



FrontLine Employee

Wellness, Productivity, & You!

BluePrint for Health® Employee Assistance Program 651-662-0900 or 1-800-432-5155

Shine at Your Review



Annual performance reviews don't have to be dreaded by managers and employees. Make annual performance reviews less of a burden for yourself and your supervisor by seeing them as opportunities to capture some of the limelight and demonstrate the investment you have in your position. Bring along a short report that includes last year's accomplishments, what you would like to accomplish in the coming year, and a self-assessment of where you believe you need improvement. Have a plan for making the improvements you have identified and share it. Be sure to let your reviewer know at the beginning of the meeting, if not before, that you have a self-assessment you want to share.

Practice with the Small Stuff



Working in a fast-paced, sometimes nutty environment can leave you so wired that any frustrating experience (no matter how small) begins to stimulate an overblown emotional response. You missed your bus 30 seconds ago! You spilled your unseen latte behind your laptop! There are no more size 15/32 shirts left on the rack! Use these life stressors as practice sessions to gain better control over the self-talk messages that can make your stress worse. You'll develop an ability to better manage more significant stress-inducing events. Watch how this skill builder helps both you and others benefit from a happier you.

Drug-Free Work Week Oct. 14-20

**Working
Drug-Free
Works**

Drug-Free Workplace Week is a national awareness program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and business members of the Drug-Free Workplace Alliance. Its purpose is to build awareness of the value of a drug-free workplace and encourage employees to seek help. Take the well-known "CAGE" questionnaire as a first step in discovering whether alcohol use is a problem. Two "yes" answers means an assessment is recommended. 1) Have you ever felt that you should **Cut** down on your drinking? 2) Have people **Annoyed** you by criticizing your drinking? 3) Have you ever felt **Guilty** or bad about your drinking? 4) Have you **Ever** had a drink first thing in the morning to feel better?

Talk Up the EAP Take Down Violence

All of us naturally give advice to our friends when they face personal troubles.

When it's a coworker, don't forget to encourage use of the EAP—especially if it worked for you. It could produce a more complete solution to his or her troubles, and it could prevent workplace violence, especially if your coworker experiences a great deal of physical or emotional isolation from peers, experiences rejection, is easily frustrated and prone to angry outbursts, or who feels severely cynical and complains of bad family relations. These factors and easy access to weapons place employees at greater risk of committing violent acts.



Making Negative Feedback Nicer



Who would you rather get negative feedback from—your boss or coworkers? Many people fear the boss less. That's because supervisors generally follow conventional rules of feedback they have learned, making it easier for the recipient to accept the feedback, while coworkers often take a no-holds-barred, take-no-prisoners approach to letting you know what they think. As a group, coworkers can be a convincing force for help and change, even more than a supervisor, so why not adopt some rules of engagement among yourselves that will make giving and taking feedback more effective, if not exciting? Focus on behavior, actions, statements, and content when giving feedback to a coworker. Don't focus on the person. For example: 1) Don't say someone is boring in a presentation. Instead, identify what could be made more interesting. 2) Be specific. It isn't helpful when you say, "Your presentation wasn't very interesting." Instead, offer details, e.g., "Mary, you need to speak louder and put more energy in your presentation so people feel your passion." 3) Say what's working, e.g., "Wow, you really dressed nicely for that presentation, Robert, and it was just the right length." In other words, let your coworker hear that you value him or her despite the constructive criticism. 4) Listen calmly to what your coworker has to say in response to your feedback. Refuting the feedback is often a first step toward a coworker accepting it after further discussion. It doesn't automatically mean your coworker is in denial.

Consume the News with Awareness!

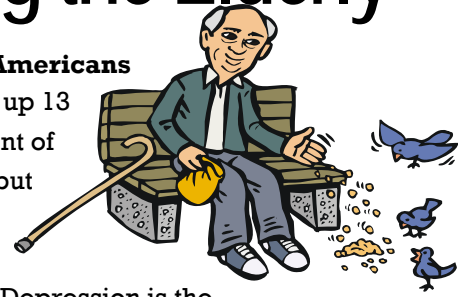
There's an old saying in some media circles that "if it bleeds, it leads." The translation: bad news sells. Of course, bad news adds to our stress, so the more we can reduce its impact, the better. Although most people say that they prefer to have good news, bad news gets our attention first because we are hardwired to pay attention to it. Knowing this gives you a bit of self-awareness and control over how much and when you consume bad news—and its cousin, "fear" news. Fear news is stressful too, but it can influence your behavior—cause you to act differently, switch opinions, and reinforce, even change, your point of view. Consume the news with awareness and you'll reduce your stress at home and at work.



Preventing Suicide Among the Elderly

Older Americans make up 13 percent of the population but account for 20 percent of all

suicide deaths. Depression is the illness most commonly associated with suicide. Contrary to popular myth, depression is not a normal part of aging. That's important to know, because family members are often on the front lines, frequently playing roles as caregivers who can potentially spot symptoms of depression that can lead to increased risk of suicide. The National Institute of Mental Health has developed a "cue card" to help spot the symptoms of depression in an elderly person. Know these symptoms in the event you are in a position to help. Ask yourself if your family member feels nervous or "empty," guilty or worthless, or very tired and slowed down. Do they enjoy things the way they used to? Do they feel restless or irritable? Do they feel like no one loves them, or that life is not worth living? Additional questions: Are they sleeping more or less than usual; eating more or less than usual; having persistent headaches, stomachaches, or chronic pain? Encourage the elderly person you love to let the doctor help. Depression, even in the elderly, is a treatable disease.



Avoid Online Get-Rich-Quick Schemes

Don't be a victim. While on the Internet, beware of spam marketing get-rich-quick schemes requiring you to invest money in a "business opportunity" that involves nothing more than you selling the same "business opportunity" to others while claiming a percentage of whatever they pay for it. And what is the business? There may not be one. The only business is selling the "business opportunity" to someone else, who then sells it to the next person.

