

Confidentially Speaking

Wellness, productivity, and you!



Cooper Employee Assistance Program 856.342.2280 | CooperHealth.org/EAP

Breast Cancer Awareness and Alcohol Use



Dozens of studies link alcohol to breast cancer. 1) Alcohol increases a woman’s risk of hormone receptor-positive breast cancer. 2) Consumption of alcohol causes increased estrogen. 3) Alcohol may damage DNA in cells. 4) Consuming three alcoholic drinks a week raises the risk of breast cancer by 15% compared with not drinking. 5) Alcohol consumption raises the risk of breast cancer by 10% for each additional drink regularly consumed each day. 6) Teen girls who have three to five drinks per week have three times the risk of developing benign breast lumps that may become cancerous later in life. 7) Having two to three alcoholic drinks a day increases the risk that breast cancer will return following treatment by 20% compared with not drinking.

Sources: Breastcancer.org, Komen.org, NIAAA.gov.

“SmartMom” App Helps Single Parents



Here’s a special find: the SmartMom app. Its purpose is helping moms find community with other moms and get answers fast to virtually any problem via a digital network. Three million questions have been answered on this app (Search: “smartmom app”). Moms are more often faced with domestic burdens such as managing multiple schedules, overseeing online school expectations, coordinating activities, being chauffeurs, handling domestic chores, and more. This app can lead you to a lot of answers fast.

Protect Against IP Address Hacking



Computer phishing and viruses cause big trouble, but if your internet protocol (IP) address is stolen and your computer is hacked, a crime could be committed and blamed on you. Your IP address is like your fingerprints on the web. Follow your organization’s security protocols. At home, protect your computer IP address (a VPN, or virtual privacy network, accomplishes this goal). Change your password often, and make it hard to guess. Your password is the only barrier that can restrict others from accessing your device.

Source: www.securitytoday.com [search “5 ways protect IP”]

What Is a Psychiatric Emergency?



Chances are that you could spot a physical health emergency like a heart attack, but could you do the same with a psychiatric emergency? Psychiatric emergencies may have no physical symptoms, but they can be just as life-threatening. Psychiatric emergencies fall into three categories: risk of harm to self, like suicidal planning and intention; risk of harm to others, like planning to hurt someone; and behavioral changes, such as not making any sense, losing touch with reality, hearing or seeing things that are not there, or becoming paranoid. Call 911 when risk of injury or death exists, and don’t dismiss psychiatric emergencies; swift action could save a life. See a list of symptoms at www.aacap.org [search “emergency 126”].

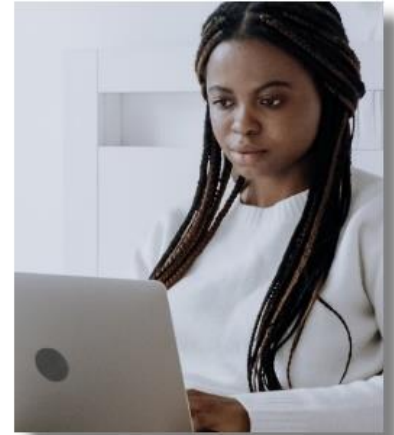
Coping with a Furlough

A furlough doesn't mean your position is eliminated, but not knowing when your income will return can be terrifying. Rule #1 when faced with a crisis like this: Take charge! Many furloughed employees now look back at a furlough experience as a defining moment when they evaluated their career path, life goals, happiness, and ability to move forward. Here's how to do it: 1) Start your day with a routine. Create a to-do list. Establish projects. Know what you want to accomplish with the time off. This will place you on the right side of this stressful experience so you can determine to stay in control of it. 2) Adjust your budget as needed to fit the current reality. 3) Do a self-evaluation of your skills and abilities, values, and passions. Read the book "What Color Is Your Parachute?" to discover two things: what you're best at and what you enjoy most. 4) Whether you stay with your employer or plan a career move, use the time you have now to design your life and the path to your next level or career target. This might mean taking online classes or seminars; look especially at credible certificate programs to add value. 5) Interact with others to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts. 6) Build stress management activities for yourself into every day.



Parkinson's Law: A Remote Worker's Bugaboo

You are working remotely from home with a task that takes two hours to complete. You have four hours available, so you plan to finish early. But the job takes all four hours! What happened? You are likely a victim of Parkinson's Law. It states that a task or job will consume all the time allowed to complete it. It feels like the work expanded to fill the time available, but it didn't—you simply filled the time with distractions. Remote workers are vulnerable to Parkinson's Law because no one generally is hovering over their work. To fight back, set deadlines much shorter than needed. Try using a timer set to sound every 10 minutes to increase awareness and help you stay focused. You will soon learn to avoid deadline panic, increase your awareness of distractions, and experience more job satisfaction. Outside of work, you will enjoy more leisure time and productivity.



Using Anti-anxiety Medications?

Google reports that searches for "anxiety" and "panic attacks" have skyrocketed during the COVID-19 pandemic (CNN.com Aug. 24, 2020). Have you experienced anxiety and panic symptoms in the past year? Although anxiety and panic attacks don't always require medication, benzodiazepines (Xanax, Valium, Klonopin, Ambien, etc.) are the class of drugs often prescribed for this condition. Work closely with your doctor if these medications are offered to you. Unmanaged, they can leave you dependent (addicted), and willpower will have no preventative effect. Improperly managed, withdrawal from benzos can be dangerous, too—even more so than heroin. The older you are, the greater the risk of injuries and accidents while using benzos. If you're starting to take a benzodiazepine, begin with the end in mind. These drugs are not meant for long-term use. Consider psychotherapeutic help in tandem with medication to boost your gains.



Election Politics and the Workplace

It's common courtesy to avoid political discussions at work. Still, they do happen. If resistance is futile, these tips can help prevent a fracas: 1) Learn to self-intervene. When tension builds, move the discussion along to more work-related matters. 2) Check your visceral reaction. Politics prompts a "flight or fight" response. Don't give in to it. This dynamic is reinforced by the culture, but succumbing to it can make it seem okay to get personal. 3) Avoid demonization or moral indictment of a coworker. 4) Do a "reboot." End political discussions with a verbal affirmation that despite differences, you really do value your workplace relationships.

