



FrontLine

Wellness, Productivity & You!

Employee

University of Texas Employee Assistance Programs 713.500.3327

Teams Must Do The Laundry



Communication issues and conflicts are

normal even for high-functioning teams. Strong teams know how to deal with these obstacles efficiently. They deal with these “laundry” issues regularly. Are you in a work group that seldom, if ever, meets? If conflict and internal communication issues remain, your team is missing a vital piece of the puzzle. Charismatic leaders and powerful pep talks don’t replace the need for team members to roll up their sleeves and get this work done. It takes guts and getting vulnerable: “Sally, how have I done sharing information with you this week? Do you feel that I’m working more effectively with you?” Learn to communicate with this level of closeness and familiarity among your team members and you’ll experience higher morale, notice lower absenteeism, and be happier about your job.

Eat Slower, Gain Less



It tastes so good, I can’t wait to have seconds—zoom! There’s evidence

that very fast eaters who eat until they are full are three times more likely to gain weight than others who don’t eat fast. During the holiday season, try enjoying what you’re eating, but take your sweet time doing it. You just may eat less. The idea is not new. “Gentle eating” seminars are a key component to many eating disorder programs, and what they teach may be a strategy that could work for you.

Light-Duty Coworkers and You



Never assume a co-worker recovering from an injury is faking his or her need for light duty. Many injured people in their initial recovery period may demonstrate few signs of distress others can see. The injured worker may even have little or no pain. Your frustration at performing laborious tasks may prompt you to question the legitimacy of light duty. Recovering workers are vulnerable to these peer confrontations, even if nonverbally communicated. Risk of another injury is high, together with an even longer recovery period.

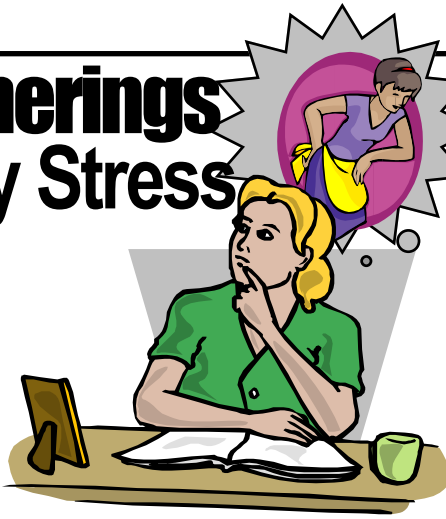
Is a Virtual Assistant the Answer?



If you wrestle with accomplishing exercise goals, getting things done on time, or procrastinating on desperately important projects, the thought of using a virtual assistant (VA) service may not have crossed your mind as the ultimate solution. Normally used by small businesses, VA services locally or abroad (location is no obstacle) work by the hour and tackle tedious, essential tasks. Surf the Web for “virtual assistant” to find one. Have you ever said to yourself “If only there were someone or some service that could stay on top of my progress or handle the details, I know I could get this thing done!”? Now you know that such a service exists.

Family Gatherings and Holiday Stress

Is it going to be another stressful and exhausting time orchestrating a huge get-together with relatives again this holiday season? Here's a novel idea: Why not take a break and skip it this year if you feel like it? If your annual gatherings happen because "that's the way it's always been," and you've also wondered "when will I get a break?", maybe this is the year to start. This doesn't mean you have to completely eliminate socializing and family togetherness, but if everything always falls on your shoulders (despite your attempts to share the load) because you do such a great job, maybe you and the entire gang will benefit from a break from the preparation, shopping, meal planning, cleaning, and laundry. This assertive step can be a difficult one to take. Inertia and everyone's great expectations for another masterful performance can put a lot of disappointment on the line. Talk about it with a close friend. A year later, you may feel reenergized. You then come back, delegate the chores, and really make a splash, if you like.



Better Teaching Moments for Your Teen

It's not easy to get a teenager to readily accept your point of view. The term

that describes the window of opportunity for doing so is often referred to as a "teaching moment." How do you recognize teaching moments so you can take advantage of them and add to the quality and happiness of your teen's life? A teaching moment is an opportunity, usually of short duration, that is characterized by the need for understanding or insight in response to an event with an unanticipated outcome. When offering understanding or insight to a teen do two things: 1) Avoid the "I told you so" approach. Instead, ask "what" and "how" questions to help guide the teen to the insight to be gained from an event. 2) Verbally praise the teen for discovering the answer and being open to accepting it.



Think: (Office) Safety

It's not a construction site, so why should you need to think safety in a quiet office setting? Although getting hit by a flying file cabinet is pretty remote, accidental injuries in office settings are plentiful nationwide. The perception that workplace injuries are less likely in offices increases risk, because thinking safety and prevention is an afterthought. Musculoskeletal disorders are the most common type of accidental injury in an office, and the back is the most commonly affected body part. Back injuries in offices are usually caused by lifting something heavy or *being in the wrong position* when you try to lift something. Slips and falls are also common in office settings. You're more likely to be off work longer recuperating from an injury if you are an older worker, but the younger you are, the *more likely it is* that you will be injured! Reduce injuries in the workplace by asking for help when moving something heavy—a box, a chair, a table, or a bookcase.



Secrets for Advancing Your Career

Demonstrating your ability to rise to the next level is important if you want to advance your career. Understanding the difference between *quantity of work* and *effectiveness of quality work* is critical to this process. Most employees struggle with the distinction. High output makes you valuable to your organization. However, providing high-quality, effective work advances the organization's goals. For example, you are asked to create a 15-page report within three days. You submit an 18-page report in two days. This is an example of quantity, but you missed the goal. Better: You write a 15-page report in three days, but the first page is a concise, quick-reading, executive summary. That's effective!

