

CONNECTIONS INC

Employee & Family Solutions | Employee Assistance Programs

Vol. 21 #6

A Message from Matt

Zoom Fatigue

A new study from the University of Georgia found that zoom fatigue was real, suggesting the camera may be to blame, and not the meetings themselves. Social anxiety from an intense amount of close-up video; the stress of seeing oneself in real time; the lack of physical mobility; and the taxing cognitive load associated with picking up nonverbal signs virtually, can increase fatigue.



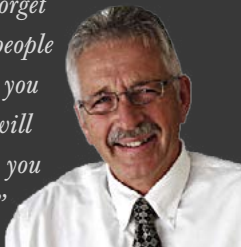
MATT VISSER, CEO
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So, what do they suggest? “As a team, take a step back and categorize the protocol for each type of meeting, put guardrails in place and experiment with them.”

[Study: Camera Use in Virtual Meetings Leads to Fatigue, Disengagement \(shrm.org\)](#)

“...people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

-Maya Angelou



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Obesity Rates are Soaring – What Can Be Done?

By: Amanda Ten Napel

Obesity is at the highest it has ever been in the United States. For the first time ever, rates are over 40%. The most recent CDC data was collected in 2017-2018. Data from more recently is showing continued significant rises in the obesity rates – enough that the researchers at Harvard and George Washington University believe that HALF of the U.S. population will be in the overweight category in 2030.

Obesity is a substantial risk factor for many common, chronic medical conditions, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and depression. These medical conditions are also very costly – estimations of the annual medical cost of obesity in the U.S. was \$147 billion in 2008. Employers, unfortunately, are often the ones to bear a large portion of these excess costs. Research has shown that a morbidly obese employee costs more than twice the amount of a healthy-weight employee per year in covered medical, sick day, short-term disability, and workers' compensation claims.

Employers have an important role in working towards a healthier workplace! Below are some ideas:

- Have a step challenge with a valuable prize!
- Allow healthy options in the breakroom, vending machines, etc.
- Walk during your one on one time with your employees.
- If there is a Wellness Program already, do your employees even know about it?
- Did you or your employees know that there are free resources in their Connections EAP account online?! There are articles there on healthy eating, recipes, women's, men's, and children's health, just to name a few.

Source: BenefitsPRO, CDC

Saying Goodbye:

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Andy and Matt at Connections EAP for the opportunity to learn and grow with them in this company! In January, I will be focusing solely on my dream of working in my private practice. I have learned so much and have enjoyed working with all our employers and our affiliates. Although I will be departing, you will be left in good hands with Donna Van Peurseem filling the Clinical Case Management role. Many of you already know Donna as Connections Leadership Development Trainer, but the next EAP newsletter will highlight Donna's experience in the world of mental health and education.

Thank you all! – Amanda Ten Napel

Connections Inc. Employee Assistance Program's mission is to provide holistic assistance products and services that support optimum productivity, team work and healthy community in the workplace.

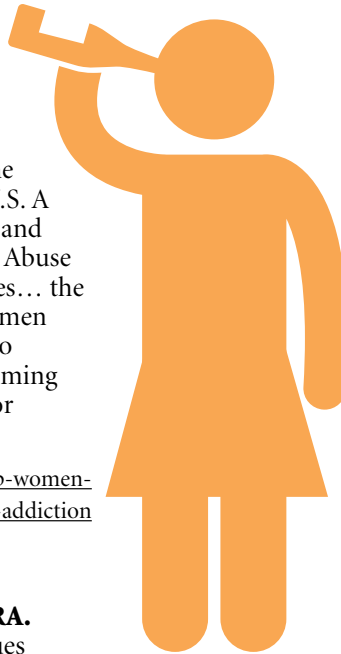
Connections Inc. Employee Assistance Program mission statement since 1988

NOTEWORTHY:

A GROWING PROBLEM FOR WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE: ALCOHOL ADDICTION

Women now drink as much as men and comprise the fastest-growing population of alcohol users in the U.S. A study of changes in drinking patterns between 2002 and 2013 sponsored by the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) found substantial increases... the frequency of alcohol use disorder (AUD) among women increased 83.7% in just 11 years! The same study also revealed that high-risk drinking — defined as consuming more than three drinks per day or seven in a week for women — has increased by about 58%.

<https://www.benefitnews.com/opinion/how-to-help-women-overcome-alcohol-addiction>



RETURNING TO WORK IN THE PANDEMIC ERA.

According to a survey regarding 'return to work' issues conducted with 32,500 workers in 19 countries:

- Only 10 % of the employees wish to return full-time to the office.
- 77% said they are ready to acquire new skills.
- 80% trust they can adapt to new technologies in the workplace
- Remote work will persist after the quarantine and 72% prefer a combination of remote and workplace hours. <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/ceo-agenda/ceosurvey/2021.html>

Not every employment setting will be responsive to the above. You can't cook a burger on Slack or manufacture tooled parts on Zoom. However, employee ENGAGEMENT will be critical in all work environments. Supervisors and managers must communicate in settings that are remote, face to face, and the combination of both. A good start – make a monthly plan with a checklist of the essential communications for each of my direct reports. Have I:

1. Communicated work priorities?
2. Made observations of achievement and success?
3. Demonstrated care & concern?
4. Discussed boundaries (teambuilding and productivity)?
5. Requested solutions/action plans?

Maynard's Corner

Confidentiality is a guarantee by Connections Inc. Information is never revealed to your employer or anyone else unless you have signed a document releasing the information.

Employees often express their concern of confidentiality and it may be the reason that they elect not to use this valuable benefit.

However,

confidentiality is the highest priority within Connections Inc.

Please go to www.connectionseap.com and select the orange tab **EAP VIDEO**. This five minute video explains the many **services offered**, at **no cost** to the employee and that all communication is **confidential**.



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NEXT ISSUE: SUPERVISOR, CAN YOU HEAR ME? (7 Things Fabulous Listeners Do Differently)



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