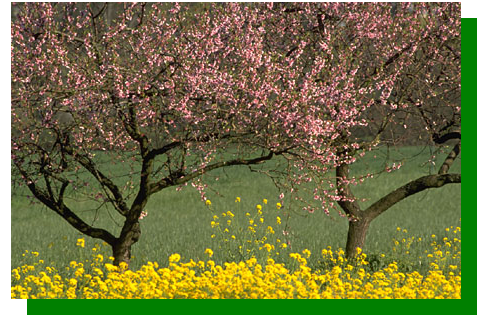


EAPost



Brought to you by FEI Behavioral Health

SPRING 2006

Rules for Kids – Internet Safety

Web monitoring programs can safeguard computer-savvy children, but you should also create rules they must follow when they are online. Here are some key ones to advise them on:

- Never give out their name, phone number, address, passwords, or other personal information.
- If something on the computer makes them feel uncomfortable they should turn it off.
- They should never agree to meet in person with anyone they've met online.

Web browsers may filter out the most explicit adult content, but if their “advance search preferences” are ever turned off, common key words like “teen fun” can produce explicit sexual and violent Web sites. Hint: If your computer tends to be online “continuously” via a broadband or cable Internet connection, be aware that these defaults will not reset until you shut down and restart your computer. ↻

Teenage Sleep Patterns

If “early to bed, early to rise” doesn’t work for your teen, there’s no need to scowl, blame TV, or proclaim that he or she is exhibiting laziness. Recent research shows that the biological clock of a teenager is just plain different. It appears to take longer for a teen to need sleep once awake, creating the tendency for teens to go to bed later and, as a result, to sleep in. It’s part of the normal adolescent package. Sleep for this age group is vital, though, and only 15 percent get the required amount—nine hours a night. ↻

Source: National Sleep Foundation

Avoid Online Investment Scams

Most of us live by the adage “if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.” However, it is especially important to keep this in mind when exploring the world of finance and investing, particularly online investing. The desire to maximize your retirement nest egg or return on investment can place you at risk for an investment scam that could leave you penniless. Some warning signs include being pressured to invest quickly or risk losing the opportunity, a need to be “referred” to the program by another investor before you can participate, or rules that don’t allow you access to your investment for long periods of time. ↻

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Planning Ahead for a Successful Summer for Your Kids

Finding adequate care and meaningful activities during summer vacation can present challenges for parents of school-age kids. But, with advance planning and thoughtful consideration to options available, you can arrange a summer that works well for you and your child. Start now to look at your summer calendar. Talk with your child to find out what interests him or her; gather information about local programs and summer camps, and talk to other parents. Ask questions to learn as much as possible about a program before enrolling your child. Consider your child’s comfort level, the cost of the program, the hours, and program flexibility. If your child will be spending time at overnight camp and will be away from home for the first time, talk to them about their concerns. Show confidence in your child’s ability to handle being away from home, prepare for camp together, and keep the emphasis on fun.

If your employer offers Work-Life Services through FEI, remember to call on us for assistance in searching for summer child care and activity programs. ↻



Wellness Corner

Which Comes First – Success or Happiness?

Does success in life bring happiness, or is it the other way around? Most research studies presume that happiness follows success, but the American Psychological Association recently announced findings based on 250 studies on happiness that point to just the opposite: success follows happiness. Other factors such as intelligence, family, and physical fitness contribute to success, but making decisions that help produce happiness really does help you achieve it. Happy individuals are more likely to have fulfilling marriages and relationships, high incomes, superior work performance, community involvement, robust health, and even a long life. It looks like the adage “do what makes you happy and success will follow” has empirical support. ~

Source: American Psychological Association
Press Release, December 18, 2005

Successful Aging – A Matter of Attitude

We all know that healthy aging is dependent on health and physical exercise, but did you know that it may be equally important to be optimistic? Research has found that people who have a positive attitude and are good at coping with change tend to age more successfully. One study of people who ranged in age from sixty to ninety-eight showed that the participants’ attitude was even more important than their level of physical fitness. Staying involved in the community and having a strong social network also predicted successful aging. What this means to you: retirement planning should focus not just on finances, health and wellness, but on those factors that influence a positive attitude and allow you to maintain a healthy social network into the future. ~

