

The CAMERON Connection



Cameron and Associates, Inc.

The Newsletter Of Your **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

WINTER 2010

For Your Information

COUPLE CONFLICT

The best time to talk with your partner about serious issues is not when he or she has just arrived home after a long day at work or is preoccupied with concerns of his or her own. Gauge your partner's receptivity to talking before you begin a difficult conversation. If the timing is off, ask your partner if you can set aside a specific time to speak within the next few days. A conversation is likely to go much better when both parties are ready to have it.

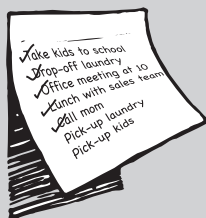


ALCOHOL USE AND SLEEP

Use alcohol in moderation only and not before bedtime. Do not use alcohol to induce sleep. A nightcap can lull you to sleep, but alcohol typically produces light, unsettled sleep. Additionally, using alcohol to fall asleep could lead to dependency.

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS

1. Make a list, prioritize it and check things off as you get them done.
2. Review your list from time to time. Is everything on that list necessary?
3. Ask yourself, "What's the best use of my time right now?" Then do it.



IMPROVING YOUR LIFE

Tips to Improve Work and Family Balance



Finding the right balance between work and family is a difficult and on-going challenge for all working parents. If you're struggling with the demands of work and family, the following ideas and suggestions may help:

The most important thing to know

Work and family don't "balance" automatically. Achieving balance is an on-going process that takes careful listening and communication, planning, joint-decision making and effort. Understanding this can reduce frustration and help you take the actions necessary to create and maintain the right work-family balance for you.

First things first

First and foremost, clarify your values and use them as your guide for planning and making choices regarding work and family demands. Ask yourself these questions:

- ▶ What is most important in your life?
- ▶ What gives your life meaning?
- ▶ What do you want to be and to accomplish in your life?

Clarity on these issues is critical because the answers to these questions affect everything else in your life – especially the decisions you make regarding work and family and the way you spend your time.

Establish priorities

There is not enough time to spend doing things that aren't important to you or your family. Identify your various roles and attach a level of priority to each. Make sure you are putting your time and energy into only those things that are truly most important to you.

Make a plan

Discuss work and family balance with your partner on an on-going basis. Develop a plan that integrates your individual and mutual goals with the responsibilities and issues of work and family. Start from a macro perspective that includes your values and goals and work toward a micro view that describes in detail the roles and responsibilities for each family member.

Discuss expectations

Unspoken expectations and assumptions about how things "should" be done are often the cause of work, family and relationship conflict and stress. When our partner or others do not meet our expectations, often we feel hurt or anger. To avoid upset and improve work-life balance, discuss with your partner what you want and expect of each other. In particular, discuss your expectations and attitudes about the following: housework, house maintenance, meal preparation and meal times, child care, elder care, parenting roles and parent involvement, the nature and amount of couple and family time, time devoted to work and career, money or financial issues.

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Anxious People Have Higher Heart Attack Risk



According to researchers at the University of Southern California, men who scored the highest on tests for anxiety were 30 to 40 percent more likely than the others to have a heart attack. The findings held, said the researchers, even when standard cardiovascular risk factors such as high blood pressure, obesity, high cholesterol, age, cigarette smoking and blood sugar levels were factored in. No matter what risk factors were present, anxious, fearful people have a higher risk.

3 strategies to decrease worry and anxiety

The good news is that anxiety is very treatable. If you are concerned about the amount of worry and anxiety you may be feeling, below are three strategies to help:

