

# City of Milwaukee Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Quarterly Newsletter: March 2014



## How to Lose Your Best Employees

As a supervisor or manager, you are the team coach tasked with the job of developing and retaining star employees. Way too often, the “squeaky wheel” gets most of your attention, time, and energy. While addressing a crisis is obviously important, neglecting star players will ultimately lead to poor job satisfaction and your stars looking for a new team to play for. The bullet points below are sure fire ways to lose your best employees.

- **Don't keep your people informed.** You've got to communicate not only the good, but also the bad and the ugly. If you don't tell them, the rumor mill will.
- **Micromanage.** Only tell them what you want done and how you want it done. Instead, also explain *why* it needs to be done and *why* it is important. Ask for their input on how it could be done better.
- **Don't recognize outstanding performance and contributions.** Behavior you want repeated should be rewarded/recognized immediately.
- **Don't have any fun at work.** Find ways to make work and environment more relaxed and fun, and you will have happy employees who look forward to coming to work each day.
- **Have dumb rules.** Guidelines and direction are good, but don't have rules that get in the way of the job.
- **Tolerate mediocrity.** A-players don't want to play with a bunch of C-players.
- **Don't do employee retention interviews.** Waiting until a great employee is walking out the door to conduct an exit interview to see what you could have done differently. Be proactive and meet with employees periodically to review their work and address concerns as early as possible.

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# What is Your Emotional Resiliency?

*Emotional resilience* is your ability to adapt and bounce back from stressful situations or crises. More resilient people are able to “roll with the punches” and adapt to adversity without lasting difficulties, while less resilient people have a harder time with stress and life changes. We all know someone who seems great at handling stress. Interestingly, people with high *emotional resiliency* share common traits:

1. **Emotional Awareness:** They can identify what they are feeling and why they are feeling that way; i.e. “I’m feeling angry (*the feeling*) about what Jean said today (*the event*) because it hurt my feelings (*the reason*).”
2. **Perseverance:** Resilient people are action oriented and don’t give up, even if they are not succeeding or doing things perfectly.
3. **Internal Locus of Control:** They believe that they are in control of themselves most of time and that they have a **choice** in most situations.
4. **Optimism:** Resilient people can see or find the positive or at least the “not so bad” aspects in most situations and believe they will eventually weather whatever comes along.
5. **Support:** They know the value of social support . They find and surround themselves with positive friends and family.
6. **Perspective:** They find meaning in difficult situations rather than seeing themselves as a victim of uncontrollable circumstances.
7. **Sense of humor:** They are able to laugh at themselves and life’s difficulties as a way of coping with something unpleasant.
8. **Handle difficult emotions:** They

have the capacity to positively manage strong feelings and impulses rather than give into them.

## Build Emotional Resiliency

- Accept help and support from those who care about you and will listen strengthens resilience.
- Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems. You may not be able to change the facts that, but you can

“Try to visualize what you want to happen, rather than worrying about what you fear most.”

change how you interpret and respond to them. The key is to interpret the situation or event realistically without catastrophizing.

- Accept that change is a part of living. Folks who cannot tolerate change in their life-circumstances are the ones who suffer most. If a door closes on one end, think about changing your goals to open a new door.
- Learn to know the difference between realistic and unrealistic goals. This does not mean one should not have big goals. It does mean that some goals are unreachable unless smaller goals are met first.
- Take decisive action. It is pretty natural to avoid situations that are uncomfortable. However, resilient people work through tough situations by making decisions. And yes, sometimes taking decisive action is “deciding to do nothing” until there is more information.
- Opportunities for self-discovery. Resilient people are open to learning

new things about themselves, even if these things might be unpleasant. One of the best ways to learn something about you is taking time to reflect after a difficult situation. Asking yourself “How did I respond?”, “What did I do well?”, or “What could I do better next time?”

- Nurture a positive view of yourself. Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems. Don’t get caught up in negative self-talk. Be kind to yourself.
- Keep things in perspective. Avoid blowing things out of proportion.
- Maintain a hopeful outlook. Try to visualize what you want to happen, rather than worrying about what you fear most. It is easy to focus on the negative aspects of our lives. Often times, we have to actively look for the good things and not allow the bad stuff to outweigh the good. Optimism is a choice.
- Take care of yourself. You cannot develop emotional resiliency if you are depleted. Pay attention to our own needs and signals from your body. Schedule time for “play” and exercise in whatever way you enjoy.

