



THE EMPLOYEE ENHANCEMENT NEWSLETTER



HELPFUL RESOURCES FROM YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Sept
19

September Online Seminar

*Maximizing Your Day: Effective
Time Management*

Better understand basic time management principles and what characteristics make effective time managers.

Available on-demand starting
September 17th at
www.deeroakseap.com

About Your EAP

*Life Can Be Hectic. The EAP Can
Help You Find Your Balance.*

Deer Oaks, your EAP, is always available to you and your household members. If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline. Counselors are available 24/7 to provide you with immediate care.

Tele-Health Services

Did you know that the EAP offers structured telephonic and video counseling in addition to traditional in-person counseling?

Call from the privacy of your home or office and one of our helpful counselors will help you address issues that are making it difficult to manage at work or at home.

Helpline: 866-327-2400
Web: www.deeroakseap.com
Email: eap@deeroaks.com

Time: Do First Things First

Finding the time to do the things you need and want to do is often a big challenge. Effective time management means deciding what you want out of life and moving toward your goals. Long-term goals are based on the people, activities, and things that give meaning to your life. Short-term goals help you to measure your progress toward long-term goals. Priorities provide a ranking of the activities that help you to achieve your goals. You may think of goals in several different categories, such as goals dealing with physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health; or financial, job, education, family relationship, and social goals.

Examples of Goal Setting

Mental—Develop an optimistic attitude.

Physical—Eat balanced meals each day.

Spiritual—Grow in courage, kindness, and unselfishness.

Family—Make home life happy and enjoyable.

Job—Improve skills and accuracy.

Financial—Start a savings account.

Social—Get involved in community service activities.

Consider the goals of your family when you set individual goals. To be most successful, families need to agree on the goals to be achieved.

What is important to you?

People have many different goals. Goals are the specific things you want to do within a certain period of time. They should be challenging, but realistic. You may also need to think about the goals of family members and others so you can fit them all together. You need to set priorities, because you cannot do everything at the same time. Having clear priorities helps you do “first things first,” instead of spending time on less important things and then wishing you had done things differently.

Busy parents and people facing change in their lives often have an especially difficult time managing the actions that help them achieve their goals. If you are feeling overwhelmed by everything you feel you need to do, it is often helpful to stop and think about what is really important.

Think about your goals in terms of balancing your life—making time for family, friends, work, community, and yourself. Focus on what you think is important, coordinate this with your family’s goals, and identify actions that will help you reach your goals. These should be your highest priorities. If you are new at management, it may help to work on one goal and set of priorities at first. Ask yourself, “What really needs to be done?”

Set your priorities carefully.

You can set your priorities in two ways:

According to Urgency—Some things must be done immediately. If you wait too long, it may be too late to do some of these tasks. Examples of urgent tasks are calling the doctor when you or family members are sick, or filling out your income tax forms when the calendar says April 14. Helping your children find their shoes and homework in the morning may also seem to fit in this category. Try to gradually reduce the number of urgent, crisis-response actions.

According to Importance—Some tasks must be done before others, while some can wait until a better time comes along. Important tasks could be such things as replacing a tire that has no tread left, taking medicine that the doctor ordered, or planning your budget and grocery list before going shopping. For long-term, important projects, try to do one part at a time.

After you have worked on goals and priorities, think about making a plan for using your time. Make a list of everything you might do. Then make a to-do list, with tasks ranked in order of importance. This serves as a guide for your daily activities.

Remember that urgent matters are usually easy to see. They are right in front of you and are hard to ignore. Frequently they are pleasant, exciting, or fun to do. They are popular with others—you feel good when you have done them. All too often, however, these things to do are not very important, and they do not help you move toward your long-term goals. Think carefully when planning your time use. Don't waste your time on unimportant things—even when they seem urgent.

Importance has to do with results. Some examples of important matters that are not urgent might be relationship building, personal care and recreation, problem prevention, recognizing new opportunities, and doing educational activities. Take some time on a regular basis to plan ways to work on important things.

