

NEELY EAP

September 2021

NEWS LETTER

GET THE MOST FROM YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



WELCOME

We are so pleased to be your employee assistance provider. Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are a first-line response to providing prevention and short-term problem resolution services. We provide short-term counseling services, seminars, legal services, and financial advice, all FREE of charge to you. Each month our newsletter will be packed full of wellness information and updates about upcoming seminars and webinars.

SEPT'S SEMINAR

Please join us for our live seminar **Courageous Conversations about Diversity**. The seminar will help you understand why we need to talk about diversity in the workplace.

Sept 9th @ 3pm

[Click Here
Registration](#)

UPCOMING QUARTERLY

WEBINAR

**Improving Leadership Through
Communication & Delegation**

Sept 16th @ 3pm

[Click Here
Registration](#)



COVID CASUALTIES: Impact on Mental Health

By Natasha Eckelbarger

COVID-19 has been the crowning theme of the past year. Our daily routines were upturned, and we began to mix our home lives with work and school. Life as we know it came to a grudging halt. Even now, while vaccines are being distributed and cases are slowing, COVID-19 still impacts mental health. Suddenly, we're worried about contracting a virus we don't fully understand. Stress around getting sick or family members falling ill could have long-term impacts on your mental health now and in the future.

The Stigma Around COVID

As Corona Virus has swept the globe, a stigma has developed around contracting the virus, getting the vaccine, social distancing, and quarantine. Many of those who test positive for COVID, or worry they will test positive for COVID, feel pressured to tell those they've been in contact with during that timeframe. Feelings like guilt and shame are common, compounded by the stress of getting sick and potentially endangering family and friends.

Along with this, people have anxiety around missing work, their children missing school, or the potential for medical debt. COVID has changed the social landscape of our lives, and coping with these changes can bring on anxiety, depression, stress, and, unfortunately, the stigma that comes with COVID-19.

How Stress Impacts Mental and Physical Health

Stress is caused by an increase in cortisol (the stress hormone) levels in the body. It can be brought on by a change in routine, transitions, or a busy schedule. A small amount of stress is normal. It can help you conquer challenges and stay safe. But since the pandemic hit, normality is out the window. As stress increases, it can negatively impact your mental and physical health. Experiencing a large amount of stress can lead to anxiety, panic attacks, and depression. Physically, stress can cause high blood pressure, headaches, chest pain, stomach problems, and dysfunctional sleep.

Since most of us experience stress at some point in our lives, we must learn to manage it. Learning healthy coping skills is the first step in controlling stress instead of letting it control you.

Coping with COVID Anxiety

After listing all the reasons anxiety and stress are running rampant around COVID, it's easy to see how healthy coping mechanisms are essential. Firstly, if you are experiencing a decline in your mental health, don't be afraid to reach out to a mental health professional who can guide you through these difficult times. Remember, anxiety, stress, and depression are normal when dealing with a life-changing pandemic. Second, surround yourself with supportive people who can validate your struggle. Having a solid support system is vital when working to improve your mental health.

Also, remember to give yourself some grace. No one is perfect every day, and it's okay to struggle. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed, do the following breathing exercise.

- Taking deep breathes to lower your heart rate can calm your body and help you move past the anxiety.
- Finally, stick to healthy routines and practice self-care!



Remember, you have a free "Couch-Time Check-In." Everyone deserves a little couch time.

Sources:

<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/covid19-stigma-guide.pdf>
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/stress>

Enjoying Labor Day without Work Place Stress

By Natasha Eckelbarger



According to a study conducted by the American Psychological Association, almost one-third of Americans struggle with work-life balance, with work being the number one cause of stress. A three-day weekend can go a long way to reduce work-related stress, but only if you're willing to unplug and focus on self-care. Labor day is meant for working people to find relaxation away from their day-to-day responsibilities. Relaxing while focusing on family life is a healthy way to cope with stress.

Although, if you ignore the need to rest, you could fall into unhealthy coping mechanisms like binge eating, impulsive spending, smoking, drinking, and inactivity. All of these things can lead to long-term mental and physical health problems. The best way to avoid this is by taking advantage of your free time away from the office.

The Origin of Labor Day

Labor Day was created in 1882 to provide rest and relaxation for the American worker. Since most workers were primarily employed in industrial and agricultural sectors in 1882, unplugging from work was as simple as heading home for the long weekend. However, now that technology has shaped the workforce, more and more workers take their work home, even on long weekends.

Technology and Workplace Stress

Labor Day is celebrating its 139th birthday this year. It's safe to say the workforce has changed dramatically since 1882. Instead of leaving work at the office, American workers are taking it upon themselves to work from home during the pandemic, and maybe even during labor day. Most workers can relate to answering an email or phone call on a weekend or holiday, but stress levels are rising with the minor distinction between work and regular life. 2020 marked a year of working from home, which only exacerbated the work-life balance issues we're facing in America



Be with those that
bring out the best in you,
not the stress in you.

Tips for Enjoying Labor Day

The first important lesson of enjoying labor day is to unplug from work. This means silencing your phone, staying logged out of your email, and leaving work responsibilities for the next official workday. Next, find an opportunity to do something you enjoy. Hobbies can easily be pushed to the bottom of your priority list when you're focused on work. Labor Day is an ideal chance to catch up on the things you're passionate about in life. Next, plan to spend time with those who energize you. That means filling your long weekend with people who understand you and make you feel seen. Finally, don't be afraid to make self-care a priority.

If you're experiencing negative mental health symptoms around your work-life balance like anxiety, panic, anger, depression, or mental exhaustion, don't be afraid to reach out to a mental health professional who can provide the resources and support you need. Labor Day is about celebrating the hard work you provide while taking the opportunity to rest and recuperate. So don't forget to unplug and enjoy your holiday weekend!

Remember, you have a free "Couch-Time Check-In." Everyone deserves a little couch time.

Sources:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6926869/>
<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2007/08/workplace-stress>



WHAT CAN MY EAP DO FOR ME?



At Neely EAP, we understand the challenge of balancing work and life stresses while staying mentally healthy. That's why we've partnered with your employer to offer you the following services, free of charge:

- 24/7 Hotline, Access to Confidential Services
- Short-Term Counseling *Couch Time Check-In* (preventive annual counseling session)
- Legal and Financial Assistance
- Wellness Trainings
- Online Employee Training Vault
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing
- And more. log in online at www.neelyeap.com

About Logo

For decades enslaved African Americans look to the North Star for hope, inspiration, and freedom. Neely EAP (NEAP) provides the **hope** that your situation will improve, the **inspiration** to move you in the right direction, and the **freedom** to live your best life.