



## UR Medicine EAP

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## Manage Stress Right Now: Start Sooner, Procrastinate Less

Procrastination is about putting off the pain of starting a project. A visual image of the work often adds to this avoidance. To intervene, focus away from the vision of the work, and onto the vision of completion or success. Then, visualize smaller steps to make it easier to start. For even more motivation, divide small steps into even smaller steps. The Nike slogan “Just Do It!” is well hyped, but it may not stir you to act. Modifying this slogan to “Just Start Small” or “Just Do a Few Minutes” may easily kick-start you to act sooner, and if you do, continuing on to finish the job is more likely. Try it, and discover if it is a game changer for you.

## Seasonal Affective Disorder

Feeling gloomy in winter is a common complaint, but some people are affected far more than others. People who experience affective disorder (SAD) often have feelings of sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, and sluggishness that they can't shake. When any type of depression interferes with social and occupational functioning, take a few minutes to get an assessment. Start with your Employee Assistance Program <https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/eap.aspx> to get the right source of help. Learn more about SAD from the National Institutes of Health. <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder-sad-more-than-the-winter-blues>

## Don't Psychologize Friends and Coworkers

Do you “psychologize” your friends? Psychologizing is analyzing others in psychological terms—theorizing or speculating about their decisions or behaviors. To help cement a more trusting and helpful relationship with a coworker, discard this habit. Instead, practice empathy. For example, “Mary, that was a tough decision. How do you feel about it?” This approach will elicit stronger insight versus hearing what psychological dynamics you believe are affecting them. Plus, you’ll avoid the retort, “Stop analyzing me!” Acknowledging someone’s difficult experience, pain, or discomfort naturally precludes a judgmental response. It takes practice if you don’t communicate naturally this way. However, the affirming reaction will reinforce this communication skill, and you’ll appear less judgmental.

## Did You Have a Panic Attack?

About 25% of people will experience a panic attack during their lifetime. A panic attack can strike any time or place. You could suddenly awaken at night to sheer terror. It’s not a heart attack, but you might think you are having one, with total fear of losing control. A rapid irregular heartbeat, extreme anxiety, trembling, dizziness, and inability to catch your breath are classic symptoms. Symptoms often resolve in about ten minutes; the event by itself is not symptomatic of an anxiety disorder or mental health condition. Still, if you have a panic attack, talk to your medical provider to rule out health issues and gain reassurance. Learn more about panic attacks here. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/panic-attacks/symptoms-causes/syc-20376021>

## Boost Your Team's Positivity

Many workplace teams experience stress, but it is often made worse by not nurturing a team culture that can maintain high morale and resilience. Take these steps to reinforce team positivity: 1) Decide to not just perform tasks. Instead, agree on a common vision and set up goals. Then post them. 2) Lose the cynicism and believe in the organization, or discover how to rekindle this loyalty so you have a foundational purpose with your employer and a real reason to engage that naturally pulls you forward. 3) Don't avoid the manager; determine how to elicit praise for your successes. Praise from the boss is pure currency to boost morale. 4) Regularly set aside a few minutes to have honest discussions about issues—even if a moment of silence passes as members consider what's relevant. Don't allow only a concern or issue to be what prompts such meetings. You may miss the opportunity to resolve a problem early-on. Recommended reading: “The Team-Building Tool Kit: Tips, Tactics, and Rules for Effective Workplace Teams.”

# EAP

Employee Assistance Program