

# YOUR EAP NEWS

MAY  
2020

COUNSELING SERVICES ♦ LEGAL/FINANCIAL CONSULTATIONS ♦ ONLINE WORK/LIFE AND WELLNESS

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## Parenting Stress, Isolation, and **Coronavirus**

**M**any national associations for child abuse prevention are concerned about incidents of child abuse being underreported during the COVID-19 pandemic. School closures, child care centers, and other programs are not open or operating. Typically, this is how adults outside the home spot signs and symptoms of abuse and make reports. Are you a parent who needs more parenting support or at least great ideas for child behavior management? Find hundreds of ideas at [www.preventchildabuse.org/coronavirus-resources](http://www.preventchildabuse.org/coronavirus-resources). (You will also find great ideas for taking care of, and even pampering, yourself during this difficult time.)

## Challenges of **Working Remotely**

**I**f you are new to working remotely, then you are discovering the challenges that come with it. The most frustrating are distractions. As soon as the last one is gone, the next one appears. To deal with distractions, rely less on willpower and more on strategies for each one. Start by keeping a list of distractions you notice. How many did you find or experience, such as dings from email, TV and radio, pet needs, social media, phone calls, text messages, wandering thoughts, and leftover pie that calls out to you? Next, decide on an intervention for each one. If you still struggle, try setting a kitchen timer for 10 to 15 minutes of solid chunks of work time that you blast through—then repeat.

## Grief, Loss, and the **Pandemic**

**T**hose needing to attend or arrange funerals are facing extreme challenges because of social distancing and travel restrictions related to COVID-19. These circumstances can make grief and loss worse. Thoughtful and effective answers to almost every question imaginable about funerary services and COVID-19 can be found at [www.rememberingalife.com](http://www.rememberingalife.com), with new content posted by the National Funeral Directors Association. You will find the answer about communication, support, grief, overcoming long-distance challenges, funeral options, safe viewing processions, planning, leveraging technology, holding multiple small ceremonies, and dozens of other issues.



## Prevent ARDS **Effects of COVID-19**

**A**re you still considering an exercise program or attempting to motivate yourself to get fit? Here's some motivation: New research shows that regular exercise can protect you against acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), a possible complication of COVID-19. Avoiding ARDS can keep you off a ventilator. The myth about ventilators is that they help you breathe, and when you are well, you go home without any issues. Not exactly. A ventilator often leads to other complications, including damage to the lungs. The older you are, the higher this risk—along with the possibility that it can't be removed. If the ventilator is successfully removed, risk of death from respiratory-related health problems later is also higher. COVID-19 is going to be around for a while, so if you are struggling to find the right exercise program, speak with an exercise coach, health advisor, doctor, or EAP.

## Avoid Virtual Harassment as a Remote Employee

**K**now your responsibilities for avoiding sexual harassment and increase your awareness if you telecommute. On the job, we are surrounded by coworkers, managers, and usually a dynamic workplace. These factors naturally create social and environmental controls that positively influence our civil behavior, manners, and communication. Many of these controls diminish or disappear entirely when we work remotely, although technology tools allow for more contact, along with more options for communication, including texting, chatting, videoconferencing, and telephone—most of it recorded. So, what if you type, text, or voice mail something to your coworker and they reject it, express displeasure with it, or otherwise take offense? The answer is, don't repeat it. Common sexual harassment behaviors include discussing one's sex life, asking a coworker about their sex life, sharing inappropriate photos or background images, making indecent jokes, sending suggestive texts, sending unwanted gifts, and repeatedly asking someone out on a date after they have said no. Most sexual harassment prevention relates to self-awareness, appreciating boundaries, and common courtesies. For example, with regard to communication, do you repeatedly use video chat when a simple text is sufficient? Do you sometimes say or do things at work that you suddenly realize you should not have said or done? Don't hesitate to reach out to the EAP or a professional counselor for confidential assistance with issues associated with communication and on-the-job relationships. You can discover resources, strategies, and new skills to help you enjoy your job more.

## Have a Team Refresher Meeting

**W**ill you need to reenergize your team after months of social distancing? Consider a refresher meeting:

- 1) Meet with your team and reaffirm that trust and open communication with each other is the mutually desired goal. Have each member discuss what this means to them.
- 2) Ask if there are any outstanding issues that need to be discussed. For example:
  - a) Do we have any unresolved concerns about communication between ourselves or management?
  - b) Do our duties or roles need clarifying?
  - c) Are resources to do our jobs lacking?
  - d) Do any roadblocks exist to impede our work at this time?Spend a few minutes during meetings revisiting these questions, and then periodically in the future. Your team will bounce back fast.

## Don't Tough Out Acute Stress

**D**oes your job include a higher risk of witnessing workplace violence? If you are exposed to such an event, be sure to meet with a qualified mental health professional to discuss your experience and understand symptoms of acute stress disorder (ASD). ASD can follow any type of traumatic event. Don't tough it out or assume "Ah, I'm okay." Proper care for symptoms may help prevent post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a mental disorder that can follow if ASD symptoms don't resolve after six months. ASD may include anxiety, depressed mood, sleep disturbances, nightmares, being constantly tense, being easily startled, irritability, poor concentration, and more.

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