



Employee Assistance Program

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www.milwaukee.gov/der/eap

Special points of interest:

- EAP Website
- Stress
- Legal/Financial
- Family
- Addiction

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Caring For an Elder at Home

Making modest changes to the home in which an elder lives may improve their ability to maintain independence and significantly reduce falls/injuries. Focus attention in the bedroom, bathroom and hallways, as they are high accident areas.

Floors: De-clutter and remove cords that present trip hazards. If a walker is used, remove door saddles in between rooms. Minimize the number of types of floor-

ing throughout the house and use low beveled strips over carpet edges to prevent tripping. Remove all throw rugs and use of skid resistant slippers on non-carpeted floors.

Lighting: Many older adults keep lights off and draw shades for privacy. Consider use of sheer drapes to let some light in while providing needed privacy. Install night lights and compact fluorescent bulbs. Low light not only leads to falls, but can also

contribute to depression.

Bathroom: Use heavy-duty hardware to install grab bars to firm anchor points (not just to the tile) around toilet and shower area. Make use of both horizontal and vertical grab bars. Install a hand-held shower head at your loved one's head level that has at least an 84" hose attachment and on-off switch on the nozzle. *Contact the EAP for a comprehensive checklist .*

Stress Busting Tips

We all experience stress from time to time. Most of the time we are able to adjust and move through it. However, stress that is reoccurring and/or constant can quickly become overwhelming.

Try these simple stress busting tips:

- ◇ **Treat your body right:** Eating right and exercising makes you less prone to stress.
- ◇ **Set and re-set your priorities:** You may need to put some

tasks on the back burner.

- ◇ **Take five:** Take advantage of a break in the day to simply relax and clear your head.
- ◇ **Go easy on criticism:** No one is perfect. Striving to be the best all the time will lead to more pressure.
- ◇ **Be flexible:** Make allowances for other opinions and the unexpected.
- ◇ **Manage your anger:** Take a moment

before losing control. Allow for a cool down period before coming back to solve a problem.

- ◇ **Watch your thoughts:** Don't "sugar coat" reality but know that staying solely with negative thoughts for too long or often will negatively impact your mood.
- ◇ **Talk it out:** This helps us get perspective on a situation and vents negative feelings.

How to Find and Choose a Bankruptcy Lawyer



“...make sure that you ask about attorney service costs, versus the actual costs of filing bankruptcy paperwork with the court.”

Filing for bankruptcy is an option for individuals and/or businesses that find themselves unable to repay debts. The process is available for those who have exhausted all other options for payment of debt.

If you are thinking of hiring a bankruptcy attorney, consider the following tips:

lawyers in your area.

If you have a lawyer, ask him for a name of a good bankruptcy attorney.

Once you have a list of names, contact each attorney on your list. Prepare a list of questions to ask, and make sure that you ask about attorney service costs, versus the actual costs of filing bank-

ruptcy paperwork with the courts. Ask if your initial visit is free, or if there will be a charge.

Speak with others who have filed bankruptcy and ask for a recommendation for an attorney. Visit online forums and speak with people in your area through on-line message boards. Since online message boards are mostly anonymous, people are more likely to be honest and forthcoming with their opinions about

local lawyers.

The Milwaukee Bar Association operates a free referral program (414-274-6768). Consider a lawyer that is certified by the *American Bankruptcy Institute*.

Check with the *Better Business Bureau* so to see if any complaints have been made against any

initial consultation.

In the end, your comfort level with the attorney should be just as important as their professional expertise.

Make sure that you explain in your initial phone conversation that you wish to meet with an attorney to determine if you will use his or her services for your bankruptcy. Some attorneys will waive the cost of the

initial consultation.

In the end, your comfort level with the attorney should be just as important as their professional expertise.

Diet Myths



Diet Myth: All Low-Fat food is healthy.

Fact: The myth is that low-fat foods automatically mean a healthier choice and fewer calories. Actually, low-fat foods are often full of

added ingredients, like sugar and flour to improve the flavor. The added sugar and flour can just cause you to become hungry again much faster. Sometimes, low-fat foods even contain more calories than the regular version.

Tip: You are better off taking a moment to read the ingredient label in comparing the low-fat and regular version to be sure that the low-fat is actually better for you.

Back to School Anxiety?

