



Employee Assistance Program

1-800-822-0244

www.oer.ny.gov/eap

September 2023

FrontLine Employee

Wellness, Productivity, and You!

Coping with the Sunday “Scaries”



The Sunday “scaries” refers to that sinking feeling or anxiety some people experience on Sunday night when they realize the weekend is over and Monday morning will soon arrive, and along with it what awaits at work. Gain control over this state of mind by jotting down your tasks and goals for the week. You will feel more control and quickly dispel the sense of dread. Anxiety is often reduced by self-care techniques, so experiment with an enjoyable form of relaxation. For more impact, incorporate this into a regular evening routine. Try a bit of “thought blocking” replaced with an activity that keeps your mind occupied. Plan your Monday on Friday by taking a bit of time to go over your schedule for the next week. You’re more likely to stay in the present come Sunday night.

Have You Added Plants to Your Workspace Yet?



Indoor plants have been shown to favorably impact individuals’ physiological and cognitive functions. One study even showed their presence can lower blood pressure. Indoor office lighting is suitable for many kinds of plants, including the following: snake plant, ZZ plant, peace lily, pothos, Chinese evergreen, and dracaena. So, get some healthy greens on your desk by searching images of these plants to see which ones will work for you.

Source: Effects of Plants at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9224521/

Stress Tips from the Field: Newly Divorced Stress



End of summer is a time when many divorces occur. If you’re newly divorced, serious stress can naturally follow your decision, regardless of how tough it was to make. Emotional stress is common among divorced couples, includes grief and sadness, and negatively affects self-esteem. Other stresses, such as coparenting challenges, financial concerns, and navigating changes in your social life, can also be challenging. Your goal is to create a new life with new routines. Don’t go it alone or remain in isolation. Bring tough challenges to your employee assistance program to get the support you need.

Impress the Boss with Your Reliability



Reliability is a soft skill valued by employers because reliable employees demonstrate consistent results with accuracy and achievement. They also help reduce supervisor stress about outcomes, predictability, and timely communication. To ramp up your reliability, you need to deliver consistent, high-quality work and let your boss’s positive response motivate you to consistently perform in this way. Take the initiative by identifying issues or problems upstream and resolving them before management is forced to resolve them. Be adaptable to sudden change, and develop a sense for what, how much, and when your boss needs to communicate.

Marijuana Edibles: What Parents Should Know

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports a significant increase in the number of children who have consumed marijuana edibles leading to the need for emergency medical assistance. A rise of 214% in emergency room visits by children under the age of 11 has occurred in the past two years. Eating products of any kind that include THC is more dangerous than smoking cannabis due to both the unpredictable and inconsistent amounts of THC added to these products and the tendency to consume more of the cannabis product, especially if the intoxicating effects of THC are not immediately felt. With 23 states now legalizing cannabis for recreational use, this health risk is not likely to diminish. Marijuana edibles can create psychotic effects and may not be much different in appearance from a gummy vitamin. Parents should follow these six guidelines regarding teen and child substance abuse prevention: 1) provide accurate education about risks and legal consequences of substance abuse; 2) discuss peer pressure and how to respond to it effectively; 3) educate young people early about stress management and coping strategies; 4) practice, model, and encourage open communication about issues and concerns young people experience; 5) discuss expectations and boundaries for your family regarding substance abuse and what the consequences will be for crossing these boundaries; and 6) know where to get help, information about counseling, or early intervention when you suspect your child is using illicit substances. Begin this search via your employee assistance program.

Learn more: <http://www.justthinktwice.gov/article/drug-alert-marijuana-edibles>



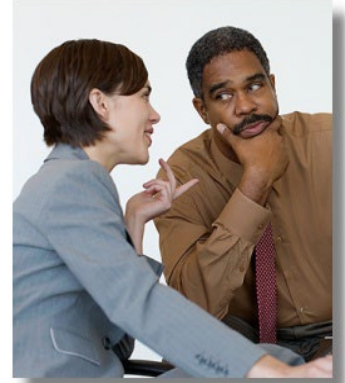
Is There Hidden Meaning in Your Job?

Do you feel bored with your job, unable to leave, and helpless to change your state of mind? There are personal interventions you can try that have worked for others. Start by taking time to think about your interests, goals, and values (what's most important to you in your life). Next, search for how these things are hidden within the scope of your job's essential functions. Don't be too quick to say, "There's nothing!" For example, do you value "meaningful relationships"? If so, can you make your job more meaningful by mentoring others, being more helpful, collaborating, engaging more empathetically, and lessening your isolation? These behaviors have ripple effects at work and can lead to more positive interactions, cooperation, teaming, and sharing of ideas.



