

EAP

Employee Assistance Program

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Facing Loss During the Holiday Season

Grief often intensifies during the holiday season and new year, and the dread that comes with anticipating the struggle can create strain. Those who have faced grief offer some tips. Acknowledge that this time of year is different and hard. Ironically, this self-awareness makes practicing other tips easier. Avoid “thought blocking,” stuffing feelings, and isolation. Make a few choices about traditions. Keep ones that are meaningful, modify others, eliminate some, and start new ones. Again, it’s okay. What works for you is what works for you. Where will you physically be during the holidays? Trust your gut. If it feels easier to manage grief in a new environment, consider this choice. Don’t apologize for how you grieve or for acting on what feels right to you. Engaging with others, especially loved ones, along with the positive distraction socializing generates, is a healthy coping strategy. So, reach out for support, consciously nurture yourself, don’t resist participating in an activity that brings you joy, and let others know what your needs are at this time. If you are not experiencing grief, do you know someone who is? Reaching out to offer companionship and support is the most priceless form of caring. Explore more here. <https://parade.com/1308668/lisamulcahy/coping-with-grief-holidays/>

Make Work-Life Balance Second Nature

Do you crave work-life balance only when overwhelmed by stress? Put work-life balance on “autopilot.” 1) Do tiring or intense work tasks during the time of day you feel the most energetic and “up.” 2) Passionately engage in a goal, hobby, pastime, or sport outside of work—something magnificent that “calls your attention.” Make it something you can’t wait to get to, either before work or after. 3) Write down realistic goals for your work each day. (Without a daily plan, you won’t easily find an end to your day.) 4) Examine what underlies imbalance. For example, do you believe overwork is noticed and will eventually be rewarded? Do you work harder hoping others won’t notice the skills and abilities you fear you don’t possess? With these few changes, you can avoid “work strain,” burnout, and disillusionment with your job.

Check and Conquer Implicit Bias

Implicit bias is a form of bias that occurs automatically and unintentionally, that nevertheless affects judgments, decisions, and behaviors. Implicit biases are naturally acquired, mostly unconscious beliefs or views about others who are different from us. Research shows that all people have biases, but with education, awareness, and conscious use of self you can prevent their expression. Biases can sour interactions on the job, damage morale, and affect the bottom line. When bias is checked, employees remain focused and engaged and possess a stronger sense of belonging. And ultimately, those who are different from the majority come to believe their value is unconditionally accepted. Learn more: “The Leader’s Guide to Unconscious Bias: How to Reframe Bias, Cultivate Connection, and Create High-Performing Teams”—coming April 25, 2023, by Pamela Fuller.

Fentanyl Education for Parents and Teens

Deaths of young people from fentanyl poisoning keep rising, at 41,587 deaths in 2021, a 20% increase over 2020. Most deaths are in young people 18-45 who unwittingly take lethal amounts—about the size of two grains of salt. A government report issued last month contains the results of a massive survey of young people that sought to gauge their knowledge of fentanyl. The survey shows a dramatic lack of knowledge of this killer drug. Only 36% of teens know fentanyl is sold as fake pills or mixed with other substances of abuse. Download the 75-question survey and use it as a conversation starter to help young people be more informed. Learn more here. <https://www.justthinktwice.gov/news-statistics/2022/11/10/how-much-do-your-friends-know-about-fentanyl>

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