**Work on building resiliency every day!**



# Exercise Beyond Fitness

Most folks are very aware of the positive benefits regular exercise has on one's physical and medical wellbeing. However, moderate exercise has been scientifically proven to help in not so commonly known areas just as well:

**1. Reduce Stress.** Working up a sweat can help manage physical and mental stress. Exercise also increases concentrations of norepinephrine, a chemical that can moderate the brain's response to stress.

## 2. Boost Happy Chemicals

Exercise releases endorphins, which create feelings of happiness and euphoria. In some cases, exercise can be just as effective as antidepressant medication in treating mild to moderate depression.

## 3. Improve Self-Confidence

Regardless of weight, size, gender or age, exercise can quickly elevate a person's self-worth.

## 4. Prevent Cognitive Decline

Working out, especially between aged 25 and 45, boosts the chemicals in the brain that support and prevent degeneration of the hippocampus, an important part of the brain for memory and learning.

## 5. Alleviate Anxiety

Quick Q&A: Which is better at relieving anxiety -- a warm bubble bath or a 20-minute jog? You might be surprised at the answer. The "feel good" chemicals that are released during and after exercise can help people with anxiety.

## 6. Boost Brainpower

Cardiovascular exercise can create new brain cells and improve overall brain performance. Moderate workouts increases levels of a brain-derived protein

(known as BDNF) in the body that is linked to decision making, critical thinking, and learning.

## 7. Help Control Addiction

The brain releases dopamine, the "reward chemical" in response to any form of pleasure. Unfortunately, some people become addicted to dopamine and dependent on the substances that produce it, like drugs or alcohol. Short exercise sessions can distract drug/alcohol use by de-prioritizing cravings.

## 8. Better Sleep

For some, a moderate workout can be the equivalent of a sleeping pill, even for people with insomnia. Moving around five to six hours before bedtime raises the body's core temperature. When the body temp drops back to normal a few hours later, it signals the body that it's time to sleep.

## 9. Tap Into Creativity

Did you know that exercise boosts creative thinking for up to two hours afterwards? Next time you need a burst of creative thinking, hit the trails for a long walk or run to refresh the body and the brain at the same time.

## Sandwich Generation

The *Sandwich generation* is a generation of people who care for an aging parent(s) while supporting their own children. One of every eight Americans aged 40 to 60 is both raising a child and caring for a parent. US Census Bureau statistics indicate that the number of older Americans aged 65 or older will double by the year 2030, to over 70 million.

Subsequently, at some point you may have the difficult task of discussing caregiving needs with your aging loved one. These talking tips may help:

- **Choose time to talk wisely.** This will make it easier for you and your loved one to listen to each other.

- **Ask questions about your loved one's preferences.** While you may not be able to meet all of your loved one's wishes, it's important to take them into consideration.

- **Enlist the help of family members.** Family and friends may be able to help you persuade your loved one to accept help.

- **Don't give up.** If your loved one doesn't want to discuss the topic the first time you bring it up, try again later.

- **Suggest a trial run.** A trial run will give a hesitant loved one a chance to test the waters and experience the benefits of assistance.

- **Enlist the help of a professional.** Your loved one may be more willing to listen to the advice of a doctor, lawyer or care manager about the importance of receiving care.

- **Explain your needs.** Consider asking your loved one to accept care to make your life a little easier. Remind your loved one that sometimes you'll both need to compromise on certain issues.

- **Pick your battles.** Focus on the big picture. Avoid fighting with your loved one about minor issues related to his or her care.

- **Explain how care may prolong independence.** Accepting some assistance may help your loved one remain in his or her home for as long as possible.

- **Maintain Independence.** Help your loved one to stay active, maintain relationships with caring friends and family and develop new physically appropriate interests.



## EAP Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to assist employees who develop behavioral/medical problems that may directly affect their work performance, and to provide Key personnel with policy and procedural guidelines for the management of these problems.

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### Foreclosure Risk?

- Contact your lender right away. When you call, be prepared to explain: 1) why you are unable to make your payment, 2) whether the problem is temporary or permanent, 3) details about your income, expenses, and other assets like cash in the bank.
- If you are uncomfortable talking to your lender, a HUD-approved housing counseling agency can help you understand your options. These services are free of charge.
- Open all of the mail you receive from your lender. It contains valuable information about repayment options. Later mail may have important legal notices. Failing to read the mail will not prevent a foreclosure action.
- Look for ways to increase the amount you have available to make your mortgage payments. Reprioritize your budget.
- **NOTHING IS WORSE THAN DOING NOTHING!** Homeowners with FHA-insured loans can get assistance by contacting HUD's National Servicing Center at (877) 622-8525 (TDD/TTY at 800-877-8339). Also, visit The City of Milwaukee's *Department of City Development* for resources at: <http://www.milwaukeehousinghelp.org/>

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