

Workplace Employee

January 2018

Testimonials

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

"This has been hands down the easiest to use health benefit I have ever used at any job. I received help quickly, the counseling is of high quality, and the absence of tedious and unnecessary paperwork is awesome."

"What a great service for employees. Very helpful to visit a counselor for many, many reasons. Not to mention it's free!"

"The option to use the internet to get an appointment and not having to call on the phone made it easier to take the first step."



Tips for Success

Mental Wellness: Substance Use

Our mental health topic for January is **Substance Use**—the consumption of alcohol and/or drugs. Traditionally, the New Year is a time for new beginnings and setting attainable goals. If you find yourself in a rut and would like to cut back on your substance use, there's no time like the present. With perseverance and determination, small changes can make a big difference in reducing your chances of having a substance-related problem. Start by outlining a specific plan of positive, individual strategies. For example, keep track of how much you are consuming; set specific goals about how frequently and how much you plan to consume; find alternatives to using by developing new, healthy habits, hobbies, or relationships; avoid triggers including people or places that make you want to use; reach out to friends and family for support; take responsibility for your actions and intentions. And, get help if you need it. If you believe that you may be struggling with a substance use problem, tell your health care provider, mental health specialist, or call CONCERN to schedule an appointment with a counselor. For more information about substance use, go to

<https://employees.concern-eap.com/mental-wellness>

Believe in Your New Year's Resolution

There are many reasons for not accomplishing a New Year's resolution, but one you may not fully appreciate is a lack of belief in your ability to be successful. You may *want and hope* to be successful with your goal, but a barely noticeable, negative self-talk script doubting your ability will make your goal elusive. Fight negative self-talk scripts, which you can assume will creep up on you, by practicing affirmations that inoculate you against them. An affirmation is a positive statement that you declare to be true and that you rehearse frequently in a manner that allows it to sink in. Think of affirmations as "software for your brain." Assertiveness, determination, feeling that success is inevitable, quickly dismissing setbacks, and ignoring others' negativity are critical skills in achieving any goal. A gut belief in your anticipated success, made possible by affirmations, allows these skills to carry you to the finish line.

Functioning Well Under Pressure

Periodically, everyone experiences work pressure. Working under pressure is the experience of a force (often a deadline) that requires you to accomplish more work at a speed that strains your ability to cope. With a faster-moving economy

and downsizing, work pressure is more likely. Therefore, employers view employees who manage pressure well as valuable workers. Managing work pressure is a learned skill. Assuming the quantity of work can't be reduced, the dominant success strategy for managing work pressure lies in attitude—seeing work pressure as a challenge rather than an inescapable trap. This view of work pressure coincides with the old adage that “stress is between the ears.” Although this may not be completely true, what you think does affect your ability to cope. Why does it matter? Because with a positive attitude, your focus changes. You notice task completion and minor success and fewer painful effects of work pressure like drudgery, wear, and exertion. Work pressure becomes more bearable with a positive attitude and less bearable without one. No coping strategy will make you immune to the stress of work pressure, but experimenting with an attitude change as a resilience strategy when you have no other option can make it more bearable to get through another day of work. Learn more: “Performing Under Pressure: The Science of Doing Your Best When it Matters.”

Don't Fear Conflict Resolution

Many employees resist conflict resolution simply for fear it might not work out in their favor! Unfortunately, the fear is based on the belief that conflict resolution is a win-lose—that it seeks to discover who is right. The art of conflict resolution, however, is anything but win-lose. Conflict resolution is about producing satisfaction for both parties. Fifty percent of successful conflict resolutions entail two things: listening to the perspective of the conflict partner and acknowledging it. What follows is the art of compromise. You can find do-it-yourself conflict resolution outlines online, work with your EAP, or buy a book. Simmering and unresolved conflict is like a drain on a car battery—but in this case, it's draining your ability to be happy on the job.

Improve Emotional Intelligence with Customers

Research shows stress for those in customer service often results from dealing with the adverse emotional reactions of customers. You can influence reactions for the better and reduce your stress. Try this emotional

intelligence (EI) boosting exercise to observe this dynamic up close. For the next couple of days, observe the emotions of your customers. Notice how and when these emotional reactions change and whether they are positive, negative, or neutral. Consider your role in influencing these changes. Spend another three days attempting to influence your customers' emotional states so they remain positive. *Then analyze:* Did you experience less stress over those three days? If yes, you have increased your EI because you have discovered and consciously used your ability to identify emotional states in others, and you can determine how to improve the quality of relationships with this information.

Make Brainstorming More Effective

Brainstorming is a technique for generating a solution to a problem by using a group of participants who offer any idea without hesitation or regard for its plausibility or likelihood of being effective. Even absurd ideas are not judged. No analysis is made until the end of the session, when all ideas are examined for the most ideal solution. Here's how to improve brainstorming: Always record everyone's input, allow no discussion or interruptions during the brainstorming, and be provocative if your group is too sedate or serious. Strive to choose a group diverse in talent and background to produce the most imaginative ideas.

Getting Help for Anxiety

If worries feel excessive and out of your control, it's time to call CONCERN for a mental health professional and get relief. Anxiety is a common complaint among employees of all ages, particularly younger workers. You know it's time to get help if you feel worries consume too many of your waking hours, interfere with sleep, affect your happiness and ability to relax, or perpetuate feelings of general dissatisfaction. Don't be fooled; disruptive anxiety can still affect you despite your life accomplishments, IQ, smarts, or financial security—even if everything is going great in your life. Feeling you should not be worrying because life is “just fine” can prevent you from getting help while you also feel guilty for not being happier. Anxiety is not in your imagination, and resolving it is not about “snapping out of it.”

Employees and eligible dependents can request CONCERN: EAP counseling and work/life services 24/7 by calling or visiting our website.

Call: 800.344.4222
employees.concern-eap.com