

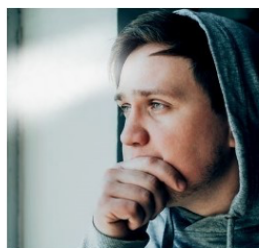
## Supporting Employees Who Have Chronic Pain



Many employees experience chronic pain, but it is not uncommon for pain sufferers to minimize discussing their conditions for fear it could affect their job in some way. Some

employees with fibromyalgia, lupus, and chronic fatigue syndrome may never tell anyone at work about it, not even their boss. Some employees have even reported avoiding the pain associated with getting dressed in the morning by sleeping in their clothes all night. How can coworkers help. Based on an online community survey of employees who experience chronic pain, the most requested need from coworkers was compassion and understanding. Pain sufferers want you to know that they are not lazy, unmotivated, or unwilling, and that the last thing they want is to feel like they let down the team. *Learn more at [www.themighty.com](http://www.themighty.com) (search content tab, and “chronic illness coworkers”).*

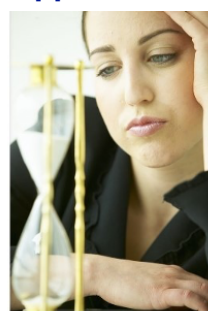
## September: Suicide Prevention Month



Many myths are associated with suicide. Shining light on these myths can prompt more intervention sooner. Intervention starts with asking whether the potential victim is

suicidal, planning suicide, or is thinking about “harming themselves in some way.” One such myth is that suicidal people appear depressed, but this may be true for only 60% of victims. 80% of victims do display warning signs, but despondency is not at the top of the list. More important is what’s expressed. Pay attention to utterances about personal uselessness, being trapped, being a burden on others, having no reason to live, being in too much pain, or having “the” solution to all one’s troubles. Then ask about suicidal thinking or planning, and direct the person to help. You may save a life. *Learn more: [hhs.gov](http://hhs.gov) [search “depression increase risk of suicide”]*

## While Waiting for Your Therapy Appointment



You’ve decided to see a professional counselor, but your chosen psychotherapist isn’t available for a couple weeks or more. It’s difficult waiting, and you feel a burning need to start.

Contact your company’s EAP for short-term support. The EAP won’t provide psychotherapy services, but there is a lot of “pre-therapy” work you might be able to achieve, like getting clarity on the problems and issues you face, thinking about goals, learning about how psychotherapy works, what to expect from therapy, and how to get the most out of it.

## Activities and Risks of COVID-19 Infection



Which activity places you more at risk for contracting COVID-19—getting groceries or eating *outside* at a restaurant? What about traveling by

airplane, attending a basketball game, or eating in a buffet line? Experts were asked to consider the risk associated with 36 different activities and then grade them on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 is the most risky). Although not scientific, the list and scores might help you protect yourself with a decision to participate in certain activities, or in some cases, avoid them altogether.

*Source for list and scores: [www.kltv.com](http://www.kltv.com) [search: “36 activities covid”]*

## Workaholic: Myths That Mess with Mental Health



Workaholics often have habits of thinking that can pose secondary consequences for their own health. “Not deserving a rest” until a certain amount of work is accomplished is one such behavior. Basing one’s personal worth on the amount of work that gets done is another. Paying more attention

to work failures while minimizing the significance of successes, or defending their work practices with retorts like “no one ever died from working too hard” are some examples. Unfortunately, research shows that workaholics will have health problems and die sooner because of how work interferes with health, including results such as erratic sleep, poor nutrition, a lack of work-life balance, loneliness, substance abuse, depression, neglect of exercise (or not enough of the right kind of exercise), and neglecting important health decisions such as annual physicals, examinations, lab tests, and perhaps vaccines. Some workaholics may experience the inability to relax without feeling physically ill, anxious, and agitated if they aren’t working. This prevents them from taking vacations, and often induces them to come to work sick, which is a form of presenteeism. If you are aware of any of these behaviors, it’s time to learn more; and if making healthy changes is difficult, talk to a professional counselor, EAP, or life coach to help you discover a better work-life balance. Start with the 20 questions quiz offered by the 12-step program Workaholics Anonymous. The promise of stopping workaholic behavior is, ironically, increased productivity; improved relationships at work and home; stronger feelings of accomplishment in more aspects of your life; and possibly a longer life. *Source: Quiz for Workaholic at [www.workaholics-anonymous.org](http://www.workaholics-anonymous.org) [search “twenty questions”]*

## When You’re a First-Time Manager



If you’re a new first-time supervisor, you’ll discover an endless stream of advice, including do’s, don’ts, how-to’s, websites, and lots of books. Supervising others and developing leadership skills to get the work done will be your most measured job function.

