Tips for Better Mental Hygiene

Mental hygiene is the practice of using techniques, strategies, and good thinking habits to help prevent harm to mental health and maximize a positive outlook for your life. Mental hygiene is more than practicing positive thinking, just like oral hygiene is more than brushing your teeth. Personal problems that linger despite attempts to resolve them are an opportunity to use professional counselors or helpful resources to examine goals, relationship stress, self-talk patterns, diet, sleep, and conflict resolution or stress management strategies. A big benefit of professional help is always learning more about mental hygiene going forward to prevent similar or related problems. Don’t struggle with lingering problems. Instead, take a path of discovery where solutions are accompanied by new ways of applying good mental hygiene needed to overcome roadblocks, fears, and frustrations in your pursuit of happiness.

Should you wish to discuss your needs regarding your mental hygiene, contact UAlbany EAP for a confidential conversation.  

Creating a Life

Your life will happen one way or another, so it’s a good idea to take charge of its direction. A life plan is the way to do it. Thousands of books discuss how to create one. No matter your age, the purpose of this effort is to capitalize on opportunities and avoid regrets. A life plan can be written for a month at a time or drafted to incorporate many years.

Life plans help you maximize and prioritize possibilities and help to separate the possible from the improbable. You probably don’t have the resources to visit the moon someday, so a plan will keep you pursuing dreams that are still realistic. The future is coming, and with it the realities you will face. A plan can help you navigate these challenges with your happiness remaining intact. So, where are you heading?

Resource for Articles: Frontline—Employee Wellness, Productivity & You! Frontline newsletter is courtesy of the New York State Employee Assistance Program.

If you want to live a happy life, tie it to a goal, not to people or objects.

~ Albert Einstein (1879-1955)
In the Workplace...

Work Addiction Scale

Workaholism is not an officially recognized disease process, but those who work too much are more prone to depression and anxiety disorders. These are real treatable illnesses. Examining your work pattern can motivate you to find more balance. You can then discover whether the changes you want are too difficult to maintain. This can help you decide the next step—seeking counseling or support from an EAP or counseling resource. Start with a screening tool called the Bergen Work Addiction Scale. Published research from the U.S. National Institutes of Health shows the online measurement tool is reliable for its purpose.

What Willingness to Learn Says About You

You may have hard-fought education and training in one area of work, but if you are not communicating a strong sense of willingness to learn new skills, you may be overlooking opportunities and a critical way to engage with your employer in the modern era. Willingness and a desire to learn demonstrate your motivation for personal improvement and achievement. Your readiness and openness to learn a soft skill employers value says a lot about you. Employers look for potential, capability, and the ability to withstand change. Desire for a new challenge communicates it all!

Bullying in the Workplace Others Can’t See

Sometimes bullying can be easily missed by observers. But it’s no less painful when the aggression is recognized only by the targeted victim who understands the context. Would you recognize someone else’s victimization? As a coworker, you may miss or overlook these acts which can be as subtle as an aggressive sigh, the clearing of a throat, an uncomfortable silence, or a subtle movement designed to communicate disapproval or disdain. Because bullying victims often suffer in silence, coworkers can be an influential source of support if they are willing to practice personal courage. Step forward to find out whether a colleague is being victimized. Coworkers have a responsibility to notice their surroundings, see each other as part of a work family or team, and offer support. Trust your gut. Never side with bullying behavior. And don’t succumb to the bystander effect—speak up and get involved.

Resource for Articles: Frontline—Employee Wellness, Productivity & You! Frontline newsletter is courtesy of the New York State Employee Assistance Program.
Best Back-to-School Tips

Getting kids back to school and on a new schedule can be a tug of war without a little preparation. Here are four tips that stand the test of time:

- For the nervous youngster facing a new school or grade, walk through the schedule one week before school begins and visit classrooms. This will get a lay of the land to reduce anxiety.
- If the school offers a pre-start and/or back-to-school night, attend it.
- Beginning a week before the start of school, test sleeping routines by having everyone in the family practice going to bed and getting up at the expected hour.
- Create a chart or to-do list of both the morning and the evening routines so young ones grasp the importance of self-management and independence.

