



Employee Assistance Program

December 2011

www.milwaukee.gov/der/eap

Special points of interest:

- EAP Website
- Goal Setting
- Health
- Legal/Financial
- Family

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New Year's Resolution

Yes, it is that time of year once again. We start off with all the best intentions and goals for the future but somehow fall off track. You are not alone; research shows that 46% of folks are maintaining their resolution(s) after six months.

I firmly believe that folks fully engage in a process of change when that change is (1) *reachable/achievable* and (2) *meaningful/worthwhile*. Many folks fall short when they are not

fully ready; we get caught off guard and unprepared. The following tips may serve as a guide in keeping that change in motion:

- **Be Realistic:** Rather than starting or completely stopping something large, it may be more realistic to simply do a little more or less of whatever it is that you want to see different. Avoid the "all-or-nothing" and succeed vs. fail trap.
- **Research and Outline your Plan:** Identify what the potential chal-

lenges may be and how you will handle them ahead of time.

- **Pro's and Con's:** Listing them may serve as motivation when times get tough.
- **Talk about it:** Folks are less likely to quit something when others are aware of their commitment.
- **Keep Trying:** It helps to track progress along the way. If you falter, look back just enough to learn from it and move on!!

Healthy Eating During The Holiday

The Holiday Season is most certainly a time to enjoy family, friends and loved ones over a meal or two. If not careful, it may also be a tempting opportunity to over indulge.

Here are a few tips to maintain your health over the Holidays:

- **Exercise:** Take advantage of time-off to schedule in some exercise. Not only may this off set those extra Holiday calories but may also establish a good routine into the new year.

- **Eat Regularly:** Avoid the temptation to starve yourself in preparation for that big Holiday meal. A better idea is to eat healthy snacks throughout the day.

- **Be Assertive:** It is okay to politely refuse to eat something you really don't want or when full.

- **Limit Your Alcohol:** Alcohol contains calories...and lots of them! Treat alcohol as another food item when deciding not to over do it.

- **Balance Out Your Meals:**

Try to separate your plate into sections for fruits, vegetables as well as for those high calorie foods.

- **Review Your Cooking Methods:**

You may want to consider grilling instead of frying. If you are roasting, try a low calorie cooking spray oil or steaming to better retain nutrients.

- **Feeling Full?:** Pay attention to your body and leave the table when you feel full.



What is Credit Counseling?

Credit Counseling is a process offering education to consumers about how to avoid incurring debts that cannot be repaid. This process is actually more debt counseling than a function of credit education.

Credit counseling often involves negotiating with creditors to establish a [debt management plan](#)

(DMP) for a consumer. A DMP may help the debtor repay his or her debt by working out a repayment plan with the creditor. DMPs, set up by credit counselors, usually offer reduced payments, fees and interest rates to the client.

Credit counselors refer to the terms dictated by the creditors to deter-

mine payments or interest reductions offered to consumers in a debt management plan.

A complete listing of U.S. Trustee approved credit counseling agencies is available via the following web page: http://www.justice.gov/ust/eo/bapcpa/ccde/cc_approved.htm

Parenting in Tough Economic Times

Financial worries on top of existing parenting demands may quickly become overwhelming. Here are some tips to consider in helping you manage both your budget and child's overall wellbeing.

- **Limit The Child's Exposure to Worries:** Kids are incredibly perceptive and look to their parents in how to react to any given situation. Consider limiting talk about your own fears in front of children and monitor their exposure to TV news.

- **Share Honestly But Appropriately:** Provide the child with some reassurance by pointing out areas of stability that will not change, like staying in the same school.

- **Economize in a way that's clear and fair:** If you need to scale back in after-school activities,

allow them to pick from a few options. This may help decrease their sense of disappointment. Research less expensive community based options offered, such as those offered by the library and parks department.

- **Keep Predictability High:** Build in and maintain routines around exercise, dinner time, sleep and one-on-one attention.

- **Let Kids Contribute:** Help build their self esteem by allowing them to assist with chores/duties around the house. This has the added benefit of giving you a bit of break as well. Donating old clothes or toys to a local shelter can boost their sense of effectiveness or impact in the world they live in.

- **Take a Breather:** Remember to go easy on yourself. If you feel that stress is getting the best of you, take a moment away to regain your composure. Be careful not to let your kids feel it's all their fault.

- **Set Aside Some "me" Time:** So, when do you refuel? Lets face it, you most likely don't get the opportunity to recharge as often as you should. Remember to get enough rest, squeeze in a little fun, even if it is just for 10 minutes to reconnect with friends or do something you enjoy.



"...build in and maintain routines around exercise, dinner time, sleep and one-on-one attention."

Grief During The Holidays

The Holidays may be a particularly difficult time for those who have lost a loved one. It may very well be the first Holiday without that loved one or serve as reminder of an absence in our lives.

Understanding Grief

The term "grief" is used to describe feelings and thoughts associated with processing a loss. Just as no two individuals are alike, so to is grief. Everyone's experience is uniquely theirs. Nevertheless, there are particular stages related to grief that are helpful to know and understand.

