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DECEMBER 2023

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## 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.

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## WELLNESS SEMINAR

Please join us for our live seminar  
"Employee Guide to Planning for the New Year"

Dec 14th @ 3pm

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## QUARTERLY WEBINARS

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# Employee Guide to Planning for the New Year

By: Courtney Garcia-Echeverria

As the current year draws to a close, it's a perfect time for employees to reflect on their professional accomplishments and set goals for the upcoming year. Planning for the new year is not just about resolutions; it's an opportunity to enhance your career, personal development, and overall well-being. This article will explore strategies to help employees navigate the planning process and enter the new year with purpose and enthusiasm.

**Reflect** on the past 12 months. Consider your achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement. Ask yourself: What were my accomplishments at work? Did I encounter any obstacles, and how did I overcome them? What skills did I develop, and what would I like to improve?

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**Goal-setting** is a crucial aspect of planning for the new year. Rather than vague or unrealistic resolutions, use the SMART criteria to create well-defined goals:

- **Specific:** Clearly define what you want to achieve.
- **Measurable:** Establish criteria to track your progress.
- **Achievable:** Ensure your goals are realistic and attainable.
- **Relevant:** Align your goals with your personal and professional aspirations.
- **Time-bound:** Set deadlines to create a sense of urgency.

## **Seek Feedback and Development Opportunities:**

Professional growth often comes from seeking feedback and identifying opportunities for improvement. Schedule a meeting with your supervisor to discuss your performance, strengths, and areas for development. Constructive feedback can guide your goal-setting process and provide valuable insights into areas where you can excel.

### References:

- Grant, A. M., & Parker, S. K. (2009). 7 Redesigning Work Design Theories: The Rise of Relational and Proactive Perspectives. *Academy of Management Annals*, 3(1), 317-375. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10916520903047327>
- Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2002). Building a practical theory of goal setting and task motivation: A 35-year odyssey. *American Psychologist*, 57(9), 705-717. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.57.9.705>

## **Prioritize Work-Life Balance:**

While setting professional goals is essential, prioritizing work-life balance is equally important. Burnout can negatively impact your performance and well-being. Consider establishing clear boundaries between work and personal life, taking regular breaks during the workday to recharge, and planning vacations or time off to relax and rejuvenate.

Planning for the new year is a valuable opportunity for employees to reflect on their past experiences, set meaningful goals, and strive for personal and professional growth. As you embark on this planning journey, remember that the key to success lies in continuous learning, adaptability, and a proactive approach to your professional development.

**If you'd like to learn more about setting goals for next year or if you need help planning, Consider joining our [December webinar: Employee Guide to Planning for the New Year.](#)**



# Shedding Light on Seasonal Affective Disorder: SAD Awareness Month

By: Courtney Garcia-Echeverria

As the winter months approach, a condition that often goes unnoticed but can significantly impact mental health comes to the forefront—Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD.) Designated as SAD Awareness Month, December offers an opportunity to shed light on this form of depression that affects numerous individuals during the darker and colder seasons. This article delves into the key aspects of Seasonal Affective Disorder and offers insights into managing its impact on mental well-being.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), classified as a subtype of major depressive disorder, manifests seasonally, typically in fall and winter. The reduced exposure to sunlight disrupts circadian rhythms and key neurotransmitters such as serotonin and melatonin. Recognizing the symptoms of SAD is crucial for timely intervention and support, which often include persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, low energy and fatigue, difficulty concentrating, changes in sleep patterns, and tendencies toward weight gain and increased appetite.



Managing Seasonal Affective Disorder involves a multifaceted approach:

- 1. Light Therapy (Phototherapy):** A widely effective treatment for SAD involves exposure to bright, artificial light, commonly referred to as *light therapy*. This entails sitting near a light box that emits a specific light intensity, simulating natural sunlight and helping regulate mood.
- 2. Psychotherapy:** Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) has demonstrated effectiveness in managing SAD symptoms. By identifying and modifying negative thought patterns, CBT facilitates the development of coping strategies for seasonal mood changes.
- 3. Medication:** In some cases, healthcare professionals may prescribe antidepressant medications to alleviate symptoms. Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs) are commonly utilized to impact mood regulation positively.



As we observe SAD Awareness Month, it is essential to recognize and support those affected by this condition. Whether through light therapy, psychotherapy, or medication, effective strategies exist to manage SAD symptoms and promote mental well-being during the challenging winter months. Taking a proactive step towards seeking professional help is crucial for a brighter and healthier season. If you are interested in learning more about SAD or suspect that you may be experiencing its symptoms, please do not hesitate to reach out to [your EAP](#) for support.

#### References:

- Rosenthal, N. E., et al. (1984). "Seasonal affective disorder: A description of the syndrome and preliminary findings with light therapy." *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 41(1), 72-80.
- Golden, R. N., et al. (2005). "The efficacy of light therapy in the treatment of mood disorders: A review and meta-analysis of the evidence." *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 162(4), 656-662.



## WHAT CAN MY EAP DO FOR ME?



### About our logo

For decades, enslaved African Americans looked 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.

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
- Free Short-Term Counseling and Couch Time Check-In (preventive annual counseling session)
- Legal and Financial Assistance
- Work-life referrals for adult care, childcare, pet care and more
- Wellness Trainings & Online Employee Training Vault
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

