



CONNECT WITH EASE

Employee Assistance Service for Education



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Mental Health Month

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EASE CAN HELP DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

CONNECT WITH EASE:

(800) 882-1341

**Free confidential professional help for
district employees and family members:**

Family troubles. Emotional distress.

Job stress.

Anxiety. Drug/alcohol use. Grief. Loss.

Life transition issues.

Professional counselors are ready to help.
Call the EASE Hotline for 24/7 assistance.

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Mental health is essential to everyone's overall health and well-being. So much of what we do physically impacts us mentally- it is important to pay attention to both your physical health and your mental health, which can help you achieve overall wellness and set you on a path to healing and recovery. A healthy lifestyle can help to prevent the onset or worsening of mental health conditions, as well as chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. It can also help people recover from these conditions.

There are things you can do that may help. Finding a reason to laugh, going for a walk with a friend, meditating, playing with a pet, or simply getting extra sleep can go a long way in making you both physically and mentally healthy. The company of animals - whether as pets or service animals— can have a profound impact on a person's quality of life and ability to recover from illnesses. A pet can be a source of comfort and can help us to live mentally healthier lives. And whether you go to church, meditate daily, or simply find time to enjoy that cup of tea each morning while checking in with yourself - it can be important to connect with your spiritual side in order to find that mind-body connection.

EASE wants everyone to know...

that living a healthy lifestyle may not be easy but can be achieved by gradually making small changes and building on those successes. Finding the balance between work and play, the ups and downs of life, physical health and mental health, can help you on the path towards focusing both!



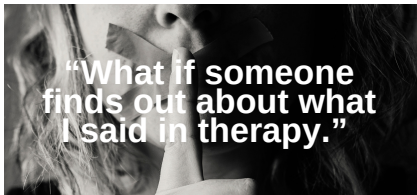
COMMON CONCERNS WHEN SEEKING THERAPY

By EASE Therapist: Terry Alcantar-Nelson, LCSW
www.breatheintherapy.com

As we go into the last week of Mental Health Awareness Month, it's a great time to talk about what prevents employees from seeking therapy. There tends to be a few commonly mentioned reasons for not seeking help when it's needed.



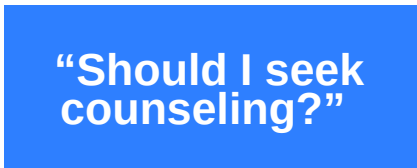
This is a valid fear. Maybe it's been the case that you have sought out the ear of a friend when going through a hard time in your life, only to have that person make an observation or comment that feels judgmental, or worst your relationship changes because of it. People have opinions. It's natural to want to share those opinions with a friend. This is how the therapeutic relationship is so different than any other relationship that you may have. Therapists are actually trained to be completely neutral. Staying neutral is key to the therapeutic process. Therapists are trained to see the whole person and see behaviors as an expression of needs. Therapists remain neutral and practice unconditional positive regard, which means there is no judgement regardless of what is shared. It's what we do!



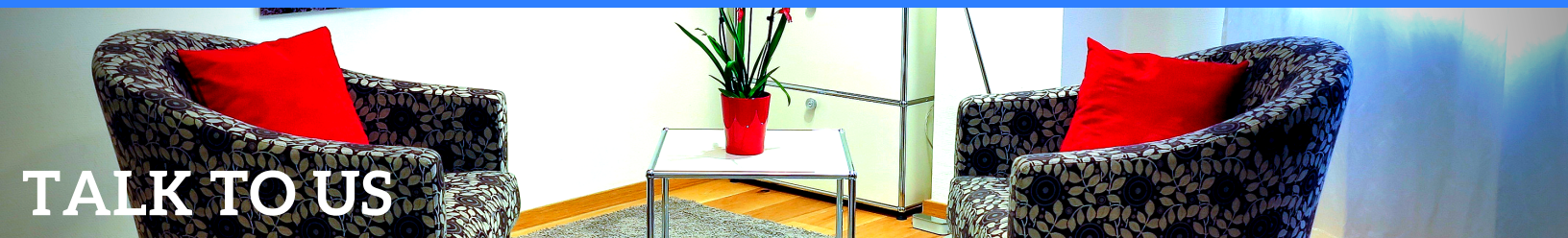
Again, the very specific professional and ethical guidelines actually make it against the law for a therapist to share anything the client has shared in sessions (unless there is specific written consent). This mandate, called Confidentiality allows us to assure clients that clients feel that everything they share stays within the confines of the therapist-client relationship. It allows for the knowledge that the client's information and experiences will be completely protected from judgement, unwanted exposure, and criticism. The vulnerability required to the work of exploring feelings and problems requires that therapists maintain confidentiality always.