- *Denial and Isolation*
A person in this stage may talk and/or behave as if the loss has not occurred. "This isn't happening to me!" As a result, they may avoid family and friends that may challenge the denial or call attention to what has changed.
- *Anger*
This stage typically occurs when the person begins to ask "Why me?" They may question religious beliefs. They may accuse family members or friends of uncaring attitudes.
- *Bargaining*
At this stage a person has vented all their anger and now tries to

make a "deal" with themselves or a higher power. A promise to fulfill something if things would simply be as they were before. "I promise to be a better person if..."

- *Depression*
At this stage the person feels the full extent of the loss...it sinks in and the sadness is heavy. Other factors such as changes in finances, family roles, independence and/or intimacy adds to the burden. "I don't care anymore."

- *Acceptance*
At this stage, there is a sense of ease about the present and what lies ahead, "I'm ready for whatever comes." For survivors, this will be a time when healing begins.

How to Support a Loved One Through Grief

Be a good listener - That means you do less talking and allow him/her to reminisce and talk about their feelings.

Provide reassurance - it is very common for a person to feel guilt that they could have done more. Let them know that they did what they could.

Be available - This is especially true immedi-

ately after the death and during holidays and other special events when the loss is most keenly felt.

Help out with errands and keep in touch- A person may feel too overwhelmed with emotion to do even simple tasks.

Be patient and understanding- If a loved one refuses to accept your invitations to dinner, etc., be patient and keep asking. In time they will be ready.

What Not to Do
Do not avoid them - Don't worry if you don't know the right thing to do or say. Your presence or simplest of gestures is all that is required to help.

Don't pressure them to stop grieving - Each person grieves in their own time and own way.

Don't hide your grief - or avoid the subject because you don't want to upset them. Instead grieve together, hold each other and cry, or talk about the times you both spent with the loved one.

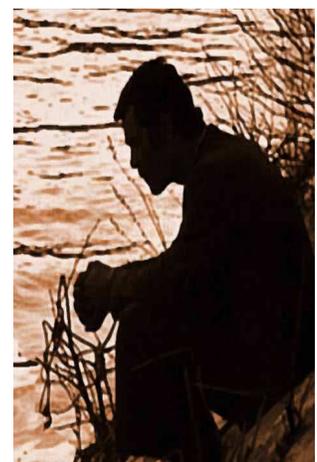
Don't say, "It was for the best" - Realizing this

doesn't diminish the pain and sense of loss.

Don't say "I know how you feel" unless you really do - These are just hollow words unless you have been in the same situation and can offer suggestions about what helped you to heal.

When to Seek or Encourage Professional Help

1. Feel like life is not worth living
2. Wish one had died with loved one
3. Blame oneself for the loss or not having prevented it
4. Feel numb and disconnected from other for more than a few weeks
5. Are having difficulty trusting others since the loss
6. Are unable to perform normal daily activities and/or responsibilities



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Employee Assistance 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.

Labor Management Employee Assistance Program

Steering Committee

The City of Milwaukee Employee Assistance Program is guided and overseen by a Joint Labor and Management Steering Committee comprised of representatives from major departments and unions.

The Employee Assistance Program is operated by the City of Milwaukee Department of Employee Relations with the assistance of the Joint Labor and Management Steering Committee.

Prescription Drug Abuse

What is it?

In short, prescription drug abuse is the intentional use of a medication without a prescription; in a way other than prescribed; or for the feeling/effect it causes.

The Numbers

It may be surprising to know that prescription drugs are the second most commonly abused category of drugs, behind marijuana and ahead of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and other drugs. In 2009, about 2.8 percent of the U.S. population (7 million) were current users of psychotherapeutic medication drugs taken non-medically. The most common medications taken in order of prevalence are: pain relievers,

tranquilizers, stimulants and sedatives.

Use of prescription drugs among teens is becoming more common. Nearly 1 out of 12 high school seniors reported non-medical use of Vicodin; 1 in 20 reported abuse of Oxycontin.

What is Driving This High Prevalence?

A significant factor is the misperception of their safety. Because these drugs are prescribed, they are often thought to be safer than "street drugs." This is a myth; prescription drugs impact the brain in the same way as illicit drugs. They may be just as addictive and lead to serious physical/medical problems. Prescription drug use is only safe for the individuals for

who actually have prescriptions for them, have been examined by their doctor and are taking them as recommended by their physician.

Another myth involves the belief that there is nothing "illegal" about it since it was prescribed by a doctor. Again, this is a myth; taking medication without a prescription or sharing them with others is not a legal use.

A second factor is the simple availability of prescription drugs. Between 1991 and 2010, prescription of stimulants increased from 5 million to 45 million; prescriptions for pain relievers increased from 30 million to 180 million (NIDA, 2011).

The third factor has to do more with why it is being used and varies from person to person. For some the motivation is to address pain, anxiety, a sleep problem or simply to get high.

Treatments For Prescription Drug Abuse.

Drug addiction is a biological, pathological process that alters how the brain functions. Subsequently, treatment is usually specific to the type of drug being used. It may involve medication to manage dangerous withdrawal and talk counseling.

For questions or further information contact the City of Milwaukee EAP, your primary care physician or health insurance provider.