



Employee Assistance Program

1-800-822-0244

www.oer.ny.gov/eap

July 2023

FrontLine Employee

Wellness, Productivity, and You!

Family Separation Stress and Military Personnel

The demands of military service often requires extended periods away from loved ones. This can strain relationships and mental well-being. Stress is made worse by missing family milestones and not being physically present during tough times. Take steps to prioritize communication with loved ones through regular phone calls, video chats, and letters, but more importantly, make this a habit or ritual so you proactively manage stress in your career rather than react to it. Make goals for your time with your loved ones to create cherished memories, as they'll become positive memory anchors when you are away. Not following these guidelines can strain relationships further and make you feel more isolated and even resentful. For more tips, support, and referral help, your EAP and other resources are available.



Don't Just "Fix and Forget"

Go further when resolving customer and employee complaints by discovering root causes. Start by understanding the customer's experience. Ask, "Can you tell me more about what led to this issue?" or "What were your expectations before this problem occurred?" Think about why—and keep asking to discover the root causes. Once confirmed, brainstorm and develop potential solutions. Implement, monitor, and evaluate a solution. Taking these steps will lead to fewer complaints, happier customers and employees, and more love for your job. This is called root cause analysis.



Planning a Staycation in Grand Style

If vacation money is tight, try a staycation—a vacation spent at home and within one's local area. Here's how to make it exciting and refreshing: 1) Set a budget so you know what's possible. 2) Brainstorm ideas—museums, new hikes, new restaurants, movie nights, exhibits, or special events. 3) Create the itinerary and schedule with detail. 4) Disconnect from social media and smartphones, and don't check email if possible. Limit television viewing. 5) Relax and have fun. With real planning, you will have a great staycation.



Drowsy Driving Intervention Tips

Every year, hundreds of drivers are killed by drowsy driving. One in 25 people reported driving while drowsy in the past 30 days—heavy eyelids, falling asleep at a red light, swerving, slamming on the brakes in a frightful "nod-off." Drowsy driving is more likely between 5 a.m. and 7 a.m., but the recommendation is to pull off the road—safely—to get refreshed. A nap is ideal, if possible. Recognize approaching drowsiness: yawning, blinking more than usual, and straining to keep your eyes open. Caffeine (drinking water can work too), fresh air, sitting up straight, and walking for a few minutes can also restore alertness.



Find more solutions at www.cdc.gov/sleep/features/drowsy-driving.html

Helping a Friend with an Eating Disorder

Like those with other health conditions, eating disorder sufferers often seek treatment with the encouragement of loved ones. Are you concerned about someone's relationship with food, their body image, or behaviors that indicate the likelihood of an eating disorder?



There are tips recommended by the National Eating Disorders Association for helping a person you care about. The first and most important recommendation is to learn as much as possible about eating disorders. Skipping this step is why many interventions and discussions focused on convincing someone to get help—for any behavioral/health problem—end in disappointment. Why? When you have accurate information, your responses to any naturally defensive statements are more effective, educational, and helpful. This facilitates your loved one's ability to self-diagnose. Shame and stigma reduce quickly. Less defensiveness is observed, emotions may be calmer, your loved one is likely to listen more readily, and the acceptance of help is more likely. Beyond this key step, rehearse what you want to say. Set a private time and place to talk. Be honest, direct, and use "I" statements, not accusations (i.e., "I have noticed..." vs. "You must/need to..."). Learn more about the steps to helping a loved one or a friend at nationaleatingdisorders.org.

Parent Alert: Use of Non-LSD Hallucinogens Surging Among Young Adults

Consumption of non-LSD hallucinogens is rising among young American adults—mescaline, peyote, psilocybin ("magic mushrooms"), and PCP. In 2018, 3.4% of 18-to-30-year-olds had used one of these drugs within the past 30 days, but by 2021, the number nearly doubled to 6.6%.