- **Control your worry.** Select a half-hour “worry period” that will take place at the same time and place each day. Observe your worrying throughout your day. When you “catch” a worry beginning, postpone it to your worry period, reminding yourself that you will have time later to worry about it and there is no use upsetting yourself now. When you get to your worry period, spend 30 minutes thinking about your concerns and what you can do about them. Try not to dwell on what “might” happen. Focus more on what’s really happening. Distinguish between worries over which you have little or no control, and worries about problems that you can influence. If you can influence the problem, do some problem-solving and take action. If the worry is largely beyond your control, recognize that little or nothing can be done and that you are only making yourself feel bad by worrying.
- **What causes you to feel anxious?** Try to pinpoint what it is you are feeling anxious about. If you can recognize what’s really bothering you, what can you do to eliminate or minimize the situation in some way so that it isn’t so stressful? More important, how can you react differently so you won’t be so affected by this situation?
- **Exercise and learn relaxation techniques.** Not only can exercise and relaxation techniques ease tension and relax the body, they can give you a break from worry. For exercise, focus on aerobic exercise like brisk walking, jogging, swimming or cycling. Relaxation techniques may include muscle relaxation, yoga, biofeedback, meditation or deep breathing. Choose what works best for you.

Your EAP is here to help

If your worry or anxiety seems excessive, uncontrollable or is significantly interfering with your daily functioning, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for CONFIDENTIAL counseling, referrals or information. We’re here to help you or your dependent family members with most-any personal, family or work-related concern.

Do you know the signs of an anxiety disorder?

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the U.S., affecting more than 19 million Americans each year. What are the most common anxiety disorders and their related symptoms?

Generalized Anxiety Disorder – Constant, exaggerated worrisome thoughts and tension about everyday routine life events and activities, lasting at least six months. Almost always anticipating the worst even though there is little reason to expect it; accompanied by physical symptoms, such as fatigue, trembling, muscle tension, headache, or nausea.

Panic Disorder – Repeated episodes of intense fear that strike often and without warning. Physical symptoms include chest pain, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, dizziness, abdominal distress, feelings of unreality, and fear of dying.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder – Persistent symptoms that occur after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event such as rape or other criminal assault, war, child abuse, natural or human-caused disasters, or crashes. Nightmares, flashbacks, numbing of emotions, depression, and feeling angry, irritable or distracted and being easily startled are common.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder – Repeated, intrusive and unwanted thoughts that cause anxiety, often accompanied by ritualized behavior that relieves this anxiety.

Getting Help

According to the NIMH, ninety percent of people with emotional illnesses will improve or recover if they get help.

TIPS TO IMPROVE...

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Involve the whole family

Make sure your family knows that their needs take a high priority despite the demands of your job. Talk about the difficulties of meeting work and family responsibilities and let other family members try to help find solutions. Children can also be given tasks that will help the family accomplish what needs to be done. This sharing of tasks not only teaches children responsibility but also gives them a sense of belonging.

Share responsibilities



Divide parenting and household tasks appropriately among family members. Be sure that everyone in your family understands that household tasks are a responsibility for all family members to tackle. Organize the

division of labor with your partner so that you each cover those tasks that are the easiest and most enjoyable for you to accomplish. Make a list of "don't-want-to-do" items that are aversive, a waste your time, or sap your energy. Delegate these tasks or consider paying for some services to be done.

Bolster productivity at work

Organize your work life to maximize your productivity and minimize workplace distractions or unproductive work habits. If you're putting in long hours at work are you making your time count? Working long hours causes stress that often finds relief naturally through workplace distractions or procrastination. Learn to better manage your time at work and avoid procrastination. Not only can you create more time for family, but you'll find that you're less stressed and performing better at work.

Keep clear boundaries

Whether you are at work or home, do your best to stay fully invested in that place during that time. If you are at home with your family, set aside thoughts of work, turn off your cell phone or Blackberry, and give your full attention to your family. Spend some time each day with your partner and each child. Even if it is only for a few minutes, talk, read or participate in an activity together. Everyone, including you, will feel refreshed and loved in such a positive environment.

Recognize the benefits of balance

Balancing the demands of work and family

Raising a Resilient Child

Resilient people have the ability to deal more effectively with stress and pressure, cope with everyday challenges and bounce back from disappointments, adversity or trauma. Many parenting experts believe that resiliency is the most important quality you can instill in your child. How can you foster resiliency in your child? While there are many factors, parenting experts recommend the following:



What parents can do to help

1. Show unconditional love. Love is the most powerful, protective factor that parents can give their child. Studies about resiliency have found that kids who overcame a very difficult childhood all had at least one adult in their life who loved and believed in them. Kids feel loved when they know their parents enjoy being with them. Schedule one-on-one time with your child daily and give them your undivided attention. This feeling of specialness is integral to their self-esteem.

