

Tapping Into Your State Library Resources

By Nicole Merriman Head, Research and Catalog Services, State Library of Ohio



The State Library was one of the first state agencies created, it was established in 1817 to serve the information and research needs of state government. As Ohio grew, so did the responsibilities of the agency, including the development of library services throughout Ohio. The current vision of the State Library of Ohio is "A smarter Ohio where every Ohioan can access the necessary resources to be engaged citizens, excel at their jobs, participate in the workforce, and pursue their passions and interests."

As part of this vision, we have created some resources that are available to state employees on the subject of mental health. These resources include books, e-books, electronic journals and databases. Keep in mind, to access or borrow these resources requires a library card from the State Library of Ohio, which can be obtained by going to <http://library.ohio.gov/PCS/GetACard>. State employees have the additional bonus of accessing the listed electronic resources remotely, from their offices or homes. Also, print books can be sent to the offices of state employees via inter-departmental mail.

If you have a question, please contact our Research Services department by calling (614) 644-7051, emailing refhelp@library.ohio.gov, texting 'statelib' to 6-6746 or by using the Ask-A-Librarian chat link on our home page at <http://library.ohio.gov>.



Avoiding Employee Workplace Burnout

What is employee workplace burnout? Employee workplace burnout can happen when the economy is tight and staff is expected to "do more with less." It happens when everyone has more than enough work on their plates and the resources are barely sufficient to manage. While this may cause sporadic stress during high-pressure periods at work, workplace burnout is a prolonged state of emotional disengagement from the job that can include a loss of motivation as well as additional stress. The scary aspect of employee workplace burnout is that it generally happens to the most productive employees. They trudge along without complaining, burning both ends of the candle until they are totally exhausted and out of steam.

In order to avoid or prevent employee burnout in the workplace, supervisors and managers first must be able to recognize the signs. Here are some tips that may assist supervisors/managers if they are seeing signs of employee workplace burnout:

- ▼ Meet with employees individually to show your support. Talk to each one candidly about his/her perception of workplace morale, workload and his/her individual performance. Ask for any thoughts, ideas, suggestions or insights to boost production and staff attitudes.
- ▼ Allow employees to talk and joke with each other while on the clock, as long as their work is getting done. This will help build relationships, fostering a sense of unity and teamwork. It also helps staff vent and de-stress.

*Are you at your
breaking point?
Contact the EAP
today for
confidential assistance.
800-221-6327*

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Coping with Depression in a Family Member

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Depression can be a serious illness that afflicts anyone regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity or social status. Depression in an individual affects everyone in the family. Initially the depressed person may have symptoms (e.g., intense sadness, sleeping and concentration problems, guilt, increased or decreased appetite, loss of energy) that are confusing to the rest of the family. Sometimes a depressed person denies having the symptoms, which makes it harder for others to be helpful and understanding. If someone in your family suffers from depression, it is important for you to understand how it can affect you and others in the family.

Helpful Strategies

- ▼ Learn all you can about depression. Unfortunately, there is still a stigma attached to being depressed. Depression is a condition that is caused by many factors - stress, suffering a major loss such as a job or a loved one can trigger a depressive episode. There is also a genetic component to depression, as there is with many medical illnesses. In some cases it may be appropriate to talk to your family member's doctor about depression.
- ▼ Accept that you may have mixed feelings. When someone is depressed it affects the entire family. There may be a change in the household routines. You may be asked to take on more responsibility and be involved in the treatment process. This can be frustrating. This frustration can sometime turn into anger if you are having a hard time communicating with the person who is depressed. These feelings are a normal part of the adjustment process. It is important that you be able to both accept and express your own feelings when someone else is depressed. This may be particularly hard for children who will have a hard time understanding the changes in their parent's behavior.
- ▼ Encourage your family member to take their medications as prescribed and to stick with treatment and talk things through with their therapist. If your family member is taking medication for depression, learn as much as you can about the medicine, including how much and how often the medicine should be taken. Most medication for depression takes a while to work. Unfortunately, some medicines have side effects that lead patients to stop taking them. Most physicians and therapists who treat depression encourage family involvement in the treatment of depression. It may be helpful to attend a session in order to understand the treatment process and learn what you can do to be helpful and still manage your own feelings.