You Probably Don't Need Counseling for That

The diminishing stigma of seeking professional mental health counseling is a positive development. However, it's worth noting that many concerns presented to counselors can be resolved through alternative means. A few misconceptions often prompt seeking a professional counselor when one might not be needed. These include: 1) believing there are no alternative resources, such as self-help strategies, support networks, or community resources, including EAP; 2) linking emotional distress with the notion that seeking professional help is essential for thorough and ultimate resolution; 3) believing a professional counselor will provide an unheard-of, inspiring, or motivational answer to a personal problem that instantly resolves it; and 4) using a professional counselor as a procrastination step to intellectualize (examine, analyze, rehash) the nature of a problem to feel as though one is making progress, while one is only resisting or procrastinating in the taking of action steps needed to create change.



Prepare for Disasters and Catastrophes

No matter where you live, a natural disaster or catastrophe can happen. Are your family and home prepared to face an event that could completely upend your life? Denial ("it won't happen here (or to me)") and procrastination in taking preparatory



steps are your worst enemies. Find information and steps to take, along with guidance and checklists, at www.ready.gov. After experiencing the effects of a disaster or catastrophe, be mindful of signs or symptoms indicating a need for mental health support—such as emotional distress that lingers, sleep disturbances, somatic or physical symptoms like headaches and gastrointestinal distress, or a desire to withdraw or remain isolated.

WellNYS Everyday Monthly Webinar Mind Your Health: Ways to Boost Your Brain



Wednesday, September 13
12:00 noon – 12:40 P.M.

Join us to learn more about how you can promote healthy brain aging. We will discuss science-based strategies that can reduce the risk of cognitive decline and help support a healthy mind and body.

Presented by:
Victoria Kordovski, PhD and Beate Davis, PhD
SUNY Upstate Medical University

To register for this webinar
Go to:

<https://meetny.webex.com/weblink/register/r3df08c5f7b8a5cde1de41727ec99cb17>



WellNYS Everyday

WellNYS Everyday is a wellness initiative dedicated to educating, engaging, and empowering New York State employees to choose to eat foods that are healthy for them and to be physically active. This initiative encourages employees to:

- Sign-up to receive the WellNYS Daily To-Do by email every day
- Run or walk your First or Next 5K
- Find out where to be physically active in New York State
- Celebrate your wellness success with “I Did It!”
- Engage in healthy behaviors while in your workplace
- Find a NYS Walking workplaces map
- Learn about Physical Activities in your region.

For more information go to:
oer.ny.gov/wellnys-everyday

WellNYS Everyday is sponsored by NYS Work-Life Services.

WellNYS Daily To-Do

September 2023

Train your brain

| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat |
|-----|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |

MONTHLY WELLNYS DAILY TO-DO'S

October

Get to know your community.

November

Give a compliment to someone today.

December

Start a new habit using the two-minute rule.

