

FrontLine Employee

UT Employee Assistance Program • (800) 346-3549

Why the Sunday Night Blues?

When Sunday night arrives, are you experiencing dread about going to work the next day? Is it because you don't like your job, or could it be depression? It can be hard to tell. There are different types of depression with different causes. But an assessment by a qualified professional or EAP can help you find out, usually in minutes. At the very least, you'll know the next steps to get out of the rut. Other symptoms of depression that may appear job-related include not feeling as good at your job as you used to be, a desire to avoid coworkers, finding it hard to concentrate, and thinking your job is no longer exciting.



Are Post-Holiday Budget Challenges Coming?

The holidays are here. Will you soon start budgeting to pay the bills? Don't panic in January, quarrel, or point a finger. Plan a family budget meeting to wipe it out. Resources exist to help you. Investigate ones that give you ideas on how to save money in hidden places. Whether it is commuting with coffee instead stopping for a latte, or cutting the cable channel extras no one uses, you can save a load of cash that's slipping through your fingers right now. Hint: Commit to a written plan so you actually follow through. Search for it: "1000 Ways to Save Money" by Siim Tuulik



What Are Club Drugs?

Club drugs are illicit, psychoactive drugs used to get high. Frequently used at raves, bars, nightclubs, and concerts, club drugs are dangerous chemicals with harmful side effects. Several of these drugs are notorious as date rape substances that produce memory loss. These include GHB, Ketamine, MDMA (also called Ecstasy or Molly), and Rohypnol (Roofies). Methamphetamine and LSD (acid) are also popular club drugs. Parents should be aware of these substances, particularly their post-use side effects, when evidence of use is more likely to be identified.



Learn more: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/club-drugs>

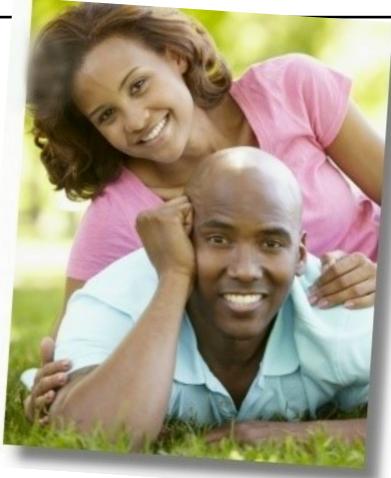
Getting Out of the Worry Loop

Worry is similar to an autoimmune response—attacking your thoughts with negative self-talk, frightening images, and fear. It can feel impossible to fight off or flee this negative feedback loop. Relief comes with a plan. Create one that targets the "what ifs" that are keeping you in turmoil. Experiment to see if this exercise empowers you and releases worry's grip. Write: *"The problem or issue I am worried about right now is (describe the problem or threat). If this problem continues, these results may follow (list all realistic possible and adverse outcomes). To help prevent these things from happening, I will: (list action steps you will take.)*



Time for Couples Counseling?

Many people think about couples counseling, but don't go. Some may threaten each other with it: "That does it, we're going!" But how do you know if you should see a couples therapist? Will it help resolve the problems you face? Could it make things worse? One reason couples don't go for counseling is a belief that it means they've failed in their relationship. (Not true!) Surveys by professional associations vary, but most show about twice as many couples reporting improvement in their relationship versus those who report that relationship issues did not improve or got worse. There are many reasons for counseling, but a nearly universal outcome is acquiring new "communication tools" – ways of speaking and listening to each other that increase relationship satisfaction. Many couples move from feeling desperate to a new level of excitement about their future because of this one achievement in improved communication. You can explore the question of whether couples counseling might be a good path for your relationship by visiting with a qualified professional and exploring in a session the issues unique to your relationship. The chances are excellent that you will know the next step to take at the end of that session. Couples therapy, like individual therapy, is a journey. You will work harder than the therapist who will guide you to your goal. But the odds are in your favor that it will be worth the trip.



Alone for the Holidays?

A lone for the holidays? Many people are fine being alone for the holidays. But if loneliness is an ongoing issue, don't accept it as "your fate" or something you "need to get used to." Research on loneliness indicates it's a health hazard, like lack of exercise, and more dangerous than obesity. It can lead to depression, damage the circulatory system, and shorten lifespan. **Tips:** Do not reason your way out of feeling lonely. Don't fill the void with social media time. Instead, take action to engage with others. Need a plan to get going, or do you have a loved one who needs help? Talk to a professional counselor or your EAP, and develop a plan to plug into a fuller life. Check this out: www.campaigntoendloneliness.org.



Learn to Be More Attentive

The ability to focus (or be attentive) is a powerful skill. It's a key to high productivity, but it's also a difficult skill to master because it requires fighting distractions, which are always "here and now." To better overcome distraction and loss of focus, practice these attention strategies: 1) Know your beginning and end point with a manageable size of work. Laboring without an end point increases vulnerability to distraction, which preys on fatigue and boredom. 2) Create a pull strategy—have a positive and compelling reason or reward at the end of your work period. This creates urgency, a force for action that thwarts distraction. 3) Have a secret place for minimal distraction—a library cubicle, but at least someplace absent the pings and clicks of a smart phone. 4) Find meaning in your work. Know the importance of your job. It can motivate and inspire you to stay focused on what you are doing.

Psychological Safety at Work

Most of us don't like experiencing rejection. As a result, many employees hold back, don't risk, and even suppress profitable ideas if they fear negative reactions for bringing them forth. To encourage risk taking, promote a "psychologically safe" workplace. Don't just agree that it's a good idea. Make it a tradition of your work group or team to encourage and invite vulnerability. Practice acceptance, and tolerate the new and unusual to eliminate fear that one's image, status, or career will suffer from taking a risk. Here's your motivation: Imagine Thomas Edison as your coworker. He tested his idea 1,000 times before he invented the functional light bulb. How long would he have lasted with you?

