

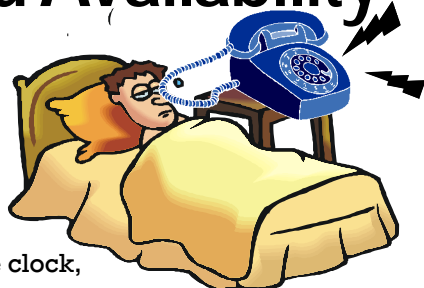
FrontLine

Wellness, Productivity & You!

Employee



“Expanded Availability” Stress?



Many employees have become accessible to business customers around the clock, thanks to technology. Even a sound sleep can be interrupted by an unexpected middle-of-the-night business “emergency” that puts the loss of a valued customer at stake. Anytime, anywhere communication made possible by PDAs (personal digital assistants) has created “expanded availability stress.” Be careful and self-aware. If you can’t completely detach yourself from your work, it can take a toll on your job satisfaction. The risk of burnout is high; you are unable to completely relax and enjoy rejuvenating leisure activities because a phone call can always interrupt you. If you experience this perpetual connection to work, seek a way to find a better work-life balance. Your employee assistance program can help. Your employer wants you ready and able—not ready to leave.

Spring Rains, Floods, and Such



Plan now to protect yourself and your family if you live in a part of the country that is subject to severe weather during spring. Follow instructions and guidance offered by local emergency preparedness experts. Don’t find yourself rushing to the store for supplies at the last second, only to face empty shelves. Get a kit, make a plan, and be informed. Visit the updated federal government Web site Ready.gov. There you will find the checklists and planning tips you need.

Disrespect Is Contagious



Employees not prone to negativity can slowly succumb to attitude problems if exposed to other’s negativity long enough. The same goes for disrespect. If disrespect creeps into workplace relationships, the risk is eventual loss of job satisfaction, struggles with absenteeism, and even staff turnover. Struggling with disrespect? During regular staff meetings, discuss what respectful communication means to you and your peers. Ask, “What can we do to experience more respectful communication among each other?” Don’t focus on past events. Instead, focus on what can be done to advance respect. Do this frequently. You’ll see respectful behavior increase and a happier workplace will reinforce it.

Sleep Tips for A Second Job at Night



If you’re working a night job (“graveyard shift”) to supplement your income, be sure to get sleep tips that are freely available online or in your library. Learn about sleep/wake cycles and how light, diet, and family stress can affect performance and safety. For example, it’s advised not to wake up and go straight to work at 11 p.m. Instead, wake up a bit earlier and participate in vigorous activity to get your body “switched on” and ready for work. Like starting an exercise program, consider consulting with your doctor about your schedule so he or she can advise you accordingly.

Source: American Academy of Sleep Medicine

Alcohol Awareness Month

Teenage Alcoholism

The most recent data available from the federal government on the number of adolescents treated for alcoholism is more than 15 years old, but there is no reason to believe that the problem of teen alcoholism has diminished. Alcohol is still the number one drug of choice for teenagers who abuse substances, although other abused drugs get more attention in public service announcements in the media. Between 1992 and 1997, the number of teenagers treated for alcoholism rose nearly 25 percent. Of adults who seek treatment for alcoholism, 80 percent report first being intoxicated before age 18. Sober facts: Adolescents who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who begin drinking at age 21. Generally, an adolescent's risk for alcohol dependence in the future decreases by 14 percent with each additional year that drinking is delayed. Beyond the illegality of supplying alcohol to underage youth, is there any better argument for not doing it? There is no credible research that demonstrates that serving alcohol to children "under adult supervision" in the "safety of their own home" will prevent or deter the later onset of alcohol abuse or alcoholism. On the contrary, the fact that alcoholism has strong genetic linkages argues that doing so may hasten the onset of this addictive disease.



Fight Deadlines with Deadlines

If you hate procrastination yet frequently find yourself in its clutches, implement the following strategy to experience a renewed sense of control and freedom from work pressure: When you are handed an assignment, decide to complete it within 75 percent of the allotted time. Decide your date and time for completion. Then, treat this earlier deadline as the real thing. Stoke your motivation by getting someone to whom you are accountable to inquire about your progress halfway through. This productivity strategy, ironically, will not generate the same type of anguish that you would otherwise experience with the real deadline. Relish the positive feelings of finishing early. Plan a reward—a movie, a night out, or a mini celebration. Become more proactive and creative with deadlines and you'll stay out of the grips of procrastination.



Getting to Know Your Neighbors

Do you know your neighbors? Many people don't know the last name of next-door neighbors, although they may periodically wave to them. Although you may be missing out on an opportunity for work-life balance, not knowing your neighbors also could be a safety and support issue. Failure to nurture these relationships may prevent you from seeking help during personal emergencies or cause you to feel hesitant about offering assistance when it's needed. Here's how to turn things around without trying hard: (1) Instead of hitting the couch, relax in a chair outside, see who walks by, and say hello. (2) Take a walk in the neighborhood, and when you meet others, greet them. (This tactic also counts as exercise.) (3) This year, attend the neighborhood barbeque. Perhaps it crossed your mind last year, but this year put the date on your calendar. (4) Have a garage sale. It's a surefire way to get to know neighbors.



How to Change Your Mood

There's nothing unusual about a difficult or "bad" mood, but don't stay frustrated in this state of mind hoping it will lift like a morning fog. A chronically bad mood might indicate an illness like depression, which should be evaluated by a health professional. Many things can influence moods, but images in our minds and "self-talk" in response to what's going on around us are big players. Try this intervention technique: Spend about three or four uninterrupted minutes imagining something you thoroughly enjoy doing. See, hear, feel, and even smell success at accomplishing this thing. This technique forces you to change the self-talk script. See if you don't notice a more desirable mood following the exercise.