The new school year has begun and chances are you and your child are wrapping up back-to-school shopping for clothes and classroom supplies. You are not alone. More than 55 million American students will enroll in elementary through high school this fall, according to the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics.

It is a busy time and nowhere more evident than at local retail stores. As parents and children square away their shopping lists, it is easy to get a little tunnel vision on tasks and forget that return to school is a change that potentially may bring along anxiety and worry for your child.

Starting a new school year may be very exciting for your child. It offers an opportunity to socialize with friends, meet new people and participate in school functions. It may also present a particularly changing time for some. Students may worry about everything from getting lost, figuring out their locker combination

or whether their teacher will like them. Yes, starting a new school year may be filled with excitement and anticipation, but it may also be very stressful on your child. The following tips may help lessen some of the stress:

For first time students, consider taking a tour of the school before classes begin. Many elementary and middle schools offer times to meet with teachers, pick up a schedule familiarize oneself with the building layout and even practice with opening the their locker.

With young children, practice the school day's entire routine—from waiting for the bus to the pic-up from school. These "dry runs" offer a chance for your child to become as familiar as possible. If your child has spent most of the summer playing alone, it may be a good idea to schedule some play dates in order to get him or her primed to socialize again.

Regardless of their age,

open the lines of communication by using open-ended questions like, "What do you think it's going to be like?", "What have you heard about high school/college?" or "What do your friends worry about?" Open-ended questions are those that can't be answered with a "yes" or "no" response. This allows for worries to be talked about one by one and gives the parent an opportunity to help separate realistic from unrealistic fears.

Keep the conversation and open lines of communication going throughout the school year. It is sometimes helpful to have planned times to talk, such as after dinner.

Finally, don't forget that parents can feel stress about the first day of school, too. When children notice their parents feeling nervous, they may become anxious, too. So try to remain calm and positive. If you find yourself worrying, take a break to talk to another adult.

In some cases, strong anxiety may interfere

with a child's happiness or learning. About one in eight children suffer from an anxiety disorder, according to the *Anxiety Disorders Association of America*.

Note frequent temper tantrums, nightmares or expressing a strong refusal to go to school. Children may also say they feel sick every Monday morning – physical complaints are often a sign of worry.

If your child is complaining of physical symptoms, have him/her seen by a pediatrician to make sure that you're not overlooking an illness. Then, talk to your child's teacher, the school counselor or psychologist. They may be helpful in ruling out the possibility of an underlying social, emotional or learning problem.

Again, preparation is critical for academic success. It is equally important to maintain communication throughout the school year. Routinely "check in" with open-ended questions will help keep those lines open and identify problems early on.

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View archived

EAP newsletters at: <http://www.milwaukee.gov/der/eap>

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.

Stages of Addiction

Just as no two people are ever exactly alike, so to is addiction and recovery. Everyone's experiences are uniquely their own. However, experts in addiction and recovery identify certain similarities in how addiction forms and recovery takes place.

Early Stage: This stage is often referred to the "experimentation" stage because it typically involves first experiences with a substance (drug) or behavior (gambling) with little to no serious consequences. It often involves social use at par-

ties and get-togethers with family and friends.

Misuse Stage: In this stage the use of a substance or behavior is used as the "answer" to stress or problems. It may be used more to relax or cope. The person here may decide when to use or engage in the behavior but ultimately cave in and use before the planned time. There may also be some negative consequences. Most drunk drivers typically reside in this stage.

Abuse Stage: At this stage the individual continues to use/engage in behavior despite serious

negative consequences that are negatively impacting daily living, employment, social life and relationships with loved ones. Folks in this stage may believe they can't function without and may find themselves behaving out of character and not like themselves even though they know down deep that it is wrong.

Dependency: At this point there have been unsuccessful attempts to cut back and likely a need to have more to get the same desired effect (tolerance). Serious negative consequences across the board, such as

losing his/her job and divorce are apparent. Depending on the behavior or substance, individuals may feel sick when they don't use (withdrawal), like nausea, tremors and sweating. Due to the severity of some withdrawal symptoms, like alcohol, a medical detoxification under a medical doctor's supervision may be needed.

The road to recovery is possible at any stage. Like the descent into addiction, the journey back to healthy living is a phased, step-by-step process.