Overcoming Loneliness

Lonely? Overcome loneliness by asking whether its cause is temporary or it’s lingering too long. Taking action is the best path to overcoming loneliness. Don’t dismiss getting a short-term assessment by a professional counselor, especially if you feel lethargic about creating change. An assessment can rule out depression. Additionally, a counselor can provide guidance and tips to support your efforts to address your loneliness.

Loneliness has two parts: the negative state of mind it produces and the circumstances you identify as the cause, i.e., isolation, absence of a close relationship, overcoming shyness, etc. Each part can benefit from its own intervention—one part involving concrete steps and the other overcoming the negative self-talk that may undermine any action you want to take. Contact UAlbany EAP to obtain counselor referrals.

Resource for Articles: *Frontline—Employee Wellness, Productivity & You!* *Frontline* newsletter is courtesy of the New York State Employee Assistance Program.

Heroin and Prescription Drug Abuse

As the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) states, “Addiction can happen to anyone, any family, at any time.” The OASAS website has important information regarding prevention as well as how to recognize the signs and symptoms of opioid drug abuse.

To access the OASAS resources, [click here](#).

Call the OASAS helpline at 1-877-8-HOPENY (1-877-846-7369).

Contact UAlbany EAP for a confidential conversation if you have concerns about heroin or prescription drug abuse.

Support and help is available!
Are you finding yourself struggling with any of the following?

- Family, parenting, and relationship issues
- Work stress and conflict
- Substance abuse or dependency
- Elder care
- Mental health concerns (e.g., depression, anxiety)
- Legal and/or financial concerns
- Grief and loss
- Or anything else related to work or home that is causing you undo stress and affecting your ability to be as productive as you once were?

You don’t have to deal with it alone. Support is available through UAlbany’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The mission of UAlbany EAP is to provide services to support a healthy, productive workforce. Available to all employees is the voluntary, confidential Information, Assessment, and Referral Service provided by UAlbany EAP Coordinator, Brenda Seckerson. Take advantage of this confidential assistance available to you as an employee benefit.

“Worrying is like walking around with an umbrella waiting for it to rain.”

~ Anonymous

To schedule an appointment for a confidential Information, Assessment & Referral session, contact:

Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
442-5483
bseckerson@albany.edu
EAP Website: http://www.albany.edu/eap

Early intervention is the key! Contact EAP.
Success Under Stress: Strategies to Thrive

What are your strategies to thrive and be successful when there are numerous stressors in your life?

In her book *Success Under Stress: Powerful Tools for Staying Calm, Confident, and Productive When the Pressure’s On*, business psychologist Sharon Melnick, Ph.D. outlines numerous approaches and strategies to be successful in spite of stress. In her text she discusses that in recent surveys, as a demographic, young people (Generation Y/Millennials) have identified themselves as being the most stressed. Interestingly though, this generation desires to have better work/life balance than previous ones.

To explore this idea of Generation Y striving for more balance along with wanting to learn how this cohort is trying to achieve this, Melnick shares that she asked an MBA student at Duke’s Fuqua Business School to describe how the young woman handled the stress of school and her workload. Here are some of the strategies this student used. See if you are doing any of these things to bring more balance into your life and to deal with stress. If not, try some of these suggestions and see if you notice a change. You don’t have to be a student or a member of Generation Y to find these strategies helpful!

