

CONNECTIONS INC

Employee & Family Solutions | Employee Assistance Programs

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A Message from Matt

Be Present

As the school year ends and summer begins, take advantage of the extra time (and daylight) with your family.

Make a conscious effort to be fully present. If you're taking time off work, make it count and turn off your phone or better yet, leave it at home.

Summer provides

a great opportunity to create lifelong memories for you and your family, so hit the lake, take a hike, or go for a bike ride. Whatever you do, make it count!



MATT VISSER, CEO
matt@connectionseap.com

"Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less."

-CS Lewis



ANDY VISSER
andy@connectionseap.com

ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOR UNDERMINES TEAMWORK AND PRODUCTIVITY

Our colleagues in Europe recently released significant data on the effects of alcohol in the workplace. Dr Caroline Wood, Head of Behavioral Insights and Research at Bupa Global, a health insurance conglomerate based in the United Kingdom (UK) says, "This (mood altering chemical consumption) represents a significant risk for any business. Alcohol and drugs impair decision-making and reaction times and increase the risk of both absenteeism and presenteeism." Included in the information her group released is the following data:

- 40% of accidents in the workplace involve alcohol.
- 42% of employees have gone to work with a hangover or are still under the influence of alcohol/drugs.
- Apart from more obvious accidents, substance misuse also undermines productivity and the output of inferior goods and services.
- Surveys indicate that performance is 39% less effective than when not impaired by chemicals.

Certain factors appear to increase the risk of chemical impairment at work worldwide. A meta-analysis of 61 studies involving more than 333,000 employees found that employees are more likely to drink at levels which threaten their health if they:

- Work more than 55 hours a week.
- Travel away from home for work.
- Remote work.
- Have high scores on measurements of personal stress experienced on the job.

Great Britain's 'Health and Safety at Work Act' appears to require more specific protocol for assessing chemical impairment at work. The North American workplace has more flexibility in the approach employers can use to assess 'chemical impairment risk. However, in all settings the reality is that impairment affects safety, team spirit and productivity. Connections Inc. EAP encourages workplace leadership teams to pro-act! Know your workplace policies related to suspected impairment. Consult with the EAP, leadership teams and/or HR staff any time chemical impairment is known or suspected.

written by Andy Visser

<https://www.ias.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Alcohol-in-the-workplace.pdf> <https://www.bupa.co.uk/business/health-horizons/workplace-addiction>

https://www.bma.org.uk/media/1067/bma_alcohol-and-drugs-in-the-workplace- oct_2019.pdf

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

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AGAIN

Gallup work initiated by Tom Rath and Donald O. Clifton found that people who receive positive feedback at work displayed positive behaviors such as:

- Heightened productivity.
- Positive toward colleagues.
- Likelihood of staying.
- Higher satisfaction scores from customers.
- Better safety, fewer accidents on the job.

Filling someone's 'bucket' with positives requires two critical features: the feedback must be specific to the individual & appropriate in the work environment. Generic one-size-fits-all feedback often backfires. Also, there is a magic positive/negative ratio: the workplace leader must provide believable positive feedback 3 times to every 1 occasion of negative communication. Interestingly, this research has its roots in marriage studies where the ratio is 5 positives to 1 negative for marriage to endure.

<https://journeytoleadershipblog.com/2017/08/26/how-full-is-your-bucket-by-tom-rath-and-donald-o-clifton/>

STRESSED OUT? COMPLETE THE STRESS CYCLE

The stress cycle is our body's response to a stressful event, which could be being chased by a vicious dog, an upcoming exam, or a difficult conversation. The three stress cycle stages? 1. Perceiving the threat. 2. The fight-or-flight response. 3. Relief.

Remaining in stage 2 (the flight-or-flight response), leads to chronic stress and high cortisol hormone levels damaging the brain. Here one doesn't think clearly, is easily distracted by temporary pleasure by eating junk food, drinking alcohol, scrolling through social media, etc. All NOT HELPFUL for a solution. In the brain, chronic high cortisol impairs a person's memory and the capacity to think and concentrate. At Stage 3 a solution is found in these five types of activities...

1. **Exercise** – is its own complete stress cycle where one gets a short-term spike in cortisol, followed by a healthy reduction in cortisol and adrenaline.
2. **Cognitive activities** such as journaling, drawing or writing down what is worrisome promotes solutions. In clinical settings this is usually called cognitive behavior therapy.
3. **Getting creative** – Fully engage in an activity you enjoy. Art, crafts, gardening, cooking, doing a puzzle, juggling, music, theatre, or dancing.
4. **Getting social** with someone else, laughter, physical affection with a person or pet can increase oxytocin and feelings of connection and safety.
5. **Self-soothing** breathing exercises, meditation and sometimes a good cry will reduce the stress hormone cortisol while increasing relaxing hormones.

[Stuck in fight-or-flight mode? 5 ways to complete the 'stress cycle' and avoid burnout or depression \(theconversation.com\)](#)

Maynard's Corner

Connections Inc. Employee Assistance Program has helped many covered employees of many employers. I have had the pleasure of working in accounting, insurance, and employee benefits, all of which help people.

However; the most helpful benefit available is Connections Inc. EAP.

We all have issues in life that families, working, and living bring us, so it's good to know that Connections Inc. EAP is available, confidential, and at no cost.

So, feel free to pick up the phone and call 800-779-6125. We are here to help!



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

NEXT ISSUE: Support Local Causes and Build Morale

CONNECTIONS INC