise.

(Future written communications may be in English only.)

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June Webinar



We All Matter: Diversity in the Workplace

Diversity and inclusion are more relevant than ever in the new normal workplace. In the face of adversity, diversity and inclusion thrive, because when different kinds of minds work together, challenges are much easier to overcome. For your organization to succeed, everyone needs to be on the same page and working towards the same goal. This training is designed to assist in creating cultural awareness and inclusion for all employees.

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



College Corner

College Planning USA offers our thoughts to all who have been impacted by Covid-19.

We also offer our congratulations to the graduating classes of 2020! Whether college or high school, this year's graduating classes will have unique experiences compared to the pomp and circumstance of "traditional" graduations. But these seniors face added stresses.

College: The job market that awaits is one thing. College loans will soon need to be repaid...that's another. **High School:** "Where to go" in the fall is the big one. "Will colleges be open" is a close second. And to what degree? There are numerous scenarios for how colleges can proceed.

On the parents' end, if college seemed "unaffordable" in a good, stable economy, how about now? If you recognize that your stress level is building, be sure to use tools to help you cope. Remaining positive is most important in times like these. And remember this is only temporary. When we get back to "normal", this is but another memory in the rear-view mirror.

IBH and College Planning USA are here to help manage your stress. Go to <https://ibhcollege.com/> to learn more about the college planning program and to book a free consultation.

ibhworklife.com | 800.386.7055