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Mental Health Risk at Work

Like physical risk, psychological risk can also exist at work. Almost anything that causes stress, anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues qualifies as a “safety hazard.” Safety hazards include unresolved conflicts, isolation, overwork, lack of work-life balance, and even an unclear job role. Not all hazards have easy answers, but many do, and your EAP is ready to help by working with you to find the right intervention strategy. The United Nations has a strong interest in workplace mental health and has offered a research-based list of mental health hazards at work. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-at-work> Turn to your EAP for help for intervening in risks that affect you.

Unplug and Connect with What Matters

Technology devices can get in the way of quality family time. Could a “device-free zone” (or two) be good for your family? The idea is to have loved ones, especially children, learn to value face-to-face interactions, which are crucial for emotional well-being. If you want to try implementing the concept, here are tips: Start the tradition early to maximize the impact on young children and its value for their developmental psychology as it grows over time. Also, get agreement and commitment from household members to adhere to the rules set for your device-free zone(s). Learn more about tech-free zones at [uKnowKids.com](https://resources.uknowkids.com/blog/what-are-tech-free-zones-and-are-they-right-for-my-family). <https://resources.uknowkids.com/blog/what-are-tech-free-zones-and-are-they-right-for-my-family>

Fight Stress with Healthier Eating

Some foods can play a positive role in managing stress. Berries reduce inflammation and oxidative stress in the body. Nuts—including almonds, walnuts, and pistachios—have healthy fats and fiber that can stabilize blood sugar while giving sustained energy. Dark chocolate with more than 70% cocoa may reduce stress hormones and release endorphins, which are natural mood lifters. Yogurt is a probiotic-rich food that supports gut health, which can positively influence mood and reduce stress. Leafy greens—including spinach, kale, and Swiss chard—can help regulate cortisol, a stress hormone, because of their magnesium content, and their folate content may help with mood regulation. Learn more from the Cleveland Clinic. <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/eat-these-foods-to-reduce-stress-and-anxiety/>

Customer Service and Emotional Resilience

Emotional resilience as it applies to customer service is the ability to cope with, adapt to, or bounce back from the challenges of difficult customer interactions. Build these resilience skills by 1) practicing asking yourself “What am I feeling right now?” This simple exercise creates reflexes for self-awareness and allows you to choose your reaction to inordinate stress. 2) Discover and then implement mini strategies to calm yourself when you are under stress. (Your EAP can help.) 3) Maintain a social support network that you can turn to when things do get tough. 4) Be optimistic and believe you can master the customer service challenge. It’s a special job that imparts tremendous skills you’ll apply throughout your life. Learn more by reading “Unshakeable at Work: Build Resilience for Customer Service” by Sue Anderson (2020).

Power of “Authenticity” at Work

Authentic employees use an honest, transparent, no-façade approach to interactions with others at work. If that sounds like you, then others find you easy to be around because your genuineness makes them feel safe and prompts their desire to also be authentic. Authentic employees are more willing to show their true emotions and admit mistakes. Their communication style helps eliminate misunderstandings, miscommunication, and the hidden agendas that create conflict at work. Obviously, the payoffs for being authentic are greater job satisfaction, less stress, and more camaraderie with coworkers. This is why authentic employees are often held up as role models. Authenticity can be a bit risky. Showing honesty and vulnerability can expose you to criticism by some, but the productivity payoffs and being a happier worker are worth it. Ultimately, authenticity makes you stand out and appear more valuable, and it improves your career prospects. Learn more: “The Art of Being Authentic: Increase Self-Esteem, Be Happier, and Discover Your Purpose” (2023).

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