

May 2020

# EAP NEWS

A worksite newsletter for employees provided by your Employee Assistance Program.



## The EAP Can Help

We understand life is unpredictable right now. Some of us are struggling with the effects of COVID-19 on our lives, or were dealing with personal issues before the pandemic began. The EAP includes free access to short-term-counseling, which can now be accessed by **phone** or **video**.

### Parenting Stress, Isolation, and Coronavirus

Many national associations for child abuse prevention are concerned about incidents of child abuse being underreported during the COVID-19 pandemic. School closures, child care centers, and other programs are not open or operating. Typically, this is how adults outside the home spot signs and symptoms of abuse and make reports. Are you a parent who needs more parenting support or at least great ideas for child behavior management? Find hundreds of ideas at [www.preventchildabuse.org/coronavirus-resources](http://www.preventchildabuse.org/coronavirus-resources). (You will also find great ideas for taking care of, and even pampering, yourself during this difficult time.)

### Choose Healthy Lungs over a Ventilator

Are you still considering an exercise program or attempting to motivate yourself to get fit? Here's some motivation: New research shows that regular exercise can protect you against acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), a possible complication of COVID-19. Avoiding ARDS can keep you off a ventilator. The myth about ventilators is that they help you breathe, and when you are well, you go home. Not exactly. A ventilator often leads to other complications, including damage to the lungs. The older you are, the higher this risk—and it can't be removed. Over 53% of ventilated elderly patients die. If the ventilator is successfully removed, risk of death from respiratory-related health problems later is also higher. COVID-19 is going to be around for a while, so if you are struggling to find the right exercise program, speak with an exercise coach, health advisor, doctor, or EAP. Source: [www.uga.edu](http://www.uga.edu) (Search "ventilator elderly") and [www.news.virginia.edu](http://www.news.virginia.edu) (Search "COVID exercise")

### Grief, Loss, and the Pandemic

Those needing to attend or arrange funerals are facing extreme challenges because of social distancing and travel restrictions related to COVID-19. These circumstances can make grief and loss worse. Thoughtful and effective answers to almost every question imaginable about funerary services and COVID-19 can be found at [www.rememberingalife.com](http://www.rememberingalife.com), with new content posted by the National Funeral Directors Association. You will find the answers about communication, support, grief, overcoming long-distance challenges, funeral options, safe viewing professionals, planning, leveraging technology, holding multiple small ceremonies, and dozens of other issues.



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## Challenges of Working Remotely

If you are new to working remotely, then you are discovering the challenges that come with it. The most frustrating are distractions. As soon as the last one is gone, the next one appears. To deal with distractions, rely less on willpower and more on strategies for each one. Start by keeping a list of distractions you notice. How many did you find or experience, such as dings from email, TV and radio, pet needs, social media, phone calls, text messages, wandering thoughts, and leftover pie that calls out to you? Next, decide on an intervention for each one. If you still struggle, try setting a kitchen timer for 10 to 15 minutes of solid chunks of work time that you blast through—then repeat.

## Thinking About Your Drinking

Studies have found that alcohol consumption increases within 12 months following a major disaster, either man-made or natural. One way that people may choose to cope with stress is by turning to alcohol. Drinking may lead to positive feelings and relaxation, at least in the short term. Problems arise, however, when stress is ongoing and people continue to try and deal with its effects by drinking alcohol. Excess alcohol consumption can actually make you feel more stressed because it's a depressant. Signs of dependence may include anxiety, irritability, extreme mood swings, and drinking alone. Do you feel like your drinking is causing stress or effecting your home or work-life? If the answer is yes, it might be time to contact the EAP to speak with a mental health professional. Source: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/>

## Don't Tough Out Acute Stress Disorder

Does your job include a higher risk of witnessing workplace violence? If you are exposed to such an event, be sure to meet with a qualified mental health professional to discuss your experience and understand symptoms of acute stress disorder (ASD). ASD can follow a traumatic event. Don't tough it out or assume "Ah, I'm okay." Proper care for symptoms may help prevent post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a mental disorder that follows if ASD symptoms don't resolve after six months. ASD may include anxiety, depressed mood, sleep disturbances, nightmares, being constantly tense, being easily startled, irritability, poor concentration, and more. Source: [www.ptsd.va.gov](http://www.ptsd.va.gov)

## Avoid Virtual Harassment as a Remote Employee

Know your responsibilities for avoiding sexual harassment and increase your awareness if you telecommute. On the job, we are surrounded by coworkers, managers, and usually a dynamic workplace. These factors naturally create social and environmental controls that positively influence our civil behavior, manners, and communication. Many of these controls diminish or disappear entirely when we work remotely, although technology tools allow for more contact, along with more options for communication, including texting, chatting, videoconferencing, and telephone—most of it recorded. So, what if you type, text, or voice mail something to your coworker and they reject it, express displeasure with it, or otherwise take offense? The answer is, don't repeat it. Common sexual harassment behaviors include sharing inappropriate photos or background images, making indecent jokes, sending suggestive texts, sending unwanted gifts, and repeatedly asking someone out on a date after they have said no. Don't hesitate to reach out to the EAP or a professional counselor for confidential assistance with issues associated with communication and on-the-job relationships. You can discover resources and develop strategies for more successful communication and relationships on the job.

Information in FrontLine Employee is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health or legal professional. For further help, questions, or referral to community resources for specific problems or personal concerns, contact a qualified professional. Add "http://" to source links to follow. Link titles are always case sensitive.

## May Webinar



### Identity Theft: What Can You Do About It?

As COVID-19 continues to impact the world, Americans are becoming increasingly aware of the risk of scams, fraud and identity theft that could occur during this time. In this webinar, you will learn what identity theft is and how to prevent it. What should you watch out for in your email? What about suspicious text messages? Learn the red flags. And know what to do if it happens to you.

**Log-in** any time this month to watch the webinar and ask the expert questions!



### College Corner

**Parents of high school sophomores & juniors... ATTENTION! If you're concerned about the cost of college and college-related debt, help is available.**

May 1 is traditionally "decision day" for seniors. The day to "commit" to their college of choice, and send in their deposit (this year many schools have changed to June 1). Parents often now hit maximum stress levels, as paying for college becomes a reality. You can avoid (or lower) this stress!

Finding the maximum amount of free money is not an easy task. Last year, more than \$60 billion in free money was given directly to students from colleges.

Unfortunately, brand name recognition often impacts a family's decision. "Popular" schools don't have to lower (discount) the price, and won't. Your state school can't. A school that you have never heard of before can give your student a great education, without breaking the bank, or having to leverage yourself to pay for it.

Want the best education at the best price? Arrange your free 15 minute consultation, and see if the EAP College Planning Program is right for you. Go to <https://my.TimeTrade.Com/book/h62gh>. 15 minutes can save you tens of thousands of dollars. We can help lower existing debt too.

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