

Workplace Employee

June 2016

Testimonials

Here are some quotes from employees who recently called on CONCERN for a Counseling Consultation:

“My counselor was really understanding and treated me like a person who she cares about not just a patient. To me that means everything.”

“The appointment scheduling process was flawless. Someone answered on Easter Sunday of all days and found a counselor for me who exactly meets my needs.”

“It was easy to use, response was quick, and my counselor is exceptional!”

“I appreciate how much they have helped in my life and how kind everyone is.”



Tips for Success

Build a Stress Management “Tool Kit”

Do you have a personal stress management program—a collection of techniques to intervene when stress hits? Or when stressed, do you cope with the anxiety and tension without a strategic approach, searching for relief only when it all becomes too much? With a thoughtful approach to stress management, you can reduce the risk of harm from prolonged stress and avoid unhealthy ways of coping with it. To build your stress management “tool kit,” first identify factors central to your stress response pattern. When stressed, do you lose sleep, get headaches or neck pain, eat poorly, eat more, not eat, become irritable, head for salty snacks, or have GI problems? See the long list of stress effects at www.stress.org/stress-effects. Once you pin down these effects, focus on how to fight back. Research the intervention strategies, and try enlisting the help of a professional counselor or CONCERN. You can also check out the Stress Management toolkit on the [CONCERN Resilience Hub™](#) for additional resources.

Soft Skills to Know: Be “Healthy Competitive”

The word “competitive” gets a bad rap in the workplace because it often describes pushy or aggressive behavior. But there is another type of competitive employee—the one who champions reaching for the gold in healthy ways. Healthy competitiveness is a learned skill and an energetic approach to work that shows you are proactive, focused, and positive. You seek to top your best, not that of others. Employers are clamoring for employees with a healthy competitive spirit because they are engaged workers. Grow your competitive spirit by:

1. Giving yourself permission to be competitive. Overcome any false scripts suggesting competitiveness means not being fair to others.
2. Identify strengths and skills that are unique to you. Spot opportunities to apply your skill set and establish goals that will add to your achievements while lifting up your employer.
3. Be a “conscious collaborator” by showing your ability to share work, elevate others, and share credit. Being competitive is an easily spotted trait, and you risk irking people if you do not demonstrate humility in this way.
4. Be confident about your skills, use hard work to achieve your goals, and avoid fear of failure. Share the final glory with those who lent a hand along the way. for problem resolution.

Plug In to Peaks of Productivity

Try this productivity booster: Draw a timeline and identify when you experience your high and low-energy periods during the day. These normal cycles are based upon diet, exercise, and other factors. Do you experience an energy peak about two hours after arrival at work? What about a slowdown after lunch? How about a

small peak in the afternoon? This is valuable data. Divide your work tasks according to these energy levels. Perform difficult tasks when energy is high and less-difficult tasks when energy is low. Assign them to the right energy slots and you will work more efficiently and get more done!

Mindfulness on the Move

The Mindful Awareness Research Center has opened at UCLA. It shows how mindfulness as an approach to health and wellness is quickly moving into health care. Mindful awareness is paying attention to the present moment, staying centered, and improving self-awareness to manage stress by regularly stopping to breathe, observe, and connect with one's inner experience. It's a powerful concept largely influenced by meditation and the research supporting meditation's health benefits. Adding energy to the mindfulness movement is the need to manage stress in our modern age. Mastering this stress is not simply about taking a pill to manage anxiety and tension, it's about learning to use the body's and the mind's abilities to intervene and heal. Mindfulness is finding its way into cancer treatment, addiction treatment, and other programs that can benefit from a whole-person approach. Learn more at <http://marc.ucla.edu> and in the CONCERN Resilience Hub™.

How Emotionally Intelligent Are You?

By now you have probably heard about emotional intelligence, or EI. EI is your aptitude for perceiving others' emotions accurately, responding to your emotions in a reasoned way, understanding what other people's emotions mean, and controlling how you will respond to emotions as you interact with others. People who do these things well are said to have "people skills." Many social scientists believe EI is at least as important as, and perhaps more important than IQ as a predictor of success. Be careful about online tests to grade your EI. Many are not empirically or scientifically-based, and others seek to market products to web visitors. The most rigorous research-oriented EI organization is the Emotional Intelligence Research Consortium. The most prominent EI experts are members of it. www.eiconsortium.org/

Smoking Pot Clouds Judgment about Driving High

Research shows that pot users are more likely to report that they can drive safely while high when they are actually high! Those who were high while taking the

survey believed they could drive safely, while those who smoke pot but were not high at the time they took the survey said they would not be safe driving while high. This may explain why a different research study by AAA discovered that fatal crashes involving pot smokers in Washington State have doubled since legalization of pot use.

www.wcpo.com/news [search: "marijuana crashes"] and <http://her.oxfordjournals.org> [search: "drugged driving"]

Dog Ownership Brings Health Benefits

Is a senior citizen in your life a bit too sedentary but still able to walk and stroll? Consider striking up a conversation about dog ownership. New research shows seniors who own dogs have more positive health outcomes. They include less frailty, better mobility, and lower risk for coronary heart disease. In the first study of its kind, these seniors also report less social isolation and say they feel more connected to their communities. They also get closer to the 150 minutes of exercise per week recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Senior dog owners must walk Fido year round, even in colder months. They therefore maintain an exercise regimen during that time of the year when non-dog owners may exercise less.

<http://gerontologist.oxfordjournals.org> [search: "dog walking"]

Chronic Pain and Substance Abuse

Opioid addiction and prescription drug abuse are national problems, and one research study discovered that 87 percent of opioid or related medication addicts are self-medicating pain. Does this sound like you or someone you know? Note these warning signs for needing help:

1) You are using the medication not just for pain but also to achieve a feel-good state; 2) Your prescribed dose seems way too low. It takes more to feel the effects; 3) Your pain has subsided, but your desire to use the medication you were prescribed is growing. You say you're worried about the pain coming back, but the effect of the drug is really the motivating factor; 4) The medication has become part of your life, and you are planning and coordinating your life around obtaining and using the medication, even to the detriment of your family, things you enjoy, and parts of your life that you value. <http://www.bumc.bu.edu> [search: "prescription abuse"] If warning signs are present, consult your prescribing physician or seek help, soon. The potential problems you may face are enormous.

Employees and eligible dependents can request CONCERN: EAP counseling and work/life services 24/7 by calling or visiting our website at www.concern-eap.com

Call: 800.344.4222