Source: American College of Neuropsychopharmacology
December 12, 2005

No Hangover? Not Good

While there is nothing fun about a hangover, you should be concerned if you have the ability to consume large quantities of alcohol with little or no adverse effects. Research shows that individuals who don’t experience hangovers after heavy drinking may be inclined to drink more heavily over time, possibly taxing an unsuspected susceptibility to alcoholism, and thereby incurring this illness. Many studies have shown this biological response to alcohol to be inherited. Talk to the EAP to learn more. ~

Revisiting Your New Year’s Resolutions

If you made a New Year’s resolution, are you sticking to it? If you have wandered off the path to achieving your goal, don’t panic! It is always okay to start over. First, decide whether or not you are really ready to make the commitment to the goal you’ve set. Half-hearted efforts are the leading cause of failed New Year’s resolutions, so reaffirm your commitment and set yourself up for success. Then set small, attainable goals for yourself. Write out your plan in achievable steps. Don’t rely upon trying to remember where you are and what the next step is. Instead, keep a schedule, plot your progress, and mark a calendar. Imagine the benefits of achieving your goal, and if possible develop a support system by teaming with someone else who is trying to achieve the same thing. Give yourself rewards for reaching steps toward your goal, and celebrate your milestones. Finally, be willing to look for professional help, especially if your “bad habits” are actually symptoms of a problem or disease. For example, are you committed to “cutting back on drinking” or “eating less”? These may not be habits you are struggling with, but symptoms of illnesses like alcoholism or an eating disorder. Let the EAP help you find the right path to success. ~

Fortify Your Brain with Fruit

Multiple studies related to eating fruits and vegetables seem to point to a previously underemphasized benefit—reduced risk of stroke. The benefit appears to be due to a reduction in blood pressure and cholesterol associated with eating fruits and vegetables. Researchers examined studies involving a total of about 250,000 people. Each pointed to similar results: eating more fruits and vegetables (with an emphasis on fruits) reduces the risk of stroke. Examine your health habits and family risk of stroke, talk to your doctor, and dive into a cornucopia! ~

Source: Neurology Magazine, 65: 1 193-1197
November 2005

Humor in the Workplace

Humor is a great stress-relieving tool. Understanding and using appropriate humor at work will help you and others avoid stress, or, worse, the accusation of harassment or offensive behavior. The bottom line is that negative humor—any joking that insults or is offensive to someone—hurts the workplace environment. Workplace humor tips include:

- Avoid humor associated with age, sex, race, ethnic background, weight, or other human characteristics.
- Avoid using humor to make light of emotionally painful situations.
- Avoid humor until you understand a coworker's personality and sensitivities.
- Avoid sarcasm and cynical humor.
- Don't use crude or offensive humor with coworkers, even in informal or social settings outside work. ↻

Lessons from Customer Rage

A customer whose complaints are not resolved will tell an average of 15 other people about it, while a positive experience gets shared with only about seven, according to the 2004 and 2005 Customer Rage Studies recently released by the Customer Care Alliance. They measure the impact that resolving customer complaints has on the bottom line. Fifty-nine percent of disgruntled customers reportedly leave for a competitor. However, resolving a complaint will endear customer loyalty, and success in doing so is as powerful as the quality of your product or service! ↻

Source: Customer Care Alliance

Diversity of Generations at Work

Social scientists have identified the merging of four unique generations within today's workforce: the Veterans (born between 1922 and 1945), the Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980), and Generation Y (born between 1980 and 2000). Generally, each of these generations possess varying fundamental values, methods of communicating, goals, and ideas about how to get things done. A multigenerational workforce provides creativity, risk taking, a myriad of experiences, and a varied knowledge base. However, these opposing views can also collide when trying to build teams, deal with change, increase productivity, motivate others, and maintain employee retention. How do you merge the best of what we all have to offer? Understand that how we communicate is influenced by the generation in which we belong. Before jumping to conclusions about what your coworker just said, try seeing things from his or her point of view. Chances are you will be enriched by the diversity found in others' communication. Once you understand these differences, you can increase your productivity and satisfaction on the job by anticipating their influence in day-to-day communication. ↻

