

# FrontLine Employee

Wellness, Productivity, and You!

## Mental Health Risk at Work

Like physical risk, psychological risk can also exist at work. Almost anything that causes stress, anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues qualifies as a “safety hazard.” Safety hazards include unresolved conflicts, isolation, overwork, lack of work-life balance, and even an unclear job role. Not all hazards have easy answers, but many do, and your EAP is ready to help by working with you to find the right intervention strategy. The World Health Organization has a strong interest in workplace mental health and has offered a research-based list of mental health hazards at work. Find it here at [\[https://www.who.int/news-room/factsheets/detail/mental-health-at-work\]](https://www.who.int/news-room/factsheets/detail/mental-health-at-work). And turn to your EAP for help for intervening in risks that affect you.



## Unplug and Connect with What Matters

Technology devices can get in the way of quality family time. Could a “device-free zone” (or two) be good for your family? The idea is to have loved ones, especially children, learn to value face-to-face interactions, which are crucial for emotional well-being. If you want to try implementing the concept, here are tips: start the tradition early to maximize the impact on young children and its value for their developmental psychology as it grows over time. Also, get agreement and commitment from household members to adhere to the rules set for your device-free zone(s).



## Fight Stress with Healthier Eating

Some foods can play a positive role in managing stress. Berries reduce inflammation and oxidative stress in the body. Nuts—including almonds, walnuts, and pistachios—have healthy fats and fiber that can stabilize blood sugar while giving sustained energy. Dark chocolate with more than 70% cocoa may reduce stress hormones and release endorphins, which are natural mood lifters. Yogurt is a probiotic-rich food that supports gut health, which can positively influence mood and reduce stress. Leafy greens—including spinach, kale, and Swiss chard—can help regulate cortisol, a stress hormone, because of their magnesium content, and their folate content may help with mood regulation.



## Customer Service and Emotional Resilience

Emotional resilience as it applies to customer service is the ability to cope with, adapt to, or bounce back from the challenges of difficult customer interactions. Build these resilience skills by 1) practicing asking yourself “What am I feeling right now?” This simple exercise creates reflexes for self-awareness and allows you to choose your reaction to inordinate stress. 2) Discover and then implement mini strategies to calm yourself when you are under stress. (The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help.) 3) Maintain a social support network that you can turn to when things do get tough. 4) Be optimistic and believe you can master the customer service challenge. It’s a special job that imparts tremendous skills you’ll apply throughout your life.



<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/eat-these-foods-to-reduce-stress-and-anxiety/>

# Master Your Self-Care Strategy

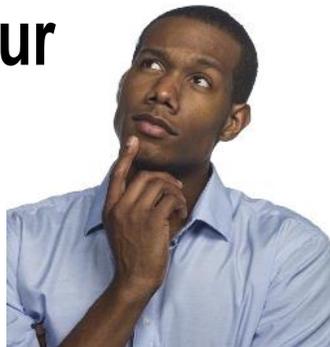
**Self-care is not** just about getting enough sleep, eating well, or taking time off for a massage. Rather, it is a conscious process of being attentive to your physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, but with a goal in mind—to build resilience that allows you to be more capable of bouncing back from adversity and managing stress better. To practice this strategic form of wellness, focus your attention on: 1) physical fitness and emotional wellness (how you manage thoughts, feelings, and beliefs so you engage in positive thinking); 2) being aware of your emotions and the emotions of others with whom you interact, and using this awareness to make better decisions and communicate more effectively; 3) knowing how to create positive emotions. Does walking outside for 15 minutes improve your mood? Does taking five minutes to tidy up your office lift your spirits? When you arrive home after work, does sitting down to play the piano inspire you? Know your “go to” natural, healthy, and positive mood enhancers and use them routinely; 4) having someone with whom you can confide in and process challenges. Your EAP can be a source for this support; 5) eating right and getting enough sleep; and 6) having constructive ways of dealing with emotional stress—a hobby, spiritual practices, networking, leisure activities. Examining this list, do you see opportunities to improve upon your self-care strategy?



# Reflecting on Your Drinking Pattern?

**There's an adage** in the recovering alcoholic community: “If you wonder whether you have a drinking problem, then you probably do.”

This is called reflecting on one's drinking pattern. It's typically a first step toward self-diagnosis and acceptance of substance use disorder. If you have been reflecting on your drinking pattern, take the next step—an assessment if any of these discoveries are true: 1) Noticing a pattern of increased alcohol consumption over time. 2) Making unsuccessful attempts to cut down on the amount or frequency of your drinking. 3) Increasing the frequency of using alcohol to manage pain, anxiety, depression, or other psychological conditions. 4) Thinking about a drink at day's end, and looking more forward to drinking. 5) Experiencing more frequent adverse consequences of any kind related to drinking. 6) Drinking more to get the effect you want from alcohol than you did in the past.



# Power of “Authenticity” at Work

**Authentic employees** use an honest, transparent, no-façade approach to interactions with others at work. If that sounds like you, then others find you easy to be around because your genuineness makes them feel safe and prompts their desire to also be authentic. Authentic employees are more willing to show their true emotions and admit mistakes. Their communication style helps eliminate misunderstandings, miscommunication, and the hidden agendas that create conflict at work. Obviously, the payoffs for being authentic are greater job satisfaction, less stress, and more camaraderie with coworkers. This is why authentic employees are often held up as role models. Authenticity can be a bit risky. Showing honesty and vulnerability can expose you to criticism by some, but the productivity payoffs and being a happier worker are worth it. Ultimately, authenticity makes you stand out and appear more valuable, and it improves your career prospects.



# Supporting a Coworker in Chronic Pain

**Tens of millions** of employees experience chronic pain, so the chances of having a co-worker affected by this condition are high. You can't take the pain away, but you can make a big difference. Most appreciated is empathy—willingness to listen, stopping for a moment, and offering understanding if your coworker mentions what they are experiencing. Employees with chronic pain typically have good days and bad days. They strategize how to minimize discomfort, but they may worry about job security, being judged, and how they are perceived by others. People are working more years than in the past, which will increase the number of chronic pain sufferers. Model patience, be encouraging, and consider helping with a small task that will bring relief and appreciation beyond words.

