

# The EAP Tool Box

Helping Associates with work-life balance!

## Work • Life Tips

▶ Here's a tip on using the free Google Calendar. Click on "Settings" and then the "event default duration." Check "Speedy Meetings." This allows you to make 30-minute meetings end in 25 minutes and one-hour meetings end in 50 minutes. You will actually get more work done. Why? The subtle pressure of knowing the meeting time will be shorter will force you to deal more effectively with the business at hand.

▶ Domestic violence is a frequent and unreported crime, but every state has passed laws and taken steps to intervene and protect victims. The laws that protect spouses from abuse also apply to people who are not married, but have a familial relationship with one another. Rule #1 is to protect yourself and your children. This may mean leaving home and seeking a safe shelter. The EAP can help you find community and legal resources that can help.

▶ If you and a coworker depend on each other to do your jobs well, you can't afford not to have a personal conflict resolution plan. When your relationship is going well, sit down and discuss how you will resolve potential conflict in your relationship. If you have experienced past conflicts, such an agreement is even more important. Put your agreement in writing and file it nearby. When conflicts emerge, refer to the plan. The power of the technique is its ability to induce commitment to reconcile differences.

## How to Promote Your Great Idea



Could you communicate a great idea to your employer in such a way that it has a shot at being adopted? Many employees believe unbridled enthusiasm is enough. Here is the right approach: 1) Ask yourself, "Will my idea help the company and its bottom line?" and "Does my idea fit with the existing concerns of the organization?" A "yes" to either question makes your idea worth pursuing, but a "yes" to both could make it a hot ticket. 2) With a friend, conjure every argument against your idea and develop effective counterarguments. 3) Determine all the payoffs and positives. 4) Draft a proposal with the logic of your idea, the gain, and the "pain" it resolves. 5) Write an implementation plan/diagram. 6) Identify the ripple effects—added costs, changes, and potential risks. (All new ideas have them.) Know the remedy or cost-benefits. 7) Enlist your supervisor as a co-author, partner, or champion of your idea.

## Involve Kids in Healthy Lunches

Here is a brilliant way to get kids to eat the healthy lunch you pack for them and send to school. Experts say that the more you can get your child to participate in the planning and shopping for and preparation of his or her lunch, the more likely it will be eaten. Sit down with a list of options in each of the main food groups—fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and low-fat dairy. Allow your child to pick favorites in each category. The technique teaches balanced meal planning, organizational skills, and commitment. Your child is less likely to pick over the lunch, will understand nutritional needs better, and will take responsibility for choices. There is less of a chance the lunch will end up in the trash. <http://news.psu.edu> [Search "kids lunch"]



## Stay Energized at Work

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Working out or going to the gym every day before work can be a big challenge, but it will help you stay more consistently energized during the workday. If you typically get groggy in the afternoon, try this five-day experiment. Schedule a 20-minute brisk walk daily during your lunch hour or early afternoon. This routine will cause you to feel more awake, less sluggish, and less likely to doze off in the afternoon, thereby raising your productivity.



# How Incivility Spreads in the Workplace

Uncivil behaviors in the workplace may include condescending statements, put-downs, sarcasm, and/or even silence if it is used purposely to withhold a compliment or kind remark.

Incivility is contagious because employees develop reflexes to reciprocate it, and may passively become uncivil toward others who did not provoke it. Fatigue from ruminating about negative exchanges may be common, and employees normally disinclined to act uncivilly may begin doing so.

Does any of this sound familiar? To repair and maintain your work group to keep it healthy and collaborative, regularly spend time giving feedback to each other in group meetings. Discuss communication issues and spend time inquiring about unresolved problems. Doing so will reduce tension among you and decrease the frequency of incivility that leads to dissatisfaction and job turnover. Source: <http://msutoday.msu.edu> [search "incivility"]



# Good-to-Know Soft Skills: Healthy Competitiveness



We appreciate and demand competitiveness from our athletes, but competitiveness at work is often shunned. It shouldn't be. The key is to be competitive in healthy ways. Competitiveness can help you achieve more, stay excited about your job, move quickly on opportunities, and win for your employer. To stay healthily competitive, avoid pairing your desire to achieve with the need to outdo coworkers for whatever acknowledgment, prize, or profit may result. Resist the reflex to engage in this sort of rivalry. Rather than seeking to challenge others, challenge yourself to top your personal best. Competitiveness is a tool. Use its energy to reach your goal, not as an unbridled personality trait that rubs others the wrong way. The secret to healthy competitiveness is being open to feedback, cheering others on, and sharing the glory. If you demonstrate this mastery of empathy, you will win more support from peers. They will cheer you on, and they will demonstrate more patience and understanding at those times when your competitive spirit gets a bit pushy or too "go-getting." Here is your competitive spirit health check: Do you mentally turn opportunities for success into contests that pit you against another person? Reject the urge to respond with competitiveness in this way. Practice asking, "Is this a team opportunity, rather than a solo opportunity?" With these few rules, you will win more gold for yourself and your employer.

# Stress Tip: Improve Your Self-Starter Ability

We all procrastinate, but the stress of a looming deadline and feeling you can't act until it's crunch time can make you feel out of control. Stop this self-punishing cycle by becoming a better self-starter. 1) Ignore the desire to plan and organize yourself until you feel "ready" to start a project. This is resistance masquerading as preparation. Instead, dive in. 2) Decide how much to accomplish within a set amount of time, for example, one hour. This shrinks the perceived size of your task. 3) If you procrastinate, you may also be distractible.

Both may play a role in helping you avoid work. Fight back by working in a "boring" location and taking planned breaks instead of allowing distractions. Close down Enemy #1—email, and its never-ending signal alert to another message.



# Childhood Obesity Awareness and Tips

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Childhood obesity has exploded in North America—up 400% in the U.S. since the 1960s. In Canada, 31% of children are now obese, with an increased risk of health problems like type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control for parents: Any increase in activity can help—a bike ride, playing at the park, or a family walk after dinner. Limit screen time—time spent on the computer, watching TV, or playing video games—to prompt other activities. Serve more vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain foods, and fewer prepared foods. Make sure your child gets enough sleep, because there is a connection between sleep and the hormones that affect metabolism. <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/obesity/facts.htm>

