

A monthly newsletter provided by Interface EAP

Making **Holiday** Family Conversations

Merrier



The annual Stress in America survey consistently reports strain among families caused by their ideological differences, and the holidays have a keen reputation for these conflicts, even at the dinner table. Try the

following tips to help make your get-togethers a little merrier: 1) steer conversations that appear to be drifting into conflict toward those things you can agree on; 2) if you are angry about what's in the news, avoid displacing this tension onto loved ones; 3) challenge yourself to be a tension de-escalator, not an aggravator; and 4) rehearse how you might respond to conflict because doing so will dramatically improve your ability to act calmly while avoiding hair-trigger reflexes.

Use the **EAP** for **Acute Stress**

EAPs do more than help employees solve problems. They also possess serious listening and empathy skills, and emotional support that offer relief from the anguish you may be feeling caused by a life crisis, difficult time, or even grim personal circumstances. Don't dismiss asking the EAP for help, even if you believe "the EAP can do nothing to help me in this situation." Don't live in fear, lose sleep, feel physically ill, or experience a constant sense of foreboding doom by "going it alone." Instead, partner with the EAP for support that can help you through a difficult period.



Maintaining High **Energy** at Work

What can keep you feeling energetic at work? There's more to it than avoiding potatoes at lunch or sugary snacks that result in an energy crash. Discover a personal plan for staying perky at work. Take a week



to record on a three-by-five card four observations: 1) what time(s) of day you feel most energetic and engaged; 2) what time(s) of day you feel the least energetic and engaged; 3) what you did just prior to these periods; and 4) what behaviors or influences appear to have affected these energy states. To complete your plan, conduct an online search of "ways to improve energy at work." You'll discover everything from munching on pumpkin seeds to going to bed by a certain time. Now, compare all these "energy tools" to see which ones fit best with your rhythm or cycle. Experiment and fine-tune your personal energy plan. Later, consider whether you have experienced an increase in overall job satisfaction as a result. You may be pleasantly surprised.

Moving Beyond **"Just Coping"**

We are all different psychologically, so an event that



creates acute stress for one person may not affect another. Don't be fooled into thinking that your crisis requires toughening up or "pressing on" like you imagine others might. Stigma against asking for help can lead to needless suffering. Fact: Getting help earlier shortens the period of distress and solves problems faster, and most counseling is not long term. One or two sessions may be all it takes to resolve the problem you face.

Master Your Self-Care Strategy



Self-care is not just about getting enough sleep, eating well, or taking time off for a massage. Rather, it is a conscious process of being attentive to your physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, but with a goal in mind—to build resilience that allows you to be more capable of bouncing back from adversity and managing stress better. To practice this strategic form of wellness, focus your attention on: 1) physical fitness and emotional wellness (how you manage thoughts, feelings, and beliefs so you engage in positive thinking); 2) being aware of your emotions and the emotions of others with whom you interact, and use this awareness to make better decisions and communicate more effectively; 3) knowing how to create positive emotions. Does walking outside for 15 minutes improve your mood? Does taking five minutes to tidy up your office lift your spirits? When you arrive home after work, does sitting down to play the piano inspire you? Know your “go to” natural, healthy, and positive mood enhancers and use them routinely; 4) having someone with whom you can confide in and process challenges. Your EAP can be a source for this support; 5) eating right and getting enough sleep; and 6) having constructive ways of dealing with emotional stress—a hobby, spiritual practices, networking, leisure activities. Examining this list, do you see opportunities to improve upon your self-care strategy?

Overcoming Money Fears

Worrying about money is common, but if you feel overwhelmed, tackling this fear is a priority. Most money fears—financing a child’s college education, retirement, paying taxes, late bills—lack a commitment to a definite plan, budget, and host of tools, advice, and interventions that can turn your life around. This plan should energize you, cause a renewed sense of control, and give you the ability to track progress toward your goals. Feeling empowered by these proactive steps is what returns the peace of mind you’ve been missing, and it also gives you a better night’s sleep. The path begins with a first step. Contact your EAP to learn about resources and other help.



Helping to Prevent Suicide

Experts in suicide prevention will tell you that “a suicidal person doesn’t ‘want’ to commit suicide—they just want the pain to stop.” It has also been observed that when a suicidal person makes a decision to act, their perception of pain may disappear. They become calm. Their decision provides relief because the suicidal person has found “a solution” to their problem. Family and friends can fulfill a powerful intervention role if they witness this change of mood or frame of mind, and they should inquire about self-harm if this change happens



alongside severe personal problems, victimization, or serious illness. If asked, most people considering suicide will not hide it from you—they’ll talk about it. And that’s exactly what you want. For guidance, turn to the

EAP, or in an emergency, call 911 or 1-800-SUICIDE.

For free and confidential assistance, call your Employee Assistance Program and speak with a Care Coordinator:

Stress/Anxiety

Grief/Loss

Financial

Family Issues

Legal

Alcohol/Drug Problems

Career Development

Marital/Relationships

(713) 781-3364

Se Habla Español

(800) 324-4327

(800) 324-2490

Crisis Counselors available 24/7



Interface EAP

www.4eap.com

Your employer has contracted with Interface EAP to provide you an Employee Assistance Program.

Services under your EAP are available to you, spouse and eligible dependents under the age of 26.