



rEAP the Benefits

State Employee Assistance Program 1-800-308-4934

Work with your moods

You can get in sync with your body and be more productive during the week by learning how natural sleep-wake cycles affect your energy level and emotions.

Here's how: Jot down how you're feeling every hour during the day. Use a five-point scale where "1" equals low energy and "5" equals feeling peppy. Keep score for a week, and when done, analyze your findings. Did you discover your "up" times and your "not so up" times?

You have a natural biological clock inside you that regulates everything from hormones to appetite. These circadian rhythms are found in almost every living thing.

Once you are familiar with your unique pattern, predicting the best time to work, study, and learn is easier. You'll know when you're likely to be energetic, positive, and upbeat so you can do more, think more clearly, and handle detailed tasks. Use this knowledge when planning important work projects and watch your productivity skyrocket!

Stepping out of your comfort zone

Success almost always requires stepping out of your comfort zone. The next time your anxieties start clawing at your willingness to explore a new workplace opportunity, remember that it's natural to feel unfit for a task at first. Expect to fumble a bit until you get your footing. Living up to your potential doesn't include firm instructions or a "paint-by-numbers" approach. False starts and dead ends happen. Don't be discouraged. Follow this rule: You know more than you think you do. The key is applying old experiences to new situations, getting feedback, and making adjustments until you excel. Then move on to the next challenge.

Veterans and Suicide Risk

Male veterans are twice as likely to die by suicide as male non-veterans and the suicide rate in the Army is at a 26 year high. The rate of suicide however is about the same for soldiers that were in combat as for soldiers who were not. Between 1980 and 2002 more soldiers died by suicide than the number who died as the result of hostile action, terrorist attacks, and homicides. Depression and PTSD are associated with suicide for veterans as it is for non-veterans. There are however unique risk factors often seen in the veteran population.

A partial list includes:

- Cleaning a weapon that they may have kept as a souvenir
- Visits to graveyards
- Obsession with news coverage of current military operations
- Wearing their uniform or part of it when not required
- Standing guard over the house
- Defensive speech (you wouldn't understand)

Depressive symptoms, increased substance use and indicators of PTSD are often apparent. There is help, The Veteran's Suicide Prevention Hotline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255) is available to families and loved ones of a veteran as well as to the veteran. If you've been deployed or know someone who has, you know that spending time in a war zone means being changed in some way. Some of these changes could be causing problems. There is a wellness resource site (Afterdeployment.org) that is available to service members, veterans and families.

For more information about suicide and resources in Tennessee, go to the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network's (TSPN) web site (www.tspn.org).

Secrets of small talk

Don't hate small talk or dread business social events. Great connections and increased productivity may result from your willingness to engage. The secret is improved "engagement skills." If deep down you'd rather be social, decide to feel "adventurous." This powers up sociability and boosts your enthusiasm, which can overcome the "I hate these events" feeling. To prepare, discard the dread and focus on having a few conversational topics at the ready before your arrival. Focus on three categories: 1) your location and immediate environment, 2) the purpose of the event, and 3) the event's anticipated outcome or result. Apply who, what, where, when, how, and why questions to these topics. Numerous icebreakers can be formulated using these topics and question-word starters. (The world's best conversationalists are newspaper reporters. Now you know why: This is how they think!) Key point: Break the ice with questions. After a conversation starts, then give your name. Offer a firm handshake first, and look the person in the eye. When introduced to others, repeat their names as you shake hands. Verbally affirm ("Uh-huh") or nod your head to show interest, and look for opportunities to volley the conversation. Don't monopolize. When you employ these skills, new acquaintances will remember you as someone who is personable. Being a good conversationalist isn't something you can easily put on a resume, but it is one skill that will boost your career dramatically.

Maximize productivity — take breaks

Treat your work like a marathon rather than a sprint and you'll get more done in less time. Start by warming up with a few easy tasks, and slowly increase your pace until you hit a comfortable rhythm. Take frequent, short breaks. If you don't, you will experience fatigue followed by vulnerability to distractions. This is your body's way of saying "Enough!" These distractions can morph into procrastination, which will usually keep you away from work longer than planned breaks would!

March into EAP Awareness Month 2009

The Employee Assistance Program is planning another year of activities in promotion of its services. Statewide activities include a personal enhancement seminar titled, "Take Charge of Your Life in 2009." In order to achieve success, there are several factors that we must take charge of in our lives. That includes effective financial planning, career skills, good mental and physical health. This seminar will teach you how to map your goals for success. It is being offered at several locations across the state. For more information and to register go online to www.tn.gov/finance/ins/eap.html. The featured contest this year is an original essay on "Taking Charge of Your Life." The one-page essay should focus on how you successfully achieved your goals in improving your work or personal life in 2008. The deadline for entries is March 31, 2009. Contact your EAP departmental representative or personnel office for guidelines. Information will also be available on the state web site.

During March EAP Awareness month, departments are asked to plan creative activities to acquaint employees with the services offered by the Employee Assistance Program. In past years, luncheons, skits, games, informational fairs, seminars, film showings, etc. were sponsored by EAP Month coordinators throughout the state. For further information regarding EAP Awareness Month, call 615-741-1925.

Partial list of EAP March seminars

3/2	Martin	3/10	Knoxville
3/3	Columbia	3/12	Chattanooga
3/3	Memphis	3/12	Nashville
3/4	Nashville	3/17	Cookeville
3/4	Jackson	3/18	Nashville
3/5	Johnson City	3/24	Nashville
3/5	Murfreesboro	3/26	Nashville
3/6	Nashville	3/31	Nashville
3/9	Nashville		