

CONNECTIONS INC

Employee & Family Solutions | Employee Assistance Programs

Vol. 24 #1

A Message from Matt

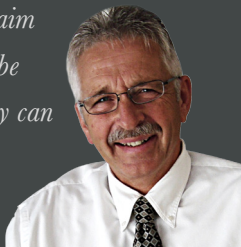
Be Intentional with Your Time

The holidays are over and for many, it's a long time until the next break or summer vacation. However, this could be a great time to take advantage of a lull in activities. Perhaps it's time to pick up that book you've been wanting to read. Maybe it's time for game night with the kids or maybe you just want to curl up in a blanket with your popcorn and hot chocolate for a movie. Whatever you do, choose to be intentional with your time!



MATT VISSER, CEO
matt@connectionseap.com

"Those who want truth can tolerate free speech, those who proclaim falsehood must be totalitarian: they can only survive by throttling discussion."
-Andy Rooney



ANDY VISSER
andy@connectionseap.com

Artificial Intelligence, Stress and Mental Health

The ongoing digitalization of information and processes has profound consequences for work in modern economies. It is, therefore, important to investigate if digital technologies increase employee stress at work (sometimes called 'technostress'.) An additional, but different topic is can technostress lead to impaired mental health.

Studying stress reactions is generally looks at heart rate variability, increases in the hormone cortisol, and blood pressure readings. The results of studies investigating these stress responses clearly show:

- Cortisol levels and the skin conductance of individuals increased after a computer system breakdown.
- Stress reactions increase when there is a systemic technology glitch which slows productivity.
- Workers have less stress reactions when access to emails is interrupted or scheduled in specific time slots, in comparison to those who had continuous access to their emails.

Digital technologies associated with specific psychosocial demands also increase the body's stress reactions. These psycho-social factors include higher productivity/workload demands, increased digital complexity, and conflicts between work and other life domains.

While psycho-biological stress reactions are common, it is a completely different question if this kind of technostress causes mental disorders such as depression. An increasing number of studies suggest that well-designed digital work may promote good health if it encourages and allows for (in-person & digital) informal contact, promotes problem-solving discussions, and also optimizes work organization, enables greater flexibility, and increases control/autonomy at work.

Digitalization of work seems to have both opportunities and risks for the ongoing mental health of employees. However, more longitudinal research is needed to speak more specifically to longer-term mental health outcomes.

written by: Andy Visser

Tamara Cagney, PHD, EAPA Institute, Norfolk VA October 6, 2022 (From lecture notes recorded by Andy Visser)

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

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: EFFECTIVE ANTI-SEXUAL-HARASSMENT PRACTICE & POLICY

Sexual Harassment: Effective Anti-Sexual-Harassment Practice & Policy

The Federal EEOC has issued updated workplace harassment guidance to prevent harassment and avoid liability. The new revisions emphasize employers must: Prove they exercised reasonable care to prevent harassment. Promptly correct harassment once notified of harassing instances. Key specifics include:

- Does the policy define precisely what conduct is prohibited.
- Supervisors/leadership staff must immediately respond to & report harassment.
- Employer written policy must outline “multiple” avenues for reporting harassment, thereby encouraging employees to contact someone other than their harassers
- The policy must be widely and effectively disseminated, the language used comprehensible to workers showing consideration for limited literacy skills, and recognize limited proficiency in English

The above is a summary of proposed guidance, which was published in the Federal Register on Oct. 2, 2023, and was open for public comment until Nov. 1, 2023 Final format will appear in 2024.

DEALING WITH OVERWHELM: STOP, BREATHE, WALK AWAY, REFOCUS

Overwhelm is the state in which anxiety, unhealthy stress, and burnout appear inevitable! A recent survey conducted with over 1200 female employees, revealed that a high percentage of women report experiencing increased levels of stress in 2022-2023. A majority of respondents cite workload as a key contributing factor. Author/researcher Megan Dalla-Camina suggests a practical stepwise personal management routine under the themes 1. Stop 2. Breathe 3. Walk Away and 4. Refocus. She also outlines when a call to the EAP to deal with ‘overwhelm’ is appropriate.

<https://www.megan-dalla-camina.com/blog/real-women/202303/how-to-deal-with-overwhelm>

ADDICTION: WHAT IS RECOVERY

William White brilliantly defined recovery from serious addiction. Particularly note:

1. The wide variety of individuals in recovery 2. The ongoing nature of recovery is a process more than a goal. 3. Recovery is more than attempting to achieve sobriety. 4. Recovery consists of measurable milestones. 5. Change objectives are both concrete and attitudinal.

White’s definition follows:

“Recovery is the experience (a process and a sustained status) through which individuals, families, and communities impacted by severe alcohol and other drug (AOD) problems utilize

internal and external resources to voluntarily resolve these problems, heal the wounds inflicted by AOD-related problems, actively manage their continued vulnerability to such problems, and develop a healthy, productive, and meaningful life.”

<https://www.megan-dalla-camina.com/blog/real-women/202303/how-to-deal-with-overwhelm>

NEXT ISSUE: Appreciating Your People



925 Westview Drive, Rock Valley, Iowa 51247 | Call (712) 476-2889 or 800-779-6125 | FAX (712) 476-2464

www.connectionseap.com | E-mail at: info@connectionseap.com

Maynard's Corner

A resource that I use quite often is found at www.connectionseap.com.

Your employer has provided you with a username and password. The “Login” is found at the upper right corner of the page. After logging in, go to Resources and then select the Work/Life Services tab.

There you will find topics: Parenting, Aging, Balancing, Thriving, Working, Living, and more.

This is a resource that provides dependable and reliable information that you can trust.

This valuable resource is available 24/7 at no cost to you.

After all, we are here to help!



MAYNARD WELLIK
maynard@connectionseap.com
Direct Phone: (515)890-0663