

# rEAP the Benefits

State Employee Assistance Program 1-800-308-4934

## Making positive choices in the midst of change

**The event + the choices you make = the outcome.**

A simplistic equation, but the truth is events don't make us do things. Tornado alerts don't make us run to the basement. It's our choice. In fact, a meteorologist may choose to run outside to get a better look at the twister.

**Learn where to take control and where to let go.**

Sometimes we try to exert our influence in situations in which we have no control. Other times we don't take a stand or make a choice when we have the ability to. Take control and make choices where you can, let go where you can't and take control of you.

**Resist "Victim Thinking"**

A victim at sea in a storm proclaims his or her choice, "I'm going to drown." A Survivor at sea in a storm says, "I don't know how, but somehow I'll survive." The Survivor has hope, but has left his or her fate in the hands of someone else. A Navigator at sea in a storm says, "I'm not in charge of the sea or the storm. But I am in charge of my boat. I know what I need to do." A Navigator has hope and a plan.

**Positive thinking will steer you in the right direction.**

Positive self-talk is a great way to sort through feelings and make honest statements about the change you are going through. It can also help break through disabling negativity and doubt to help you gain some control of the change you're going through. The following is an exercise that can help you become your own best navigator:

- When I find myself acting like a victim, I say to myself, "(your name), why are you acting like a victim?" I respond to myself, "I'm acting like a victim because there's no hope in this situation." I challenge myself, "Not even a possibility that something good can happen here?" "Oh, I suppose there is some chance something good will happen." "Good. You're a Survivor."

- When I find myself acting like a survivor, I coach myself, "(your name), why are you acting like a survivor?" "I'm acting like a survivor because I will live with it and there isn't one thing I can do about it." I challenge, "You can't think of one thing you can do in this situation?" "Oh, I suppose I can think of one thing I can do." "Great! Now you are acting like a true Navigator!"

By using the simple equation above when faced with change, you'll be in control and well on your way to navigating to calmer waters.

## July seminar: Persevering in Times of Change

The home and work environments are constantly dealing with change. While some people are able to successfully navigate changes, others have difficulty accepting and adapting. This seminar focuses on developing and utilizing individual resiliency skills in order to cope in a climate of change. Come and learn the following:

- Discover the general phases of change
- Describe common reactions to change
- Identify strategies to help you adjust to change and enhance your resiliency
- Learn of possible resources to help

### Schedule

7/12	Martin	7/21	Knoxville
7/13	Memphis	7/22	Murfreesboro
7/14	Jackson	7/27	Chattanooga
7/15	Nashville	7/28	Cookeville
7/16	Columbia	7/29	Nashville
7/20	Greenville		

Registering is easy. Just go to the EAP website at [www.tn.gov/finance/ins/eap.html](http://www.tn.gov/finance/ins/eap.html) But don't wait, the deadline to register is two days beforehand.

## What is your online presence saying about you?

With recent headlines of employers checking the online social networking sites before hiring someone, people being fired because of posts, etc. professionals need to think about what they are posting online. Social networking is a great way to reconnect with friends and colleagues, to promote activities and interests, as well as business contacts, but you need to be wise when using these tools. Always remember that nothing you say on the Internet is private. Here are seven guidelines to consider:

**1. Think before you post.** Things you put on your sites can and will come back to haunt you. Any pictures you show or updates you write are public. Even if your account has privacy settings activated, your information is never completely secure. If you are questioning whether your post is appropriate, ask yourself, would you get into trouble if your boss saw it? If the answer is “yes,” don’t post it!

**2. Make sure you have an online presence.** Sites are not just used by young professionals. You and/or your business need to stay up-to-date. Present and future clients, customers, business contacts and potential employers will look you up. If you don’t want others to know certain things about you, keep in mind when you post or update information.

**3. Remember that your online presence is part of your professional image.** The content on sites creates your online presence. Consider what image you want to portray. “Would I want to do business with this person?” Or “Would I hire this person?” If that doesn’t work, ask yourself if you would be comfortable with your family members knowing your posted information.

**4. Follow company guidelines.** Many companies have developed policies about employee social networking use during company time and even what company information is OK or not OK to share.

**5. Do not post negative comments about your employer.** If you have a gripe with your employer, talk to the appropriate person. Don’t post it online.

**6. Do not let social networking take over your life.** Some people become so involved in updating their virtual presence that they let their other responsibilities slide.

**7. Remember that phone calls and in-person visits are still an important part of doing business.** Sometimes picking up the phone or a face-to-face meeting is more productive and takes less time.

## My child is graduating and moving out. Now what?

Your child is graduating and moving out soon, you are experiencing mixed emotions about an empty nest syndrome. You are excited that your child is experiencing new activities, but you’re sad because you miss having him/her around. These emotions are very common. Here are a few tips to help out:

- **Try a new hobby.** Have you always been interested in a new hobby? Start taking lessons.
- **Travel.** Grab your significant other or best friend and visit a place that you have never been before. Now is the time to go.
- **Take a college course.** Maybe you have been thinking about going back to school to finish your degree or begin a new career path. If so, this is the perfect opportunity. Or, enroll in a couple of classes that seem interesting to you even if you don’t want a degree. It’s never too late to learn something new.
- **Redecorate your house.** When was the last time you spruced up your house? Invest some time and effort in remodeling it. This will not only give your house a fresh, new look, but it will also help you overcome your empty nest blues if you are prone to reminiscing about the past.
- **Improve your relationships.** Sometimes when a person has children, it can be hard to maintain relationships. However, without a child(ren) at home, you can focus on your other relationships. Use this opportunity to become reacquainted with your spouse, spend more time with your other kids or renew friendships.
- **Volunteer in your community.** Spend your extra time wisely by helping out the community. Volunteer at a local nonprofit whose focus is something that is important to you. Being involved in community activities will also help you meet new people with whom you can establish lasting friendships.
- **E-mail or call your child.** Instead of visiting your child on the weekends, keep in touch through telephone calls or email. This will allow you to keep in touch with what’s going on in your child’s life without seeming too pushy and allow you to gradually get used to not talking everyday.

A child moving out is hard on parents. However, it is important to keep in mind that you will eventually become accustomed to not having your child at home. Take this bittersweet opportunity to get involved in activities that you have always wanted to do and to develop an adult relationship with your child.