These drugs can have dangerous psychological effects along with physical risks, impaired judgment, and risk of accidents. They may also trigger long-term psychological effects like schizophrenia if a biogenic risk is present in the user. Legal consequences can ensue where these substances are illegal. Signs of possible non-LSD drug use may include changes in behavior and mood, withdrawal, secretiveness, and uncharacteristic mood swings; a high/low demeanor; neglect of schoolwork, chores, and activities; and the loss of interest in school. Sleep problems, nightmares, and appetite issues may also occur without apparent explanation.

Learn more: [Getsmartaboutdrugs.gov](https://getsmartaboutdrugs.gov) [search "non-LSD hallucinogens is rising."]

Create a Transition Ritual for Your Stressful Job

Emotional and mental exhaustion is common among public safety professionals and first responders at the end of their shifts. If that's you, do you have a "transition routine" for when you go home so you are more emotionally available to others.



This might include structured relaxation exercises, listening to calming music, or engaging in a mindfulness exercise. When you do these routinely, you can develop a habit signal that helps you shift your focus more quickly. You'll then be more naturally responsive with less effort, both in conversation, active listening, empathy, and eye contact with others. Talk to your EAP, and don't rule out counseling to help make it happen. Be cautious about alcohol use. It can relax you but can lead to larger problems and strained relationships, or it can interfere with a truly beneficial transition routine.

Have a Better Mood All Day

Have a more positive day at work by experimenting with these positivity strategies, and see if they don't become a habit for having a more productive day.



1) Be intentional about making your day positive by reminding yourself of the things you appreciate about your job. 2) Have achievable goals each day. Don't just "let things happen." 3) Prioritize tasks associated with these goals. 4) Practice time management during the day. 5) Initiate positive interactions with others and nurture these relationships to maintain a positive and enjoyable workplace. 6) Consciously practice gratitude for a minute or two during the day to reflect on what you like about your job. Doing so cultivates a positive mindset and builds resilience for when the going gets tough. Incorporating these strategies into your daily routine will empower you to navigate challenges that may arise, ensuring a fulfilling and resilient journey in your professional life.



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

July 2023

Go outside and enjoy nature in New York State

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	31					

MONTHLY WELLNYS DAILY TO-DO'S

- August** Eat a variety of fruit and vegetables.
- September** Train your brain.
- October** Get to know your community.