Source: Walker, D., Mark, E., & Kiss, E. (Ed.). (Updated 2016, February). Time: Do first things first (pp. 26–27). In Essential living skills: Time management skills (Pub. No. S-134F). Manhattan, KS: Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service. Retrieved October 5, 2017, from <https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu>

Eight Back-to-School Tips for Parents

Whether your child is attending school for the first time or this is your teenager's senior year, the end of summer marks the start of a new school year. These tips can help guide you as you get your family ready for the upcoming academic year.

Stress—Is your child transitioning from one school to another? Navigating new people, changing bodies, and homeroom locations can cause anxiety. One suggestion for reducing the stress is to help your child with time management skills to get homework done. It may ease one worry for both of you.

Mobile devices—Teenagers can't get enough of their phones when it comes to communicating with their friends. Help your teen learn online safety tips and how to recognize online stalkers.

Bullying—Parents play a vital role in helping their children deal with bullying. Learn the warning signs and ways to address the situation at school or online.

Safety—Riding the bus for the first time or walking to school is a big step for some children. Communicate with your children about safety rules on the bus. Another safety concern is teenagers driving to school for the first time. Consider setting ground rules for your new driver, such as no texting while driving and wearing seat belts even for passengers.

Healthy eating—For some girls, moving from "tween" to "teen" may add pressure on appearances. Learn the signs of possible eating disorders among teenagers.

Sleep—Adults know sleep is critical for success, but children—especially teens—will fight you to stay awake during the school week, then want to sleep all weekend. Preschool-aged children need 11-12 hours of sleep; school-aged children need at least 10 hours a night; and teens need about 9-10 hours, according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

School emergencies—Check with your child's school administrator and learn what type of security plan and emergency alert system it uses. Make sure your information is up-to-date for getting messages.

Vaccines—Your state board of education or local school district may have a list of required shots before your child can attend school. To ease any concerns about getting vaccinated, talk to your child before going to the doctor's office.

Source: USA.gov. (2016, August 16). Back-to-school tips. Retrieved November 28, 2017, from <https://www.usa.gov/>



Long-Distance Caregiving

Getting Started

What does a long-distance caregiver do? How many other people are trying to help out from a distance?

If you live an hour or more away from a person who needs care, you can think of yourself as a long-distance caregiver. This kind of care can take many forms—from helping with finances or money management to arranging for in-home care; from providing respite care for a primary caregiver to creating a plan in case of emergencies. Many long-distance caregivers act as information coordinators, helping aging parents understand the confusing maze of new needs, including home health aides, insurance benefits and claims, and durable medical equipment.

Caregiving, no matter where the caregiver lives, is often long lasting and ever expanding. For the long-distance caregiver, what may start out as an occasional social phone call to share family news can eventually turn into regular phone calls about managing household bills, getting medical information, and arranging for grocery deliveries. What begins as a monthly trip to check on Mom may become a larger project to move her to a new home or nursing facility closer to where you live.

If you are a long-distance caregiver, you are definitely not alone. There may be as many as 7 million people in your same situation in the United States, according to the National Institute on Aging. In the past, caregivers have primarily been working women in midlife with other family responsibilities. That's changing. More and more men are getting involved; in fact, surveys show that men now represent almost 40% of caregivers. Anyone, anywhere can be a long-distance caregiver. Gender, income, age, social status, or employment should not prevent you from taking on at least some caregiving responsibilities and possibly feeling some of the satisfaction.

How will I know if help is needed? Uncle Simon sounds fine on the phone. How can I know that he really is?

Sometimes, your relative will ask for help. Or, the sudden start of a severe illness will make it clear that assistance is needed. But when you live far away, some detective work might be in order to uncover possible signs that support or help is needed.