2. Be empathetic. Empathy is feeling from someone else's perspective and a critical component of all satisfying relationships. By parenting with empathy, you not only foster the healthy, emotional development of your child, but also help your child develop empathy for others. Listen to your child and acknowledge his/her feelings. When your child responds with fear, anger, disappointment or sadness, help them identify the emotions they are feeling. Let them know you understand their feelings. By acknowledging your child's feelings you help your child accept his/her own feelings, which in turn allows your child to resolve them.

3. Treat mistakes as learning experiences. Show your child that it's okay to make mistakes, that they are expected, and that mistakes can be a part of the learning process. When a mistake is made, instead of chastising your child or telling him/her what they did wrong, engage your child in a discussion concerning what they think went wrong and how they think they could avoid a similar mistake from happening in the future. By doing so in a positive and encouraging way, your child will learn that making a mistake doesn't automatically mean that they have failed and that they can use mistakes as a way of learning to find better ways to be successful.

4. Focus on strengths. Self-worth and resiliency come from experiencing success in areas of life others deem important. Every child possesses areas of strength and it is important for you as the parent to identify and reinforce these, rather than focus on weaknesses. Help your child discover their strengths and build confidence by helping him/her set and work toward reasonable goals. Moving toward a goal and receiving praise along the way will help your child focus on what they can accomplish rather than on failures. Each time your child achieves a goal or successfully solves a problem on their own, it gives them the confidence and skill to persevere the next time they face a challenge.

will have positive pay-offs for your children, your relationships with your spouse/partner and children, and everyone's future happiness. Recognizing this can help you keep in mind the critical need for balance in your life.

Your EAP is here to help

Remember, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to help you or your dependents with your personal, family or work-related concerns. All EAP services are prepaid by your employer and strictly confidential. If you need help, why not call an EAP counselor today? We're here to help.

The Need For Balance

If you don't think that balance in your life is vitally important to you happiness, success and health, consider this: There is considerable evidence showing that mishandled stress at home interferes with work performance, and mismanaged on-the-job pressures create or magnify problems at home. Other research shows that the quality of personal relationships strongly influences job productivity, disease resistance and longevity. Conversely, people who value power over family and friendships appear to have a harder time fighting off disease.

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THE NEED FOR BALANCE

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Ask yourself these questions:

- ◆ Can success in one area of your life compensate for failure in another?
- ◆ Can success in your profession compensate for a broken marriage or ruined health?
- ◆ Can success in the community justify failure as a parent?

Important: Success or failure in any role you play contributes to the quality of every other role, and your life as a whole. Keep balance in your life. Identify your various roles and keep them right in front of you so that you don't neglect important areas such as your health, your family, professional preparation, or personal development. Evaluating your various roles and attaching a level of priority to each is another important step toward making more intelligent decisions on where to put your time and energy.

Cameron and Associates, Inc.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE CONSULTANTS MANAGED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

All of us experience problems during our lives. However, sometimes even ordinary problems can become overwhelming. It is at these times your EAP can provide free, confidential help.

Service is available for personal problems including:

- ◆ **Personal/Work Stress**
- ◆ **Marital/Family Problems**
- ◆ **Alcohol/Drug Abuse**
- ◆ **Depression/Anxiety**
- ◆ **Legal/Financial Concerns**
- ◆ **Aging Parents Concerns**
- ◆ **Parenting Problems**
- ◆ **Personal Adjustment to Life Change**

CAI has trained professionals ready to offer assistance to troubled employees and their eligible family members 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Cameron and Associates, Inc.

**Confidential services at
your fingertips...**

(800) 334-6014

Or

(404) 843-3399

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