

Solutions

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Living Well in Anxious Times

Terrible news about war and terrorism can be extremely unsettling, but completely avoiding news is probably not the best solution. To strike a balance, consider these few tips: 1) Schedule—not just prioritize—your self-care practices such as exercise, meditation, and hobbies to help reduce stress and promote mental well-being. 2) Maintain a supportive network of loved ones you can share concerns and process emotions with. 3) Focus on what you can control—your goals, daily activities, and well-being are still important! 4) If anxiety feels overwhelming, speak to a mental health professional at your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). 5) There are now free apps that block other apps and let you get news or schedule access only at specific times. Some will even block you from tweaking the schedule in case you get the urge to peek!

Learn more: beeboom.com/app-blocker-apps/

Avoid Unconscious Bias in the Workplace

Our biases can undermine a positive workplace. A bias is a learned or acquired prejudice in favor of or against a particular thing or individual. A common distinction is that biases are usually not rational. Although diversity awareness and education can help us gain control over biases to prevent their harmful expression, unconscious expression often occurs. Do you recognize any of the following forms of unconscious bias in the workplace? Confirmation bias: the tendency to use incidents, information, or behaviors you observe to confirm a preexisting belief. Example: Witnessing a workplace error made by an older employee, and using this experience to confirm the bias that older employees make more mistakes. Implicit bias: This bias is almost entirely subconscious, and you may even disavow it. However, you act on the bias when the opportunity arises. Example: Believing subconsciously that one gender is better at leadership than another, so it influences your vote for a work team member to be the team leader, in part because of the person's gender. Implicit bias can have adverse effects on hiring and promotion practices, and it often requires a good amount of education and training to increase employee awareness to overcome it. Social bias: This refers to attitudes or prejudices that individuals have based on race, disability, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation/identity, or socioeconomic status. Example: "All disabled people are inspirational." Biases can lead to discrimination, unequal treatment, conflict, and lower morale.

Learn more: "BREAKING THE BIAS BARRIER: A Guide to Overcoming Unconscious Bias in the Workplace and Beyond"
by Anabel Bassey (2023).

Get Help for Complex Grief

Grief is a unique experience for everyone. There is no "right amount of time" to navigate grief, but some people do experience prolonged (complex) grief. It can be intense and debilitating. If you are struggling with the inability to move forward in your grief journey, consider professional counseling. There are peaks, valleys, and new horizons in overcoming grief, but taking this step to wellness can help protect your physical and mental health and relationships at home and at work. For additional information, consider also ordering from your EAP the free Grief and Loss Resource Kit, where you will find valuable information to assist with processing grief, anger, resentment, blaming, and solutions to navigate the challenges.

Learn more about complex grief with this resource: www.abct.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/complicated-grief.pdf



Do You have Shift Work Sleep Disorder?

Shift work sleep disorder (SWSD) affects about 10% to 40% of employees—like health professionals, truckers, first responders, pilots, online customer service agents, factory workers, and retail clerks—who work irregular, nontraditional hours (shift work). Preventing SWSD requires six to seven hours of quality sleep nightly, but many life factors can make this goal difficult to achieve. The key is effective sleep hygiene to avoid health effects associated with SWSD, including insulin resistance and diabetes, anxiety, depression, lower bone density, and even lower fertility and neurodegenerative disorders like dementia. Tips: create a sleep schedule and a comfortable sleep environment which limits daylight entering the bedroom and is an optimal temperature (approximately 18-20 degrees Celsius); avoid exposure to digital screens or drinking coffee or alcohol before bedtime, as they disrupt the sleep cycle; get regular exercise a few hours before bedtime; and avoid eating prior to sleeping

Learn more: sleepeducation.org

Flip the Script with Positive Self-Talk

“Self-talk” is how we think and reason. It’s the inner voice that influences your mindset and actions. The words or scripts it produces are either positive or negative but are often outside our awareness. With practice, you can take control of self-talk messages, steer them to be positive, overcome negative scripts, and make self-talk a superpower. In moments of adversity, ask yourself “Is my self-talk lifting me up right now or dragging me down?” If it’s negative, fight the script. Immediately replace a negative script such as “I can’t do this” with a positive script like “This is a big challenge, but I have the innate capacity to learn and grow from this experience.” Key: Self-talk isn’t about denial; it’s about embracing challenges, learning from failures, and anticipating positive outcomes. The payoff for a positive self-talk habit is huge—more resilience, improved well-being, and more effective relationships.



The Financial Playbook: Dealing with Debt

Being in debt can be detrimental to your overall well-being, and not knowing what to do or how to handle your financial situation can ultimately weaken your long-term goals, independence, and stability in the future. While dealing with debt may seem overwhelming, the good news is that you can make positive progress in just a few short months when you implement and stick to a plan of action that has been proven to work. Such plans of action could include this six-step method to getting a clearer picture of your finances, planning to budget, and allocating funds properly. Topics of this method include:

- **Knowledge is Power:** How to get clarity on your income and expenses.
- **Finding the Magic Numbers:** Start saving appropriately for monthly, annual, and fun/vacation expenses.
- **Utilize Electronic Piggy Banks:** Use different bank accounts to allocate your money.
- **Manage Your Money:** Set once and forget - set up monthly automatic transfers so your bases are covered.
- **Stop the Bleeding:** Credit isn’t your friend; use credit cards intelligently by educating yourself on the positives and negatives of your credit options.
- **Don’t Go It Alone:** Progress over perfection - everyone needs help sometimes, it’s okay!

Often, it’s easy to get stuck in the thoughts of “I should be able to control my finances” when the reality is that the challenges of everyone’s situation are different. Remember, there is no shame if you need help, and there are many great resources and techniques that you can access to speed up your progress on the road to financial recovery.

To read more about this action plan, follow the link here: <https://www.myfseap-ms.ca/post/dealing-with-debt>

