



THE EAP CONNECTION

Creating a Stress-Less Lifestyle

Stress can be helpful to push us to accomplish what we need to do, but when it becomes overwhelming, it is time to evaluate what we can do to improve it. Here are some tips for managing stress:

Identify what causes your stress. This may sound basic but recognizing what is causing stress helps you better manage it. By reflecting on challenges or realizing an interconnected combination of stressors, you can determine where you need support or what to prioritize.

Prioritize tasks. Start with the most important or pressing task and work from there. It can be helpful to create lists to organize thoughts and keep on track. Checking items off the list is especially satisfying and can be a positive motivator. Guard against procrastination which can lead to more stress in the long run.

Schedule self-care time. When stress levels are high, it is that much more important to have outlets for reducing stress. Self-care should be an enjoyable activity that helps you to relax, rejuvenate, and refresh. Some popular options are exercising, reading, yoga, and spending time with family and friends. Self-care also includes getting adequate sleep, eating healthy and nutritious foods, and drinking plenty of water.

Reflect upon your strengths. Everyone has things that they do well, and in difficult times, these can be used to support yourself in healthy coping. Think about what strengths you can leverage to reduce your stress and create balance in your life.

Use relaxation techniques. Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, or progressive muscle relaxation can be beneficial in combating stress. Taking time to stop and refocus (even on days when you don't feel you have a minute to spare) calms down your mind and helps you to handle more effectively what comes your way.

Focus on areas that you have control over. Stressing about things that you have no influence over can be futile and exhausting. While you may find that you can't change a situation, it's up to you to determine how you will respond to what happens. Looking for opportunities to be adaptable and flexible will keep you in the right mindset to overcome challenges and pivot when necessary.

Find balance. Stress can often be the product of a life that is out of balance. When household chores, kid's athletics, and countless obligations fill your calendar, you can easily get overwhelmed and burned out, wishing for a break. Review how you are spending your time and determine how you could better align your calendar with the things you find most rewarding, enjoyable, and relaxing.

Seek support. When stress becomes overwhelming, it may be time to get additional support. Reach out to trusted friends, family, and those closest to you. Also, remember that an EAP counselor can help you with stress management strategies and tools.

HOW TO USE YOUR EAP BENEFIT:

ERC: Counselors & Consultants is your company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) partner. For additional information, visit our website ERCincorp.com or call 1-800-222-8590.