A phone call is not always the best way to tell whether an older person needs help handling daily activities. Uncle Simon might not want to worry his nephew, Brad, who lives a few hours away, or he might not want to admit that he's often too tired to cook an entire meal. But how can Brad know this? If he calls at dinner and asks, "What's cooking?" Brad might get a sense that dinner is a bowl of cereal. If so, he might want to talk with his uncle and offer some help. With Simon's OK, Brad might contact people who see his uncle regularly—neighbors, friends, doctors, or local relatives, for example—and ask them to call Brad if they have concerns about Simon. Brad might also ask if he could check in with them periodically. When Brad spends a weekend with his uncle, he should look around for possible trouble areas; it's easier to disguise problems during a short phone call than during a longer visit.

Brad can make the most of his visit if he takes some time in advance to develop a list of possible problem areas he wants to check out while visiting his uncle. That's a good idea for anyone in this type of situation. Of course, it may not be possible to do everything in one trip, but make sure that any potentially dangerous situations are taken care of as soon as possible. If you can't correct everything on your list, see if you can arrange for someone else to finish up.

In addition to safety issues and the overall condition of the house, try to determine the older person's mood and general health status. Sometimes people confuse depression in older people with normal aging. A depressed older person might brighten up for a phone call or short visit, but it's harder to hide serious mood problems during an extended visit.

What can I really do from far away? My sister lives pretty close to our parents and has gradually been doing more and more for them. I'm halfway across the country. I'd like to help them and my sister, but I don't feel comfortable just jumping in.

Many long-distance caregivers provide emotional support and occasional respite to a primary caregiver. Staying in contact with your parents by phone or e-mail might also take some pressure off your sister. Long-distance caregivers can play a part in arranging for professional caregivers, hiring home health and nursing aides, or locating care in an assisted living facility or nursing home (also known as a skilled nursing facility). Some long-distance caregivers find they can be helpful by handling things online—for example, researching health problems or medicines, paying bills, or keeping family and friends updated. Some long-distance caregivers help a parent pay for care, while others step in to manage finances.

Caregiving is not easy for anyone, not for the caregiver and not for the care recipient. There are sacrifices and adjustments for everyone. When you don't live where the care is needed, it may be especially hard to feel that what you are doing is enough and that what you are doing is important. It often is.

How can my family decide who does what? My brother lives closest to our grandmother, but he's uncomfortable coordinating her medical care.

This is a question that many families have to work out. You could start by setting up a family meeting and, if your grandmother is capable, including her in the discussion. This is best done when there is not an emergency. A calm conversation about what kind of care is needed in the present and might be called for in the future can avoid a lot of confusion. Ask your grandmother what she wants. Use her wishes as the basis for a plan. Decide who will be responsible for which tasks. Many families find the best first step is to name a primary caregiver, even if one is not needed immediately. That way the primary caregiver can step in if there is a crisis.

Think about your schedules and how to adapt them to give respite to a primary caregiver or to coordinate holiday and vacation times. One family found that it worked to have the long-distance caregiver come to town while the primary caregiver was on a family vacation. Many families report that offering appreciation, reassurance, and positive feedback to the primary caregiver is an important but sometimes forgotten contribution.

What is a geriatric care manager, and how can I find one? A friend of mine thought that having a professional "on the scene" to help my dad would take some of the pressure off me.

Professional geriatric care managers are usually licensed nurses or social workers who specialize in geriatrics. Some families hire a geriatric care manager to evaluate and assess a parent's needs and to coordinate care through community resources. The cost of an initial evaluation varies and may be expensive, but depending on your family circumstances, geriatric care managers might offer a useful service. They are a sort of professional relative to help you and your family identify needs and how to meet them. These professionals can also help by leading family discussions about sensitive subjects. For example, Alice's father might be more willing to take advice from someone outside the family.

The National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers, www.caremanager.org, can help you find a care manager near your family member's community. In some cases, support groups for diseases related to aging may be able to recommend geriatric care managers who have assisted other families.

Source: National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Aging. (Updated 2014, March 24). So far away: Twenty questions and answers about long-distance caregiving. Retrieved November 21, 2014, from <http://www.nia.nih.gov/>.