With experience, you’ll grow instincts, but there is no rushing becoming a great supervisor. Avoid novice mistakes, which include the following: 1) taking on more work, rather than managing the completion of work; 2) not communicating enough above, below, and around you; 3) becoming overwhelmed with to-dos that rob you of your work-life balance; 4) believing others will act quickly and blindly on your say-so; 5) not modeling the type of employee you want others to be; and 6) not getting to know those you supervise one-on-one.

## Becoming a Resilient Employee



During the COVID-19 pandemic, have you coped with stress by thinking, “I am going to see this as a challenge” or “Is there opportunity to grow in this situation?” These responses to adversity represent resilience thinking. Many books about resiliency are authored by those who have faced difficult

challenges—from disabled persons to the Navy Seals. Their commonality is a decision to not surrender. Develop resiliency by discovering what motivates you to get excited about the future. Fight negative self-talk regarding your ability to succeed. Practice work-life balance and self-nurturing behaviors for their powerful benefits. And when you face changes, focus physically and emotionally on what you *can* control. Key: Resiliency skills aren’t pulled from a drawer when they are needed. They are everyday skills you use to solve problems correctly, take action on your goals, and develop reflexes to look for the opportunity in challenges you experience. *Learn more at [www.ncsu.edu](http://www.ncsu.edu) (search “resilience is a process”).*

## Brain-Challenging Activities May Delay Dementia



Alzheimer’s victims may slow the progression of their condition by participating in brain-challenging activities like puzzles, chess, letter writing, and more, according to new research. Brain tissues from active and nonactive older persons were compared and examined upon the individuals’ death. Those who participated

in regular mentally stimulating activities had less of the chemical build-up known to be associated with Alzheimer’s disease. Findings: Active-brain individuals delayed symptoms by up to five years. To support an elderly loved one, encourage brain-challenging activities, but try co-participating with them in online games like checkers, which may reduce loneliness and enhance your relationship. Find online remote games for two with a web search. *Press Release: [www.aan.com/PressRoom/Home/PressRelease/4909](http://www.aan.com/PressRoom/Home/PressRelease/4909)*

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## Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

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Child & Teen issues	Incarceration
Chronic Illness	Legal Matters
Depression / Anxiety	Parenting
Suicidal / Homicidal Ideation	Relationships
Divorce / Separation	Stress Management
Emotional turmoil	Substance Abuse
Finances	Work Issues

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## BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE

Often when people hear the word “bullying,” they think of children on the playground or high schoolers getting teased by their classmates. You might think that as people get older, rates of bullying decline due to developing brains and emotions. However, this is not the case.

The prevalence of workplace bullying is significant. According to a 2017 national survey by the Workplace Bullying Institute, about 20% of U.S. workers have experienced bullying in the workplace and over 60 million workers have been affected by bullying.

### Workplace Bullying Defined

Workplace bullying is defined by aggressive behavior with the intent to intimidate, humiliate, sabotage, or degrade. It involves deliberate, hurtful, and repeated mistreatment of employees fueled by a desire to control.

Bullying behavior can exist at any level of an organization; bullies can be, and often are, managers or supervisors, as well as coworkers.

### Identifying a Bully

It's important to be aware of the signs of bullying in order to identify when it is occurring.

Bullying can take many forms: covert and subtle or blatant and obvious. Many signs of workplace bullying are subtle, such as the person who always takes credit for work that others clearly contributed to or someone who often critiques another's work with the intent of negatively affecting their reputation.

### Examples of bullying:

- Being shouted at or humiliated
- Unwarranted or invalid criticism
- Being the target of practical jokes
- Being excluded or socially isolated
- Verbal intimidation (name calling, teasing, gossiping)
- Excessive scrutiny or micro-management
- Purposely withholding information or necessary resources
- Cyber bullying (via text, email, social media)

It's equally important to be aware of what bullying is not. There will always be healthy conflict in any workplace—colleagues with diverse backgrounds and personalities should be able to work together in a mutually respectful manner while speaking openly about matters, asking difficult questions, and challenging ideas.



