



Balance

A newsletter to help employees maintain a healthy work-life balance.



Dealing with Vaccine Anxiety

Many of us have some level of anxiety around the COVID-19 vaccines. Worries may include whether the vaccine is safe, attainable, and effective. These are all very normal concerns to have. Help alleviate some of your concerns by educating yourself and remaining up to date on developments.

- **Research what concerns you.** The CDC's COVID-19 Vaccines webpage is a good place to start. Other reputable agencies include the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and World Health Organization.
- **Stay current on vaccine distribution** by going to your State's Department of Health website.
- **Look to professionals you trust**, such as your personal physician. You could also follow leading federal experts in virus testing, prevention and treatment.

<https://mhanational.org/dealing-covid-19-vaccine-anxiety>

Making Healthy Changes

Do you have improvements you would like to make this year? If so, now's the time to take concrete steps to achieve them. Set realistic goals, develop an action plan and set it in motion.

- **Set realistic goals.** Write down the steps that will help you achieve them.
- **Plan for obstacles.** Figure out how to overcome them. Don't give up just because you've slipped. Are there changes you need to make to set yourself up for success?

- **Track your progress.** A journal or diary is one of the best tools for helping you stay focused and recover from slip-ups.
- **Get help.** Ask friends and family for support. Consider enrolling in a class or program.
- **Reward yourself.** Give yourself a healthy treat when you've achieved a small goal or milestone.
- **Add variety.** Keep things interesting by adding new activities or expanding your goals to make them more challenging.

Are you Glamorizing Overwork?

Do you constantly talk about how busy you are and about how you're burning the candle at both ends? Being a hard worker is one thing, but glamorizing working long hours can put you on a slippery slope. There is nothing glamorous about working yourself into the ground. Chronic over workers can suffer from cardiovascular problems, like high blood pressure and a cardiac event. Those unable or unwilling to draw the line between just enough and too much on-the-clock activity are also more prone to depression and anxiety. Overworking does not make you more valuable, although this association is often learned from parents or caregivers. Likewise, overwork does not beat quality as an indicator of doing a great job. For a healthier you, focus on accomplishments, rather than overworking. You may still work some long hours, but they will be fewer. Set boundaries, but if it's too difficult, consult with an EAP professional. Soon you will point to the success of your accomplishments, not the hours you rack up.

Your Stress Management "Urgency Kit"

There are many techniques for managing stress, but you may only be aware of a few, such as exercising, meditation, journaling, or talking things over with a friend. Experimenting with different ways of managing stress can help you discover a collection of dependable techniques that fit your life and work for you—a personal stress management "urgency kit." Try these quick, "on the fly" stress management techniques to see if they qualify for your kit. 1) Peel an orange. Studies show the smell of citrus can help reduce stress; 2) take a walk in green space; 3) listen to classical music for five minutes; 4) drink black or green tea; 5) try a guided imagery exercise using all five senses; 6) declutter your desk; 7) spend ten minutes in the sun. Discover a thousand ideas in the book *Simplicity: 1,000 Ways to Reduce Stress and Simplify Your Life* by Glen Mizrahi.



Being Positive May Reduce Memory Decline

Positivity or demonstrating an optimistic attitude has always been a valuable workplace trait in employees. Many research studies have examined its benefits on the bottom line, its ability to favorably influence others, and its affirming effects on general health. Now research shows optimism can help prevent memory decline as we age. Positivity is learned, and optimism is a teachable skill. A simple online search will show hundreds of tips on how to develop a more optimistic disposition. Your EAP can also help, especially if depression or other life circumstances feel like they are robbing you of your ability to feel positive.

www.sesp.northwestern.edu [search "positive memory decline"]

Use a Site-Blocker When Discipline Fails

To stay productive at work, we use self-discipline. However, there are so many digital distractions that only a robot could avoid them. Social media, shopping sites, political news feeds, gaming—these tempting delights burn up irretrievable minutes and hours, not to mention should be avoided as possible employer policy violations. Instead of sitting for hours and doing everything but work, use a site blocker. There are many such apps and browser extensions. One of them is "StayFocused", which is free. You can find others with variable features by doing a simple search for "site blockers."

Benefits to Limiting Social Media Scrolling

"Doomscrolling" is a term that has been coined to describe constantly refreshing and checking for updates related to news reports. We tend to hope that we'll find some bit of information that will help us make sense of current events or guide our next decisions. The problem is that our search can lead down a rabbit hole and leave us feeling discouraged, depleted, and disconnected. Consider setting a timer so you don't find that what started as a 10-minute escape consumes your entire evening. Take time to disconnect from social media and media outlets, especially before bed.

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Kepro's Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The Employee Assistance Program through Kepro assists organizations and their workforce in managing the personal challenges that impact employee well-being, performance and effectiveness. Kepro's life management consultants employ a comprehensive approach that identifies issues impacting the employee and assists them in developing meaningful solutions.

The Employee Assistance Program can be accessed anytime, for free, confidential support from a professional consultant or online resource. Call or log on today.

Phone:

Website:

Company Code:

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