If your family member is not in treatment, encourage them to seek professional help. It is common for

someone who is depressed to refuse to get help. Sometimes it takes a crisis before a person will accept help. The best thing you can do is to encourage the person to get help. If they continue to refuse to get help do not give up.

Consider attending support groups in your community or seeing a trained clinician. Find out what you can do to take care of yourself and to get your family member in to treatment.

Learn the warning signs of suicide: Not everyone with depression becomes suicidal. However, people who are struggling with an episode of major depression sometimes experience despair and have suicidal thoughts and feelings. Take suicide threats seriously. If you are worried about your family member, call their therapist or doctor immediately or support them in making the call. If urgent action is needed, call 911 or take them to the emergency room. Let your family member know that they are important to you and assure them that help is available. Seek help from family and friends.

You can also call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255).



Are you depressed?

If you identify with several of the following signs and symptoms, and they just won't go away, you may be suffering from clinical depression:

- ▼ you can't sleep or you sleep too much
- ▼ you can't concentrate or find that previously easy tasks are now difficult
- ▼ you feel hopeless and helpless
- ▼ you can't control your negative thoughts, no matter how much you try
- ▼ you have lost your appetite or you can't stop eating
- ▼ you are much more irritable, short-tempered, or aggressive than usual
- ▼ you're consuming more alcohol than normal or engaging in other reckless behavior
- ▼ you have thoughts that life is not worth living (Seek help immediately if this is the case)

Take a Deep Breath... *And Relax*

When you are under stress, your muscles tense and your breathing becomes shallow and rapid. One of the simplest (and best) ways to stop this stress response is to breathe deeply and slowly. It sounds simple, and it is. Most of us, however, do not breathe deeply under normal circumstances, so it may help to review the mechanics of deep breathing and how it helps us to relax.

Breathing Under Stress

When prehistoric humans were in danger of attack, their muscles tensed and their breathing became rapid and shallow, because they were preparing to run or fight. The high level of tension was a means of preparing the body for optimum performance. Today, the causes of our "stress" are different, but our stress response is the same. However, since we are not running or fighting, our tension has no release and our stress response builds. One way to counteract the stress response is to learn how to breathe deeply and slowly—the opposite of how we breathe when under stress.

How Deep Breathing Works

Deep breathing is not always natural for adults. Most adults breathe from the chest, this is shallower breathing, so less oxygen is taken in with each breath. As a result, the blood is forced to move through the system quickly so that enough oxygen gets to the brain and organs. Higher blood pressure results from this type of breathing.

Deep breathing can reverse these effects. Take some time to practice this kind of breathing each day, especially when you are under stress. You can be sitting, standing, or lying down.

Begin by breathing in through your nostrils. Count to five, silently saying the word "in," and let your lower abdomen fill with air. Then count to five, silently saying the word "out," as you let the air escape through pursed lips. Do this exercise for two or more minutes. With practice, you will be able to increase your relaxation if you image breathing in ocean air, fresh scent of flowers or forest air.

Effects of Deep Breathing

By helping you let go of tension, deep breathing can relieve headaches, backaches, stomachaches, and sleeplessness. It releases the body's own painkillers called endorphins, into the system. It allows blood pressure to return to normal, which is good for your heart. It also allows pent up emotions to come to the surface, so you realize emotional health benefits from deep breathing, too. Use deep breathing anytime, anywhere. It is a great technique for relieving stress. *Source: Parley International*



Breathing Tips:

1. Slowly breathe in through your nostrils, imagining a peaceful scene.
2. Slowly exhale through pursed lips, and then begin the sequence again.

