March 2015

FrontLine Employee

Wellness, Productivity, and You!

Employee Assistance Program, 1638 Elwell Street, BLDG 6236 Fort Carson, CO 80913 719-526-2196

Be an "Active Listener" to Improve Relationships

"Active listening" is a critical skill for professional counselors. It's used to help clients feel they are being truly heard. The term "active listening" actually originated in business literature to help managers communicate more effectively. You can benefit from these skills too. Here's how: 1) When listening to another person, show your interest by changing your emotions appropriately to react to the speaker's point, concern, or idea. Emotionally participate in the story. 2) React to any good news like it is part of your own life. 3) When a story gets lengthy or complicated, pause to paraphrase what you've heard in your own words to show interest. Retention is the highest form of flattery in conversation, so demonstrating recall rather than mindless listening always makes a huge impact.

Library on the Dangers of Using Marijuana

If you're a concerned parent looking for information on the dangers of marijuana, you'll find a list of 150 studies at www.populartechnology.net (search "marijuana"). 2014 was a banner year in terms of awareness about some of the hazards of using marijuana, such as hospitalizations from ingesting pot-laced brownies to suicides, and there were even some murder investigations focused on people who had smoked pot (ABC News, April 25, 2014). Pot is getting stronger. In February, a new form of super-pot called "skunk" hit the news. UK authorities say that its users have a dramatic increase in the likelihood of psychosis after using it.

Nutrition Awareness Information

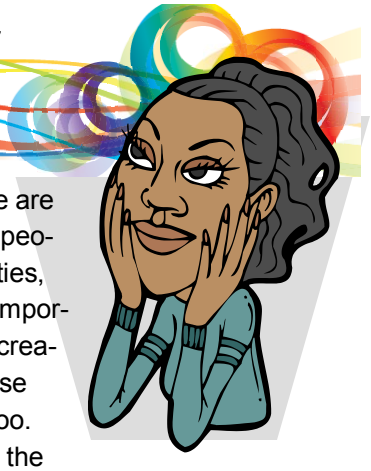
In honor of Nutrition Awareness Month, download a library of nutrition tip sheets at www.eatrightPRO.org (search "nutrition tips and handouts"). Discover 25 healthy snacks for kids, how to eat healthy on the run, how to create healthful nutrition habits in your child, "eating right" tips for older adults, how to examine food labels on the foods you buy, how to create a healthy "power breakfast," how to eat nutritionally on a budget, 20 ways to enjoy more fruits and vegetables, and more.

The Mindfulness Movement

Have you seen the term "mindfulness" online, off-line, and in the health news? Mindfulness is an approach to well-being and health that entails learning how to pay attention in the moment and gain improved self-awareness using techniques like slow breathing, focused concentration, and meditation to relax, gain control over anxiety and depression, deal with fears, reduce stress and pain, and improve concentration. Mindfulness helps you feel centered, helps you slow down, makes you less reactive to the stresses of life, and helps you be more productive. Mindfulness is gaining mainstream acceptance in medical school training to help professionals understand its use in supporting the treatment of many medical conditions. For more information, check out the just-released book *Mindfulness for Dummies*.

Information in *FrontLine Employee* is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health or legal professional. For further help, questions, or referral to community resources for specific problems or personal concerns, contact a qualified professional. Add "http://" to source links to follow. Link titles are always case sensitive.