Turn on the Lights — Share Information

The failure to share information is a perpetual cause of conflict among coworkers. Information is knowledge, and controlling information brings power to the knowledge holder, which explains the desire to withhold information, despite its drawbacks. You are more likely to share information if you see yourself as a team player and feel good about keeping others informed. Team players appreciate necessary information, and reciprocate in sharing it. To break loose of the information-holding habit, create time to share information, help reduce secrecy and distrust in the environment, encourage a noncompetitive work environment, and acknowledge how good it feels to share information. ↻

Getting Personal Without the Pain

It's customary to be social at work and share some personal information about our lives. But how much is too much? Finding a balance can be a hard-learned lesson. Here are a few guidelines to consider before self-disclosure:

- Is the information so compelling or irresistible that it would be burdensome not to repeat it, although you want it kept secret?
- Could the information interfere with the workplace?
- Could the information be used by others in a malicious or inappropriate way?
- Does the personal information adversely affect the way you are perceived by others?
- Will sharing personal information open a dialogue that leads to awkward or uncomfortable questions from coworkers?

If you are frustrated by a pattern of sharing personal information that causes difficulties for you later, consider talking to the EAP about ideas on drawing a better balance so you feel connected, but not torn apart by gossip and misinformation at work. ↻



On the Job



Getting Help for At-Risk Loved Ones

Hospitalization, even against the will of the individual concerned, is usually necessary when a person poses a danger to themselves or others (such as if planning suicide, or making threats to harm themselves or others) and they won't accept help. Hospitalization is often needed when a person is not in control of his or her emotions and/or has lost contact with reality. State laws differ regarding involuntary hospitalization, but would you know how to help a family member or loved one if it was necessary? In an emergency, a call to the police should be your first step, but if you are growing concerned about the behavior of a loved one, and their unwillingness to accept help, talk to the EAP. ~



Just a Little Bit of Anger

Anger is a normal human response, and your ability to feel and manage it constructively has health benefits. Participants in a Carnegie Mellon University research study were presented with mentally frustrating tasks that provoked anger. Subjects who demonstrated justifiable anger had lower blood pressure, a lower pulse rate, and a lower level of cortisol, a stress hormone. Justifiable anger seemed to protect them from the negative affects of stress, and gave the subjects a sense of optimism and a feeling of control over their lives. Other subjects who maintained "control" and did not demonstrate justifiable anger experienced just the opposite—more stress, higher blood pressure, and feelings of less personal control over their lives. The lesson learned? Anger is not inherently bad. When expressed appropriately, it may in fact be beneficial. Some people do need help with anger management, but others may need help feeling and expressing justified anger so that they can better respond to life's stressors. The EAP can help. ~

Source: Carnegie Mellon University
Press Release, Oct. 2005

EAP Confidentiality and Public Places

Q. If I participate in the EAP, do I risk being identified outside the EAP office by the EAP professional saying hello to me at a training session or other event?

A. Confidentiality is so important that the EAP professional will avoid engaging with you in public. If you approach the EAP professional to say hello, he or she may minimize conversation. Don't feel offended. This detachment is important to preserve your confidentiality and the perception of confidentiality for the EAP. ~

Help Is Just a Call or Click Away

We all face difficult challenges at different times in our lives. Today more than ever, companies understand that when faced with personal problems, an employee's work life may be affected as well. Through FEI Behavioral Health, your EAP and/or Work-Life Services provider, help is available if you find yourself struggling with a personal concern or life event. The EAP can assist you with issues such as work-life balance, relationship conflicts, anger management, legal or financial matters, drug or alcohol abuse, stress, family caregiving, parenting concerns, anxiety or depression. Getting help is as easy as calling your EAP or LifeCycle® Service toll-free number to talk to a professional to review your options. Or you can log on to the Internet for information from your company's EAP website. You and your eligible family members can receive a confidential referral to a professional counselor in your community, or receive valuable information that can lead to solutions for life events.

Remember, we are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and only a phone call or mouse click away! ~

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