### Bullying is not:

- Expressing differences of opinion
- Offering constructive feedback
- Making a legitimate complaint about another worker's conduct
- Reasonable management action, including decisions about job duties or discipline

### Common Characteristics of Bullies and Their Targets

Bullies seek out people who are vulnerable and unlikely to confront or report them. Bullies typically have dominant personalities and are quick tempered and opinionated. Bullies are often insecure themselves, and bullying helps them create the impression they are in control.

On the other hand, their targets tend to be compliant in relationships—wanting to be a people pleaser—and are often shy, quiet, and non-confrontational. Victims are often seen as competition by the bully due to their competence. They might also be new to the workplace.

### The Effects of Bullying

When organizations ignore workplace bullying behavior, it can cost the business significantly due to:

- Loss of productivity
- Increased absenteeism due to manifestation of illness
- Increased accidents on the job and healthcare payouts
- High rate of employee turnover

# BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE

## **Steps to Stop Workplace Bullying**

When a person is being bullied in the workplace, they often experience disbelief and shame, making it difficult for them to report the behavior. Often when the target does report it, the employer is in denial and makes excuses, which enables the behavior. In the majority of bullying cases, the bullying only stops when the target quits, is fired, or is forced to leave.

## **Employers lead by example and should:**

- Know what constitutes bullying behavior
- Focus on job performance and ensure feedback is constructive
- Promote a positive workplace culture
- Establish an anti-bullying zero tolerance policy
- Establish processes for reporting, investigating, and resolving complaints



Whether you're a target or a bystander, be prepared to handle bullying in the workplace with these steps.

## **Tips for Dealing With a Workplace Bully**

If you think you might be a victim of bullying in the workplace, it's important to formulate a plan of action. Remember: Never stoop to the bully's level or let them walk all over you. Instead, take the high road and always keep interactions professional and respectful.

### **Do Your Homework**

Educate yourself about what constitutes bullying behavior.

- Keep a log of the dates and summary of incidents. Note any witnesses who were present.
- Save a paper trail of emails or letters. Keep copies at home rather than in the office.

### **Stand Up for Yourself**

Do not allow yourself to be intimidated.

- Practice self-affirmation and self-assertion.
- Seek to open channels of communication with the bully.
- Address the behavior with the bully—tell them how it makes you feel.
- Tell the bully what the consequences are if it continues (e.g., getting your supervisor involved, contacting the Human Resources department).

## **Useful Assertive Phrases**

"I feel offended by what you said. Can you explain what you meant by it?"

- "I didn't appreciate when you did \_\_\_\_\_ (describe action). It seems like you are purposely trying to interfere with my job duties."
- "I feel disregarded and disrespected by your behavior."

## **Plan of Action**

Make efforts to take action and change the situation before leaving employment.

- Discuss your concerns with your supervisor or other management.
- Contact Human Resources to discuss the situation.
- Reach out to family and friends for support.
- Seek counseling for additional support.

## **What You Can Do as a Bystander**

Listen to the target and offer support.

- Don't participate or spread gossip as this only fuels the bully.
- Document details of what you witness to share with management or Human Resources.
- Tell the bully to stop.
- If the bully continues, walk away—bullies need an audience.



## RESPONDING TO A CHANGING WORKPLACE

In a changing workplace, where downsizing and re-engineering are facts of life, you need to hold yourself accountable for your own job performance, morale, attitude and behavior.

"You need to take initiative to ensure that you will prosper when changes come to your department and the expectations aren't as clear as they once were," says Rosemary T. Salmon, coauthor of *The Mid-Career Tune-Up*. "And instead of waiting for your boss or the company to issue new guidelines, take the opportunity to initiate some personal action plans, so you can actively respond to recent developments."



### Strategies for success

Keep these strategies in mind when your company changes directions, objectives or structure. They are proactive responses to managing your own performance and morale.

