

Confidentially Speaking

Wellness,
productivity,
and you!

August 2021



Cooper Employee Assistance Program

856.342.2280 | CooperHealth.org/EAP

Facing Personal Change

When change is upon us, our attention is quickly drawn to the pain of moving from what is familiar to what is unfamiliar. This occurrence is what fuels fear, anxiety, what-ifs, and worst-case scenarios. This is what you repel. So, coping with change is about wrestling with unknowns. How can you do this? Replace harmful thoughts with positive ones *as soon as you become aware of them* by imagining good outcomes that will come from the change. Use your mind's eye to see these results. You won't see a 180-degree flip immediately, but you will make a big dent in your fearfulness—usually enough to carry you to the next step: looking for opportunities in the change that create new excitement.



Teens and Video Gaming Addiction

Millions of teens aren't participating in youth programs and sports because they are compulsively playing video games. Video gaming disorder (and screen addiction, internet gaming addiction, etc.) has gained recognition by the World Health Organization, with the American Psychiatric Association calling for more studies. Some surveys report 1 in 10 teens is hooked on gaming, with some playing more than 10 hours a day online. This can result in sleep deprivation, increased ability to tolerate more gaming, withdrawal (anxiety) when not gaming, lying about use, and experiencing the inability to cut back. Are you a concerned parent? Start with your EAP and then learn more at www.gamequitters.com.



Take Micro-breaks to Empower Productivity

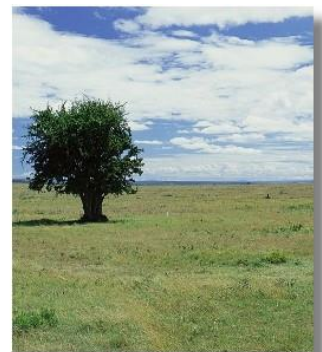
Micro-breaks are complete detachment from your work for two minutes or less. They are powerful tools for managing stress, improving engagement, increasing productivity, and improving creativity. A micro-break might involve walking to a window to gaze out for a minute or getting a cup of coffee. Proof that micro-breaks work is, for example, spotting needed changes in a letter or authored document upon returning from a distraction. The key is remembering to take the break. For that, experiment with apps like TogglTrack or Nag, among others.



[www.futurity.org \[search "micobreaks"\]](https://www.futurity.org/search/micobreaks)

Ostracized at Work?

Being ignored and excluded at work—ostracized—may be more emotionally harmful than harassment, according to one Canadian study. Although more employees say they are ostracized than harassed, most surveyed don't perceive these behaviors as serious. Being ostracized has commonly been linked to workplace violence, so there is a compassionate aspect to helping workers feel like they belong, as well as a risk reduction rationale. Have you witnessed ostracism in the workplace? If so, what can you do to create a positive and inclusive workplace for all? (Comments found at the following resource offer insight on the impact of



Source: [www.psychologicalscience.org \[search "workplace ostracism"\]](https://www.psychologicalscience.org/search/workplace%20ostracism)

Practice Cheerfulness to Find Job Passion

Feeling a lack of passion for a job is not uncommon, but there is a potential fix. Under stress, it's easy to focus on negative emotions and thoughts in a downward spiral. You are then less likely to see the upside, the things you do that contribute to the greater good—the part of your job you can be passionate about. The good news is that cheerfulness—demonstrating happiness and optimism—is a conscious behavior. You can use it to manage stress and increase job satisfaction. Follow these three steps: 1) Find the part of your job you do like—any aspect you can be cheerful about. If you carry groceries to customers' cars, focus on how this service benefits customers. 2) Link this benefit to your desire to find happiness in the role you play. 3) Talk up this aspect with others. If you do, you may recognize more meaning in your job. Research shows practicing cheerfulness, along with having positive thoughts and emotions, has big returns. It can build resilience for when the going gets tough. It allows you to feel more in control and less focused on negativity. It boosts desire to fend off negativity. It also helps increase the number of positive relationships you have—people will want to hang around you more, and this can lead to improved employment opportunities and even improved financial outcomes. Happiness is a do-it-yourself project. Use purposeful cheerfulness as one life skill to help you achieve it.



Learn more: www.futurity.org/stress-positive-moods-938722/.

Power of Internal Customer Service

Imagine everyone treating fellow workers and departments like valued external customers. This practice is called a customer-centric positive workplace strategy. It produces a cascade of benefits, like reduced stress, fewer conflicts, improved productivity, and higher morale. It requires keen awareness but starts with showing positivity in interactions. Crucial is avoiding seeing others as a nuisance (e.g., "Oh no. It's the folks in the print shop again. What could they possibly want?"). Be empathetic so you hear beyond a request from an internal customer to identify with the need. Be proactive in helping solve problems. Don't be avoidant or keep others wondering when or if they'll hear from you again. Keep promises.



Just This Much Fentanyl Is Fatal

Fentanyl is an opioid pain medication 50-100 times stronger than morphine.

Carfentanil is even more

potent—100 times stronger than fentanyl. These drugs are illicitly sold and lethal in extremely small amounts (see image). It is impossible to know how much of—and even whether—either drug might be mixed with other illicitly sold drugs. This phenomenon is increasingly common and a cause of over 70,000 opioid deaths in the USA and Canada in the past year. This makes intervention to get drug-dependent persons in treatment more crucial than ever. Talk with professionals knowledgeable about intervention if you are concerned about a loved one. Start with your Cooper EAP. We can provide you with referrals to a support group to help you energize your desire to end your enabling of your loved one and to empower change in the relationship that makes treatment non-negotiable.

Source: www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/fentanyl-and-carfentanil.aspx.



Did You Start a Side Business Recently?

Did you start a side business during the pandemic to help close the income gap in your household?

Millions of people did—or had to—but as work schedules return to normal, and with the security of your job still crucial, be sure

to continue to demonstrate the same commitment and high level of performance you did before the pandemic. Many employers have concerns or rules about outside jobs because they fear divided loyalty and conflicts of interest. Avoid these six side-job mistakes: 1) allowing a side job to interfere with attendance or availability; 2) conducting side-job business on the clock; 3) using the employer's office, phone, proprietary information, or supplies; 4) competing with the employer; 5) asking coworkers to work for you; and 6) using the employer's name in promotional literature as a sales aid.

