

# Solutions

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## Stress Tips from the Field: Schedule “Think Time” and Decompress

Simply pausing to think might be one of your best techniques for managing stress. On a busy day, pausing to think can help you organize your thoughts, prioritize tasks, and clarify goals. Doing this may lead to better decisions while you reduce mental clutter. (Mental clutter is the overwhelming thoughts, worries, distractions, and information that pile up in your mind and make productivity difficult.) Just five minutes of no distractions and calm can help you prevent burnout, give you a bit of renewed energy, and let you decompress. This week, plan some five-minute think times throughout the day. Then, see if you experience more mental clarity, creativity, and job satisfaction, along with the sense that you are more effectively managing stress.

## Deepening Relationships at Work for Improved Job Satisfaction

Most people come to work, do their job, and leave. They interact with coworkers just enough to get by—without recognizing the value their colleagues bring. Don't leave workplace relationships to chance. Actively build them to enhance your well-being and create a fulfilling work environment. You'll find more meaning in your job. Here's how: Seek out and participate in transparent conversations where ideas, concerns, and feedback are shared freely. Offer support and show appreciation for your coworkers' efforts. Regularly collaborate on projects. Participate in team activities. Be approachable and “askable,” which means being open, friendly, and easy to talk to, so that others feel comfortable coming to you with questions or concerns. Learn simple skills to resolve conflicts constructively, and make a habit of celebrating successes together.



## Conquer Digital Time Theft

Digital time theft is passage of time that produces no or little workplace productivity resulting from diverted attention while engaged in online, nonwork-related activity prompted by distraction. If you have experienced digital time theft, you know the frustration of suddenly realizing you've been distracted by some online activity again. It can feel as though you have little control over how easily you are sidetracked, but gaining control might be easier than you think. Experiment with what works for you. Do a search for highly specific apps/tools that dramatically increase self-control over precisely this problem. They allow you to avoid online distractions, so you do not mindlessly browse the Web but instead stay on task. Some tools even add a delay in opening a web page long enough for you to catch yourself being distracted, so you can return to your current work! Google “apps to help you focus.”

## Don't Undermine Your Assertiveness

Many who want to be more assertive often undermine their attempts at assertiveness. As a result, they later feel confused about why their needs or concerns weren't taken seriously. When assertiveness is mixed with uncertainty and fear of the consequences of being too direct, you lose the effectiveness of your message and hinder your goal in communication. Do you recognize any of these assertiveness "missteps"? 1) Hesitancy and unsureness: "If it's okay, and if you have time—it doesn't have to be today, but can we discuss my performance review?" Better: "I would like to discuss my performance review. What is a good time for you to meet?" 2) Framing a question instead of a statement: "May I offer another idea for everyone to consider?" Better: "I believe we should consider an alternative approach for this project." 3) People pleasing or conflict avoidance: "I have a few observations to share about your report's conclusions." Better: "I noticed inaccuracies in your report; let's review them together to ensure accuracy." A person may perceive the initial statements above as assertive. However, in each case, the level of assertiveness is diminished. This can trigger ineffective communication, confusion, delays in problem resolution, and a greater risk of weakening, not enhancing, your workplace relationships. Having trouble communicating with someone at work? Your employee assistance program can help. They are go-to communication pros.

## The Supportive Workplace: Mental Health Skills for Managers

Managers are on the front line of today's workplace mental health crisis. Burnout, anxiety, depression, loneliness, and mental illness are all on the rise. The only option is to be prepared and take action now to support the mental health needs of your employees. And it's not as hard as you think.

The Supportive Workplace program helps managers gain the knowledge and confidence needed to build a work environment that promotes mental well-being. This includes setting boundaries and guidelines, reviewing scripts and demonstrations, and developing mental health awareness skills. This program originated as an in-person workshop series - one of our highest rated programs - that has now been expanded and optimized for flexible, accessible, self-paced online learning. This seven-module course teaches 'real-world' skills for managers from course content, frameworks and strategies that have already been implemented and proven to work in workplaces across the country.

Upon completion, we will provide you with a Supportive Workplace Certificate to add to your portfolio and résumé demonstrating you're a skilled leader for today's workplace. Contact FSEAP to get started today.

## Find More Meaning and Energy in Your Job

Gallup research has found that 40% of employees believe their mental health is negatively affected by their job. Managing stress is important, but improving wellness is also accomplished by becoming more "engaged." Could you enjoy your job more despite aspects of it that you do not like? If so, research says you will increase energy, find new meaning in work, feel more positive and in control, and feel more hopeful and productive. You're also less likely to burn out. Helping employees become more engaged is a hot topic in the world of work. If you haven't explored this idea yet, you may be on your way to discovering new energy and improved mental health on the job. See the resource below to get started.

Learn more: [www.greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_to\\_be\\_more\\_engaged\\_at\\_work](http://www.greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_be_more_engaged_at_work).