You've taken a major step towards taking care of yourself and now you have decided that the therapist is not a good fit for you. When seeking mental health services, you have the right to ask for a change in provider when you feel that the therapist may not be right for a variety of reasons. This reason could be as simple as, "I'm just not clicking with them" or "I don't feel that they understand my situation". In fact, a 2001 study found that feeling an alliance or connection with one's therapist was actually more important than the actual techniques used in the course of therapy. The relationship is what matters... and if it doesn't feel like a good working relationship, you can ask for a change in therapist. As the client, you need to feel at ease and connected in order to do the work and feel good about it. If you find yourself in this situation, don't give up! Find a therapist that feels like a good match for you.



Seeking counseling for the first time can be anxiety provoking. It is well worth the work involved to find someone with whom you feel connected, you know will listen without judgement, and be able to offer a neutral viewpoint, all the while maintaining confidentiality. Taking care of your mental health needs is a way of taking care of yourself when life seems too stressful and overwhelming. Here at EASE, we hope to be able to provide you with some relief and support.



TALK TO US

EASE has counselors if you want to talk.
(800) 882-1341

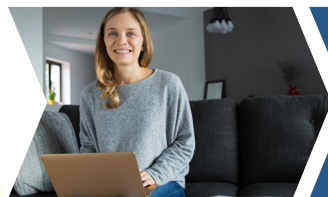


WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work allows you to provide for yourself and your family while also serving a purpose in the community, but when it takes over your life, it can negatively affect your health.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE IS IMPORTANT

Of adults employed full time in the U.S., nearly 40% reported working at least 50 hours per week, and 18% work 60 hours or more.¹



People who feel they have good work-life balance are more satisfied with their job and their life, and experience fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety.²

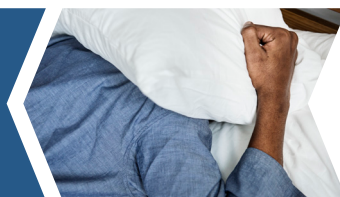
WHAT WE'VE LEARNED FROM MHA'S WORK HEALTH SURVEY™

More than half of people who responded to MHA's Work Health Survey say that they do unhealthy things (e.g. drinking, drug use, lashing out at others) to cope with workplace stress.



Over 75% of people are afraid of getting punished for taking a day off to attend to their mental health.

More than two-thirds of people have had their sleep negatively affected by workplace issues.

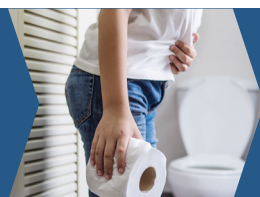


People who work in manufacturing, retail, and food/beverage jobs were most likely to report that work stress "Always or Often" impacted their personal relationships.

HEALTH SUFFERS WHEN WORK TAKES OVER YOUR LIFE



The mental and physical health impacts of workplace burnout and stress are estimated to cost as much as \$190 billion per year (\$6,025 per second) in healthcare spending in the U.S.⁴



Poor work-life balance increases your risk for health conditions like sleep problems, digestive disorders, and mental health problems. This is especially true for people who work longer shifts or on nights and weekends.⁵



Working overtime increases the likelihood of having symptoms of depression, especially in men.⁶

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND CAREGIVERS

For people with chronic illnesses, balancing the demands of work while also caring for your health can be difficult, but laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family Medical Leave Act are designed to protect the jobs of people with disabilities or medical concerns. Talk to your HR representative and your boss about your health care coverage and what accommodations can be made to help you manage – such as working from home or shifting your hours – so that you are better able to tend to your health.



In studies of people who had been diagnosed with cancer, those who believed that their employers would be accommodating to their treatment were more likely to return to work.⁷



A survey of people with diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis found that self-acceptance, understanding and support from coworkers and management, adaptations to workflow and work environment, and adequate benefits were among some of the most important factors when it came to their ability to keep on working.⁸



Research about caregivers is unclear as to whether paid employment has more of a positive or negative impact on the caregiver's well-being. However, one study found that among caregivers who work, caregiving responsibilities caused women to miss work twice as often as men.⁹

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH #4MIND4BODY

Mental Health America has created a space where people can learn from each other about what they do to stay well.

Tell us how you balance your personal and professional life by posting with #4mind4body.






We'll collect your Twitter and Instagram posts at mentalhealthamerica.net/4mind4body. You can also post directly and anonymously to the site if you would like.

ARE YOU STRUGGLING?

If you are taking steps to care for your mind, body, and soul but still feel like you are struggling with your mental health, visit www.mhascreening.org to check your symptoms. It's free, confidential, and anonymous. Once you have your results, MHA will give you information and help you find tools and resources to feel better.

For a complete list of sources, please visit bit.ly/4mind4bodyWork.



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