

FrontLine Employee

UT Employee Assistance Program • (800) 346-3549

Communicating with Millennials for Peak Productivity

A lot of business literature focuses on how to communicate with millennials. Do you know that 70% of millennials prefer digital communication to any other type? Workplace tips: When giving assignments, include “the why.” Millennials are less motivated by simply being told, “do it.” Team skills, challenges, less fear of change, applying tech to problems, high energy, finding the answer, and pushing the limits of discovery—these are strengths and values of millennials. Consider these attributes when needing to boost productivity. Don’t pit older workers against millennials, and avoid an “us vs. them” work climate. To learn more, see the book “Millennials in the Workplace” by Justin Sachs.



Emotional Stress and Traffic Accidents

Does emotional stress increase your chances of being in an automobile accident? In fact, some research has shown that certain types of stress increase your risk more than others. The highest likelihood of an automobile accident has been associated with marital separation or divorce, a child leaving home, and a hospitalized partner. Positive stress associated with a large purchase or a raise at work can also increase risk. What’s the takeaway? It’s awareness for distracted driving. If negative states of emotions linger, consider managing them with professional counseling. It could be a safety issue.



Source: researchgate.net [Search “emotional stress and traffic accidents”].

Gardening and Stress Management

Whether it is one square foot or half of a backyard, gardening is a known stress reliever. Some vegetables are easy to grow and nearly impossible to flub, like green bush beans. With a few seeds, a tiny garden space can give you a healthy distraction, the surprise of sprouts, a bit of entertainment, some amazement and wonder, a healthy food, a positive experience in a hectic day, a goal to achieve, something to nurture, and something to share—all for a buck! It’s spring, go for it.



Resource: ydr.com [Search “gardening stress”].

How Complacency Increases Risk

Complacency is the number one cause of workplace accidents. Complacency is defined as “self-satisfaction especially when accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers.” (Merriam-Webster) Understand complacency for the insidious state of mind it represents. When you perform the same task repeatedly that requires alertness—without incident—you risk experiencing complacency. Dismissal of safety steps follows. For example, instead of walking the long way around a dump truck, you short-cut it across the back while it dumps its load, tragically on you. Practice remaining conscious of safety rules; make them part of who you are as an employee. Complacency and alertness are opposites. You can’t be both at the same time.



Learn more: ohsonline.com [Search “complacency”].

Mental Wellness in the Workplace

What is *mental health wellness*? Within the workplace, mental health wellness is the practice of personal awareness that helps you stay in control of what you think, what you feel, and how you react to everything going on around you. Practicing mental health wellness may be reaching out to patch up a relationship with a coworker with whom you had a conflict earlier so the negative exchange doesn't fester and harm your relationship, and thereby create unnecessary stress. Another example might be saying "no" to avoid feeling overwhelmed and delivering less than your best work. If you are conscious of your thoughts and feelings and practice this self-awareness regularly, you will make decisions more in-line with what you truly want as you interact and respond to the environment. Without practicing mental health wellness, you are more likely to respond to the world on "autopilot," reacting emotionally rather than in a rational manner conducive to reducing stress and producing a positive impact on mental health. Mental health awareness is about *intrapersonal* skills (what's going on inside you), thinking upstream, counting to ten, taking a deep breath, and weighing the external and internal realities of a decision or a response. With mental health wellness, you make better decisions while you increase the likelihood of being happy, healthy, and more productive, and discovering more meaning in your job.



Update on E-Cigarettes: Time to Escape the Vape?

More teens now use e-cigarettes than smoke tobacco. (Use of and sales to minors of either is illegal.) E-cigarettes are not as toxic as tobacco, but researchers are discovering unintended consequences of these devices. For example, e-cigarettes can be abused to get a stronger hit by manipulating the device. The practice is growing. Another unintended consequence is younger children using e-cigarettes, and turning to real tobacco later, because these devices are only about 50% as satisfying as real tobacco. If teens start using e-cigarettes, they are seven times more likely six months later to be smoking tobacco than teens who have not tried either. Nicotine in any form is a highly addictive drug. A new study of some e-cigarette products found the vapor contains known carcinogens and toxic chemicals. Myth debunked: There are seven FDA-approved aids to quit tobacco—e-cigarettes are not one of them.



Source: drugabuse.gov [Search "e-cigarettes"].

Should You Get Up Earlier?

You may hear time management gurus insist that getting up at 5 a.m. amounts to secret sauce for increasing personal productivity. Proponents of morning solitude argue that this time of day allows you to focus better on key issues, take advantage of your best mental state, and achieve more as you make key decisions before the distractions of the day begin. Author Robin Sharma, a productivity coach, calls this "the 5 a.m. club." Launching yourself before the rest of world awakens may have advantages, but here's a tip—experiment first with getting up 15 minutes earlier than usual. You may discover magic in that small amount of time and get all the benefits of an early riser. If desired, add more time. Decide what you will do with these golden minutes or hours; otherwise, you may find yourself heading back to bed.



Use Caution with Mental Health Apps

You can easily download hundreds of mental health apps on your phone—stress, anxiety, depression, staying happy—it's endless. More of these apps pop up each day, and the 2018 "best of" list is already out. But hold the phone! Before you start matching an app to the mental health problem you believe affects you, talk with a professional counselor to help you gain a fuller understanding of what help—if any—you can benefit from, online or not. Symptoms of mental problems may be plainly visible to you and/or others, but the causes of those symptoms may be an entirely different problem that is less visible or understood. A professional assessment will give you more confidence, and you're likely to find more successful help for the problem you face.