- 1.** The July monthly WellNYS Daily To-Do is to go outside and enjoy nature in New York State. Join us on Wednesday, July 12, at 12:00PM for the webinar, “Hike New York: Exploring the Great Outdoors.” To register go to: <https://meetny.webex.com/weblink/register/r4826a8883444076ad98673d73917769a>.
- 2.** Discover summer in New York State by going to: <https://www.iloveny.com/>.
- 3.** What is your favorite region to enjoy nature in New York State? Is it the beaches of Long Island, the wilderness of the Adirondack or Catskill Mountains, wineries of the Finger Lakes, or the roaring water of Niagara Falls? Do you have any plans to visit one of these regions this summer?
- 4.** Playing games like corn hole, frisbee, or even playing catch in your backyard can be the perfect July 4th activity.
- 5.** Enjoy the beauty of nature by watching a sunset or sunrise. Set your alarm early or clear your evening schedule and go for a relaxing stroll to enjoy the beautiful colors of the sky.
- 6.** Pack a pair of walking shoes today before you leave for work. On the way home, stop at a local park or in your neighborhood and go for a walk to unwind after a long day.
- 7.** Enjoying the wonders of nature on horseback is a fun way to get together with friends, family, or your significant other. Take a trip to a nearby stable or paddock this July. Click on the following link to find horseback riding in your area: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/101037.html>.
- 8.** We spend much of our day inside at work, inside at home, and inside our mode of transportation. Commit every day to go outside and enjoy nature!
- 9.** The 2023 I BIRD NY Challenge is back! Use your observation skills and join the annual Challenge by identifying any 10 bird species of your choosing in New York State. Go to: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/109900.html#2023> for more information.
- 10.** Did you plant a vegetable or flower garden? Tending to a vegetable or flower garden is a great way to commune with nature. If you didn't already start a garden, it may not be too late.
- 11.** Outdoor concerts are one of the many ways to enjoy music this summer. Where is your favorite venue in New York State to enjoy a concert?
- 12.** Interested in learning more about hiking? Go to <https://meetny.webex.com/weblink/register/r4826a8883444076ad98673d73917769a> to register for today's wellness webinar at 12:00PM.
- 13.** It's not typical to schedule time on our calendar to do absolutely nothing. Make today different. Schedule 15-20 minutes today to sit outside and close your eyes and just be mindful. Listen to the birds, and just enjoy the warm temperatures that July brings.
- 14.** Paddleboarding is a low-impact workout that can help improve balance, core strength, and reduce stress. It's a great way to enjoy being on the water. Search online for a local rental company near you.
- 15.** Fishing is great way to get outside this summer and enjoy both the beauty of nature and the water. Learn more about getting a fishing permit from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation website. It's only \$25 for ages 16-69, and \$5 if you are over 70. Go to: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6091.html> for more information
- 16.** Badminton is fun and an inexpensive investment in summer fun. It is great exercise to chase a birdie with your racket.
- 17.** Miniature golf is another way to enjoy the outdoors. Find a local spot and challenge a friend to a round of golf. If you are feeling competitive, the person with the highest score could buy the winners ice cream. The lowest score wins!
- 18.** Put a spin on your day! Biking is a great low-impact exercise that supports cardiovascular health and strengthens your bones and muscles. Try going on a scenic bike ride to a nearby park!
- 19.** Did you know you can ride your bike from New York City to Buffalo or Canada? Learn more about the Empire Trail at: <https://empiretrail.ny.gov/faqs>.
- 20.** Enjoy the fruits of your labor! Going fruit picking or berry picking can be a perfect July activity. Grab some friends, a basket, and find a local farm today!
- 21.** Camping is a good way to relax in the great outdoors while enjoying the benefits of fresh air, exercise, and spending time with family and friends. To find and reserve a campsite, visit the NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation website at: <https://parks.ny.gov/camping/>.
- 22.** Don't know what to do on this beautiful summer day? Grab a picnic blanket, some healthy snacks, and a lawn game and have a picnic in a field or park! Having a picnic can be a perfect way to relax and enjoy the weather.
- 23.** A warm breeze, the sand between your toes, and the sounds of the waves seems like a perfect summer day activity. Beat the heat with a trip to the beach today! Check out this article on 10 Amazing Beaches You'll Only Find in New York at: <https://www.iloveny.com/blog/post/amazing-beaches-youll-only-find-in-new-york/>.
- 24.** Did you know the state official bird is the Eastern Bluebird? Visit the New York State Birding Trail at: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/109900.html>. This State website highlights world-class birding opportunities and provides information on places anyone can go to find birds in beautiful settings.
- 25.** Tidy up this Tuesday. Grab a pair of gloves and a bag and pick up trash as you see it. Remember – leave no trace.
- 26.** Always be prepared. Whether it's a hike in the Adirondacks or a trip across the State to a historic site, it's important to plan. Plan your adventure today by checking out the National Park Service Trip Planning Guide for travel and health and safety recommendations at: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/healthandsafety/upload/Trip-Planning-Guide-Package-508c.pdf>.
- 27.** Make a list of your favorite things to do outside and choose one to do today!
- 28.** Bocce Ball is a leisurely and fun way to spend time outdoors. It's a nice way to unwind after work or while waiting for the grill to heat up.
- 29.** Yard work may feel like a chore. Instead of just raking, mowing, or weeding, put your earphones on and enjoy your favorite music.
- 30.** Is there a trail or park in New York State you've driven by and said, “One day I want to go there!” Make today that day!
- 31.** Today is the last day of July, but there is more summer to enjoy. What outdoor activities do you have planned for August?

Number of days completed