- Keep a sense of humor!
- Say “no” to commitments where my participation is not crucial and/or lacks a definable goal/agenda.
- Adopt the 80/20 rule, and prioritizing activities with the biggest impact. (Want to know what the 80/20 rule is, read this article.)
- Create measureable, realistic goals. And, remember it’s OK if it’s not perfect!
- Eat well, sleep well, exercise regularly, and block out periods of “me” time on the calendar.
- Identify mentors early on, and minimize contact with “toxic” people.
- Record my procrastination time, such as Facebook and online shopping, so I get a sense of how much time I am procrastinating – and this compels me to stop!

If you are interested in the book *Success Under Stress: Powerful Tools for Staying Calm, Confident, and Productive When the Pressure’s On*, it can be borrowed from the EAP Library.

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The most wasted of ALL DAYS is one without LAUGHTER. ~e.e. cummings

American poet (1894-1962)
EAP LUNCHTIME FINANCIAL WELLNESS PROGRAM

Budget Your Way to Happy Holidays
Smart & Savvy Holiday Spending Strategies

However you celebrate the holidays, there’s always a potential amount of stress that can go along with the excitement. We don’t want our special time with friends and loved ones to be overshadowed by a sense of never-ending “to do” list anxiety—especially when that list involves spending money. We also don’t want to find ourselves mid-winter with depleted bank accounts and/or over-extended credit cards. This program will provide tips and strategies to find that holiday balance. Join us to explore ideas that will allow you to make it through the holiday season within your budget, while still enjoying all those special moments.

Presenter: Maria DeLucia-Evans, Community Educator for Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Albany County

To register contact:
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu
Call 442-5483 or register online
http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm

Noon—1:00 pm
Health Sciences Campus
Wednesday, August 30
Café Conference Room

Uptown Campus
Tuesday, September 12
Room 375 Campus Center
EAP Lunchtime Wellness Program

Strategies to Support Learners with ADHD in School and at Home

Join presenter Sheri Gaylor, an Education Specialist at the Parent Network of the Capital Region, who will provide a brief overview of the characteristics of ADHD and how they impact a child's learning at home and school. She’ll discuss strategies and tools that provide support to the learner. Bring your questions!

Prior to attending, please register with the Parent Network to provide information about your child’s needs. This information will help in the development of the presentation.

Link: http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=7ktbt6cab&oeidk=a07eefezh7h140c4bef

To register contact:
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu
Call 442-5483 or register online
http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm

Thursday, September 7
Noon—1:00 pm
Room 375
Campus Center
This month we’re exploring the idea that “less worrying means more inner peace.”

Mark Twain famously said, “I have spent most of my time worrying about things that never happened.” Can you identify with his observation? How much time do you spend spinning those worrying thoughts around in your head? And what about the effects of doing this, such as lost sleep, an upset stomach, headaches, less focus and productivity, feelings of fear and anxiety—all of which can affect your body, mind, and spirit?

Telling yourself to just “stop worrying” is easier said than done, especially if fretting has become your mode of operandi over the years. But isn’t it worth trying to come up with ways to minimize the worrying habit to experience more inner peace?

Helpguide.org has some helpful strategies to use to lessen the worry response in your life. Tips include:

- Create a worry period.
- Ask yourself if the problem is solvable.
- Challenge anxious thoughts.
- Accept uncertainty.
- Beware of how others affect you.
- Practice mindfulness.

To understand the rationale behind these tips and how to use them, check out the Helpguide.org article titled “How to Stop Worrying.”

NOTE: If you find that your worrying is crossing a line into severe anxiety and having an adverse affect on your health and well-being, be sure to reach out for assistance. Contact EAP for a confidential conversation to request resources and referrals to find support.

Many times worrying is about wanting to control something that we really can’t. When we find ourselves in a worrying frame of mind, stopping to reflect on the question “What can I control, and what can’t I control?” may be just what we need to help stop the cycle. Practice this technique and see if your worrying lessens. You just might find more peaceful moments showing up throughout your days and nights if you do.

Worrying does not take away tomorrow’s troubles, it takes away today’s peace.