Improving Your Creativity

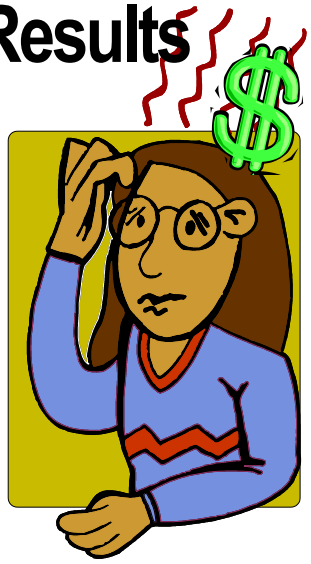


Do you think creative people are "born that way"? Creative people may have natural abilities, but they have something even more important—habits and beliefs that support creative thought. If you adopt a few of these habits, you will boost your creativity too. Creative people usually do or believe the following: 1) Challenge accepted ways of doing things. 2) Have self-awareness for their preconceptions (biases and ways of viewing problems) and challenge them. 3) When faced with a problem, see it as a challenge, not a roadblock. 4) Are not ashamed, embarrassed, or hesitant about offering up a wild idea or solution to the group. 5) Believe in their ability to be unconventional and think "outside the box." 6) Are always willing to listen to someone else's wild idea while suspending disbelief. 7) Set aside time to think creatively and ponder solutions. 8) Believe that if people want something bad enough, they will find the solution. 9) Are not afraid to try new things. Experimenting with and adopting these habits will lead you to more frequent and creative ideas. You will wake up with new solutions or having sudden insights out of blue. You will find more excitement in the average or ordinary day, and don't be surprised if it's you who imagines the magnificent solution to a big problem that stumps others.

Vitamin D Health Awareness

Ask your doctor about vitamin D, and whether you need more of it. Most people think of vitamin D as the "bone vitamin," but there's a lot more to it. Some medical experts believe vitamin D is more like a hormone than a vitamin. Only recently has the big news emerged: Vitamin D has a role in helping prevent many serious diseases and illnesses. The discovery of vitamin D's benefits was a top-ten medical breakthrough in 2007. Sunlight is our primary source of vitamin D; however, the risk of skin cancer from too much sun has given sunlight an overly bad rap. Over one billion people have inadequate amounts of vitamin D, and 64 percent of North Americans are believed to be at risk for numerous diseases from having too little vitamin D. Learn more "at" the University of San Diego by visiting www.ucsd.tv (search "sunlight and your health").

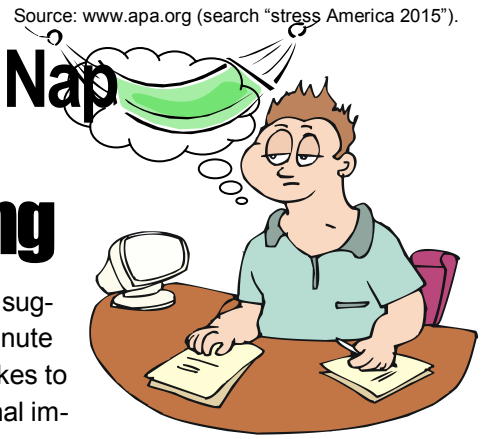
Stress in America Survey 2015 Results



Every year since 2007, the American Psychological Association has commissioned a "Stress in America Survey." And, just like each of the previous years, money stress tops the list in 2015. Seventy-two percent of Americans say they worry about money at least some of the time, and 22% say they worry about money much of the time. Emotional support is what most people report as helping them cope best with money stress—specifically, having someone they can turn to, such as family members and friends. If you're stressed about money, support is crucial because it has positive ripple effects. For example, those who had emotional support were likely to worry less, participate in fewer sedentary and unhealthy coping behaviors, make more life changes, and be less likely to have their stress levels become worse. Get guidance and help from a counselor for how to find emotional support if you are suffering from money stress problems—even if there appear to be no immediate answers to increasing your income.

Source: www.apa.org (search "stress America 2015").

When a Nap Comes Knocking



New research suggests a 30-minute nap is all it takes to reverse the hormonal impact of a night of poor sleep. This is the first study that found napping could "restore biomarkers of neuroendocrine and immune health to normal levels." Lack of sleep is recognized as a public health problem. Insufficient sleep can contribute to reduced productivity as well as increased vehicle and industrial accidents, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. People who sleep too little are more likely to develop chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and depression. The findings support the development of practical strategies for addressing chronically sleep-deprived employees. Source: www.endocrine.org (search "napping").