

NEELY EAP

JULY 2026

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WELCOME

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Through the program, you have access to confidential short-term counseling, wellness seminars, legal support, and financial consultation services, all at no cost to you.

Each month, you'll receive a newsletter filled with helpful wellness tips along with updates on upcoming seminars, webinars, and additional resources available to you and your household.



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WELLNESS SEMINAR

Stress-Resistant

Communication: How to Speak
Calmly When Others Aren't

07/23/26 | Thursday
2:00 PM CENTRAL TIME

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QUARTERLY WEBINAR

Holding People

Accountable: With Empathy,
Clarity & Consistency

09/25/26 | Friday
2:00 PM CENTRAL TIME

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<https://neelyeap.com/eap-resources>

Stress-Resistant Communication: How to Speak Calmly When Others Aren't

Do you ever replay a past conversation in your head, wishing you'd handled it differently? That replay loop, all the shoulda, coulda, woulda's. How you should have responded. How you could have stayed calmer. How you would respond now, with time and distance to cool off. I'm not a betting woman, but if I were, I'd bet that 100% of you just said yes.

As a Licensed Professional Counselor Associate, one of the most empowering things I can offer clients is education on what's actually happening in their minds in those moments. Knowledge is power. So let's look at what happens in your body when you're trying your absolute best to stay calm during a stressful conversation.

When your brain perceives a threat, it activates your **amygdala**, your fear center. The amygdala triggers your sympathetic nervous system, your fight-or-flight response, flooding your body with cortisol and adrenaline. At the same time, your **prefrontal cortex** (PFC), the part responsible for emotional regulation, impulse control, risk assessment, and social behavior, starts to go quiet. Your brain's alarm system overpowers its reasoning system.

Here's how that shows up in conversation: When someone else becomes heated or angry, your amygdala can sound the alarm as if you're in real danger. Consciously, you know that someone speaking to you rudely isn't actually a physical threat. But subconsciously, your PFC is already losing ground to your amygdala, which is why staying calm in that moment can feel so much harder than it should.

The good news: you can interrupt this cycle. Here are three ways to regulate your nervous system in the moment so you can respond instead of react.



1. Breathe, deliberately.

When you feel your heart rate climb, it's often your amygdala kicking your sympathetic nervous system into gear. Slowing your breath sends your brain and body a different signal: I'm safe. I'm in control. This quiets the amygdala and helps bring your PFC back online.

2. Ask for a pause.

Sometimes your usual tools won't be enough in the moment, and that's okay. When possible, ask the other person if you can pause the conversation and return once you've both had time to cool down. The key is to actually return to it; don't let it quietly disappear.

3. Lead with empathy.

At our core, humans want the same things: to be seen, heard, understood, and respected. Try something like, "I can see how frustrated you are. If I were in your position, I'd probably feel the same way. Can we figure this out together?" Empathy de-escalates faster than logic ever will.

Now that you understand what's happening in your brain during stress, and have real tools to work with, I hope you feel a little more equipped to take control of stressful conversations, instead of letting them control you.

To learn more about this topic, please join our upcoming webinar, [Stress-Resistant Communication: How to Speak Calm When Others Aren't](#) on Thursday July 23rd, at 2:00PM CST.

By: Rosalinda Rodriguez, LPCA
Supervised by Dr. K. Neely, Ph.D., LPC-S

References:
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Minority Mental Health & Cultural Wellbeing

When thinking of a minority group, it is common to first think of someone's ethnicity (i.e., their ancestral roots). This isn't to be confused with race (i.e., social categorization based on physical appearance), culture (i.e., learned and shared patterns of behavior), or nationality (i.e., one's country of citizenship). However, there are many other minority identities that are often overlooked, and many of them intersect. The American Psychological Association (APA) defines a minority group as a population subgroup (e.g., ethnic, racial, social, religious, or other group) with differential power compared to those holding majority power in the population (2023).

Aside from racial or ethnic minority groups, other minority groups can include the LGBTQIA+ community, gender groups (i.e., women, nonbinary individuals), and religious groups (i.e., Jewish, Muslim, Hindu). A gentle reminder: your minority status is contingent on the context of your surroundings. For example, men are the minority group in the mental health profession, but switch to a field like construction, and women become the minority. Those who identify as nonbinary would be in the minority in both cases.

It is important to understand what a minority group is so we can better recognize how minority groups' mental health and well-being are impacted. Throughout our nation's history, differences in access to power, opportunity, and resources have shaped the overall health and well-being of many minority groups through experiences of racism, bias, and discrimination.

The APA defines racism as a form of prejudice that generally includes negative emotional reactions toward members of a group, acceptance of negative stereotypes, and racial discrimination against individuals (n.d.). To understand minority mental health, we have to go to the root of it: the transgenerational impact of racism. When someone experiences trauma and/or chronic stress, their brain signals their body to release stress hormones (i.e., cortisol and adrenaline). Chronic stress has been linked to increased anxiety, depression, PTSD, sleep disturbances, and neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's (American Brain Foundation, 2024).

So when we reflect on minority mental health and wellbeing in the workplace, we have to acknowledge two things at once: many individuals carry the day-to-day stress of navigating minority experiences, and some may also carry the lasting effects of historical and intergenerational trauma associated with racism and discrimination.

1. **Education** - Continue to educate yourself on different minority groups through books, community offerings like museums, and my personal favorite: speaking directly to someone within that group.
2. **Empathy** - Humans are quite simple in that we all want to be seen, heard, respected, and valued. Take time to understand the lived experiences of colleagues whose backgrounds or identities may differ from your own and consider how those experiences may influence their well-being.
3. **Be Curious, Not Judgmental** - When we choose curiosity, our brains stay open to learning. When we lead with judgment, we do a disservice to ourselves and others.

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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