~Randy Armstrong
TED Talks

The beauty of nature surrounds us, but how often do we stop and notice. Peace, inspiration, and gratitude can be experienced when we take the time to notice our natural surroundings. Through his use of the camera and time-lapsed photography, cinematographer Louie Schwartzberg takes us on a journey in this TED Talk. Just under 10 minutes, this talk would fit into your lunch time or 15 minute break if you decide to stay at your computer. After watching the talk, this video could become one that you go back to from time to time. View it with the sound down so you can have meditative moments, focusing on your breath as you take in the beauty of what Schwartzberg has captured and created for us to enjoy.

Ideas Worth Spreading

TED is a nonprofit devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading. It started out (in 1984) as a conference bringing together people from three worlds: Technology, Entertainment, Design.

Nature, Beauty, Gratitude

“Louie Schwartzberg is a cinematographer, director and producer who captures breathtaking images that celebrate life -- revealing connections, universal rhythms, patterns and beauty.”

9:47 minutes

Watching a spider at work I vow with all beings to cherish the web of the universe: touch one point and everything moves.

– Robert Aitken Roshi (1917–2010)
Looking for Reading Ideas? Check the EAP Office Lending Library.

Contributed by Seema Mathura, EAP Office Work Study Student

As a manager, you’re responsible for leading and motivating your team to accomplish goals for the organization. However, having that title may be a bit intimidating, especially when knowing that a group of people look to you for answers. Check out this month’s EAP book features on how to succeed as a manager.

The economy crashes, the government misfires, businesses fail, leaders don't lead, managers don't manage, and people don't follow through leaving us asking, "How did that happen?" Surprises caused by a lack of personal accountability plague almost every organization today, from the political arena to large and small businesses. How Did That Happen? offers a proven way to eliminate these nasty surprises, gain an unbeatable competitive edge, and enhance performance by holding others accountable the positive, principled way.

Stephen Robbins delivers principles you can rely on throughout your entire management career—regardless of your organization, role, or title. The Truth About Managing People...And Nothing But the Truth shows what management researchers know actually works or doesn't work when it comes to managing people. The author provides ways to organize around key, human-behavior-related problem areas that managers face, like hiring, motivation, leadership, communication, team building, conflict management, job design, evaluating performance and coping with change. It also guides you in how to apply the information and improve your managerial effectiveness.

The Builders, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials all make up workforces in every type of industry all over the world. Millennials are more alike than any other generation before them due in large part to rapid advances in technology that let them share more experiences together. These same rapid advances are also redefining the fundamental ways businesses operate. Managing the Millennials includes: case studies of real managers and employees interacting in every area of business, enlightening analysis of performance and behavioral patterns across generations, and easy-to-use techniques you can use right away to improve your organization.

Visit the Library page on the EAP website for a full list of topics, books, and DVDs/CDs that the EAP Lending Library has available. Contact EAP if you would like to borrow any materials. bseckerson@albany.edu
Olive Oil Research Continues

Research news on the beneficial effects of olive oil continues! Researchers at Temple University discovered that extra-virgin olive oil protects against memory loss, and can help a person retain his or her ability to learn. The results showed that the conditions that lead to Alzheimer’s disease could be reduced, thereby reducing risk for the disease. The research was on mice, but don’t dismiss it. Mice are proven and dependable models in medical research.

Source: www.templehealth.org [search “olive oil”]
The world only exists in your eyes. You can make it as BIG or as small as you want.

F. Scott Fitzgerald
American author (1896-1940)

Are You Pet Prepared?

What’s in Your Pet Preparedness Kit?

When you think about emergency preparedness, do you remember to consider what you’ll need to take care of your pet or pets should there be the need to leave your home in a hurry? The Department of Homeland Security has put together “Pet and Animal Emergency Planning” tips and resources that can help you plan for what to put in place and what you’ll need to gather ahead of time to take care of your furry loved ones should there be an emergency. Alleviate a little stress during a stressful situation by planning ahead!