- 1. The September WellNYS Daily To-Do is "Train Your Brain." Join us on Wednesday, September 13th at 12:00 noon for the wellness webinar, "Mind Your Health: Ways to Boost Your Brain." To register go to: <https://meetny.webex.com/weblink/register/r3df08c5f7b8a5cde1de41727ec99cb17>.
- 2. Did you know the brain weighs three pounds? For more information, check out the article, *Know Your Brain*, go to: <https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/public-education/brain-basics/brain-basics-know-your-brain>.
- 3. Instead of scrolling through your phone on social media, change it up, and find an app that can train your brain. Download an app and play a trivia or word game.
- 4. Sudoku is a number-placement puzzle and an excellent game to train your brain. This game is played by using all the numbers one through nine to form a line, a box, and a grid. Look online to learn how to play.
- 5. Try these three tips to remember a name of someone you just met: 1. After the person says their name, repeat it. 2. Make an association and a connection with their name to something important to you. 3. Say their name again. If you can't remember their name, it's okay to ask.
- 6. Use your own memories to replay the significant experiences in your life. Write down a specific year and next to it, add any major life events. For example: What happened in your life in 2017?
- 7. To learn how exercise affects the brain, go to: <https://lifesciences.byu.edu/how-exercise-affects-your-brain>.
- 8. Learning a new language is an excellent way to train your brain. There are plenty of free programs on the Internet. In the search engine, type "best free language learning websites or apps."
- 9. Train your brain this weekend by playing a game of Scrabble. Scrabble is board game played with others. The objective is to create words using your letters and placing them on a board. For every word you put on the board, you will receive points. The person with the highest number of points, wins!
- 10. The act of listening to a story can light up your brain. According to OEDB.org, when we are told a story, not only are language processing parts of our brain activated, but experiential parts of our brains also come alive. <https://www.oedb.org/librarian/your-brain-on-books-10-things-that-happen-to-our-minds-when-we-read/>.
- 11. Learning one new word per day can build your vocabulary and train your brain. Go to: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/word-of-the-day/calendar> every day. Once you learn a specific new word, use it in a sentence.
- 12. If you had to choose a jigsaw puzzle, how many pieces would you choose? Studies have shown that doing jigsaw puzzles can improve cognition, visual-spatial reasoning, improved concentration, short-term memory, and problem solving. <https://blogs.bcm.edu/2020/10/29/a-perfect-match-the-health-benefits-of-jigsaw-puzzles/>.
- 13. Join us today at 12:00 noon for the wellness webinar, *Mind Your Health: Ways to Boost Your Brain*. A maximum of 1,000 participants can attend. If you are unable to join the webinar, it will be recorded and added to the WellNYS Everyday website. <https://meetny.webex.com/weblink/register/r3df08c5f7b8a5cde1de41727ec99cb17>.
- 14. Learning to dance can increase the brain's processing speed and memory. Try a Zumba or Salsa class or ask your partner to go to a ballroom dancing class.
- 15. Whenever you are learning a new skill, set aside time and practice this skill every day. You will gain confidence and may master the skill sooner the more you practice.
- 16. Flow is the unique mental state of effortless engagement. To learn more how to enter the flow state, go to: https://www.ted.com/talks/ted_ed_how_to_enter_flow_state?language=en.
- 17. Taking up a regular practice of tai chi can help reduce stress, enhance sleep quality, and improve memory. A 2013 study found that long-term tai chi practice could induce structural changes in the brain, resulting in an increase in brain volume. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3621760/>.
- 18. Try a free crossword puzzle every day at: <https://www.dictionary.com/>.
- 19. Feeling stressed? Most likely your mind needs a rest so try a couple minutes of meditation. Simply close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and allow your body and mind to rest. If you struggle to meditate, listen to a guided meditation. Search the web for guided meditations as there are many.
- 20. Make a list and memorize it. This could be a grocery list or a to-do list. Make the list challenging. Think of it as a work-out for your brain.
- 21. Simple ways to challenge the mind include changing up your routines or habits. Drive home a different way, eat a meal with a different hand, or put your left sock on first if you always put your right sock on first. Mixing up your routines will challenge your mind.
- 22. Instead of relying on your phone contact list, challenge yourself to memorize important phone numbers of your family and friends. Do you remember your childhood phone number?
- 23. Cooking is good for your brain. It involves making a meal plan with details, making a list to grocery shop, and multi-tasking and organization. Check out the following article: <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/cooking-for-cognition-why-making-a-meal-is-good-for-your-brain/>.
- 24. Train your brain by reading every day. Instead of reading the Internet, turn paper pages and read books, magazines, and newspapers. Reading challenges your mind.
- 25. Do you write in a journal? If you want to remember something specific that occurred during your day, write it down in your journal before you go to bed. This is an easy way to recall information.
- 26. Sleep is essential to brain health. Some studies suggest that during sleep, your brain flushes out toxins that have accumulated during the day. It is also important for consolidating short-term memories into long-term memories. Sleep deprivation has also been linked to the development of neurodegenerative disease, so it is very important to not skip sleep. Source: <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/how-sleep-clears-brain>.
- 27. Are you ambidextrous? The definition means you can use either the right or left hand with equal ease when you perform such tasks as writing, cooking, or brushing your teeth. Practicing this teaches your brain to do something new.
- 28. Meditation and mindfulness may affect the functioning or structure of the brain. To learn more, go to: <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/meditation-and-mindfulness-what-you-need-to-know>.
- 29. You are what you eat. A balanced diet is essential for brain health. Vegetables, fruits, and Omega-3's is essential for brain function. Does your diet include the recommended amounts of these important nutrients?
- 30. What was your favorite tip to train your mind this month?

Number of days completed