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- ▼ Engage or invite your staff for a lunchtime walk as a team.
- ▼ Encourage your staff to attend training and advancement opportunities to break the cycle. If employees feel as though they are in a dead-end job or there is no time to focus on their development, they are much more likely to suffer from burnout. Make your staff aware that you support professional development if they have an interest.
- ▼ Provide healthful snacks for your staff to grab from time-to-time. For example, stock a bowl of fresh fruit, stash bottles of juice and water nearby, and keep single serving size bags of pretzels in a basket on a table in your office area. Little touches such as this can help make your employees feel cared for and appreciated.
- ▼ If one employee is saddled with the bulk of the work, find a way to redistribute the responsibilities more evenly, to be rotated amongst other employees within your team.
- ▼ Encourage employees who frequently work through breaks and lunch time to step away from their work and take a breather.
- ▼ Remember, showing a little concern for employees, supporting them and acknowledging when they are in difficult positions can alleviate some of the stress that can lead to employee workplace burnout.

Developing Healthy Eating Habits



Although there are many different views concerning diet and nutrition, there is agreement that total physical and emotional health is very much influenced by our diets and eating habits. Nutritionists also generally agree with the following recommendations of the U.S. Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs.

Helpful Strategies

- ▼ Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables and whole grains.
- ▼ Decrease consumption of refined and other processed sugars and foods high in such sugars.
- ▼ Experts agree that no more than 30 percent of total calories should come from fat. Decrease consumption of foods high in total fat, and partially replace saturated fats, whether obtained from animal or vegetable sources, with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.
- ▼ Decrease consumption of animal fat, and choose meats, poultry and fish that are low in fat.
- ▼ Except for young children, substitute low-fat and nonfat milk for whole milk, and low-fat dairy products for high-fat dairy products.

- ▼ Decrease consumption of butterfat, eggs, and other high cholesterol sources. Some consideration should be given to easing the cholesterol goal for pre-menopausal women, young children, and the elderly in order to obtain the nutritional benefits of eggs in the diet.
- ▼ Decrease consumption of salt and foods high in salt content.

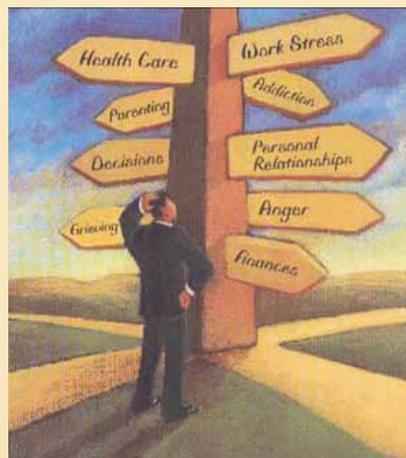
Additional Considerations

- ▼ Overeating can be as harmful as insufficient nutrition.
- ▼ Obesity, in addition to causing physical problems, has implications for mental and emotional health - e.g., response to emotional tension, substitute gratification in intolerable situations, specific symptoms of emotional illness such as depression or a type of addiction, etc.
- ▼ Compulsive eating - the binger (stress), the unsatisfied eater (unfulfilled), the night eater (insomnia) are eating habits detrimental to health.
- ▼ Distribution of food intake is important and should be adapted to one's lifestyle and schedule. Usually it is best to eat a large or moderate breakfast that contains a good mixture of protein and carbohydrates. For lunch, you should eat a proper meal - not just a snack - and for dinner, a relatively light, easily digested meal.
- ▼ Many people eat food quickly without really tasting it. Savoring the food by chewing it slowly rather than shoveling, gulping, and gorging not only adds to the enjoyment, but also is healthier.
- ▼ Expand your eating time. Whenever possible, eat in a relaxed atmosphere or environment. The fast food phenomenon of our day is physically and psychologically detrimental if one eats this way habitually.
- ▼ Many people eat on the run and at irregular times. It is best to have regular meal times, moderate amounts of food, and companions to share conversation.

By Liveandworkwell.com



Your employee assistance program offers confidential help for personal problems and concerns. Concerned about a troubled family member who won't get help? Feel tired and exhausted, but don't know if it's burnout, loss of motivation, depression, or all three? Late for work too often? Has use of alcohol or drugs created a crisis you are facing right now? The bottom line: Never wonder if your concern is suitable for the EAP. So if you've been putting off taking action to solve a serious issue that is weighing on you, give the EAP a try today.



Having problems with your emotional eating habits? Contact the OEAP today for confidential assistance. 800-221-6327

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