- **Do your best to meet cost, time, quality and quantity requirements.** "Even as things around you change, keep your work moving along at a steady, predictable pace," says Ms. Salmon. "You may need to interact more with others who can help you with the resources you need and you may need to keep others informed about new and unexpected obstacles or bottlenecks."
- **Adjust to changing priorities.** You should be able to shift from tasks that are comfortable, habitual and easy to new activities that will help you meet new priorities. "It may be difficult for you to let go of routine actions that you've been doing for a long time," says Ms. Salmon. "But the need to change your approach to accommodate new priorities is essential."
- **Take the initiative in developing creative solutions to problems, and do what's necessary to get the job done.** Decide which is the better option -- a thoughtful, analytical, data-based approach that leads to informed and tested conclusions; or an intuitive, creative, gut-feeling approach based on brainstorming and other imaginative techniques.
- **Accept responsibility for your work and for the consequences of your efforts.** Accountability is an important concept for employers. Companies and their managers are looking for people willing to accept responsibility for whatever happens, even if the results aren't as positive as they may have been in the past. "In times of rapid, unpredictable change, doing the best you can is a fair expectation," says Ms. Salmon. "Plus, accepting responsibility when things fall short of your manager's expectations or your own personal standards is the first step in learning how to make things better."
- **Set high performance standards for yourself.** You know what you're capable of doing, and you know how much time and energy you're willing to invest in your changing job duties. Once you have defined your own performance expectations and made certain they meet at least the minimum required by your company at this time, you should be able to proceed with confidence.
- **Maintain a high level of enthusiasm and an optimistic perspective about changes in responsibilities and directions.** "Even if you feel that what your company has done or is doing isn't in your best interest, you need to keep your end of the bargain by working as conscientiously and efficiently as possible," says Ms. Salmon.
- **Do your best to foster cooperation and teamwork with others.** "Everyone is probably in the same situation, trying to figure out how things are going to develop and stabilize," she says. "Some of your colleagues may have figured out approaches that can help you, and some of them may be able to benefit from your ideas."

# LESS IS MORE: HOW TO SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

Life today is complicated. Most Americans are pulled in multiple directions every day by commitments to their families, workplaces and communities.

Many people have responded to the pressures of modern life by seeking ways to consciously simplify their routines and attitudes at home and work.

"The goal of living a more simple life isn't to arrive at a static point in your life but to become skilled at balancing your personal relationships, workplace issues, finances and other demands," says Heather G. Mitchener, coauthor of *The 50 Best Ways to Simplify Your Life*.



## **Being in the Moment**

One way to simplify your life is to practice mindfulness—to slow down and recognize and appreciate the simple things in life. To be mindful instead of mindless, stay in the moment and be conscious of what you're doing. Don't think ahead or look back.

"When we look ahead constantly, we not only rush through the less pleasant tasks, we also tend to hurry through the things we love to do, because we're always thinking or worrying about what we have to do next," says Ms. Mitchener.

A good way to practice being in the moment is to follow your breath, a technique that doesn't require any special training or self-consciousness. To breathe mindfully, take notice of your breaths and try to make them as calm and even as possible. Your breaths should be long and slow and should come from your diaphragm rather than your upper chest. Pay attention to each breath, letting thoughts fall away.

"You can do this exercise any time you think of it," says Ms. Mitchener. "Make it a goal to be mindful, in general, but also set aside short periods to practice. This will improve your ability to make mindfulness a habit. As you learn to live this way, you'll feel more centered."

## **Slow Down**

If you feel like you have too much information in your life, stop subscriptions to magazines, newspapers, or emails you rarely have time to read. Leave the radio and TV off unless you're really listening to something that matters to you. Turn off your cell phone unless you're making a call or waiting for one that's important.

To reduce the amount of "stuff" in your home, ask yourself these questions before you buy something: Do I really need it? How often will I wear or use it? Where will I store it? Is there a reason why I must buy it?

## **Get Organized**

Begin by sizing up the problem areas in your home or workplace and making a plan of attack. If you're easily discouraged, start with a small, confined area, such as a single drawer. Otherwise, target an area that gives you the most grief. Your goal should be to clear out clutter that causes you to waste time—a hall closet that has become a catchall for everything from clothes to sports equipment.

Learn to focus at work. Multitasking can be an asset, but often the lack of focus it requires means you actually get less done in a day, or less done well. To increase your focus and break free from distractions:

- Begin each day by setting priorities on what you want to accomplish.
- Check email at set times, rather than letting each new message interrupt you.
- Set aside a time to retrieve voice mail and return calls.
- Keep a calendar of your deadlines and obligations

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# The Wellness News

Tips and resources for living well

September 2021

## Cholesterol Education Month

September is National Cholesterol Education Month. This is a good time to get your cholesterol checked and to take steps to lower it if it is high. Understanding cholesterol numbers can feel overwhelming, but knowing the values, and managing them is an important part in taking control of your heart health. This month, take the time to talk with your family and health care team about your heart health.

About 38% of adults in the United States have high cholesterol (meaning a total cholesterol of  $>200$  mg/dl). High cholesterol usually has no signs or symptoms. You may not know you have unhealthy cholesterol levels until it is too late—when you have a heart attack or stroke. That is why it's so important to get your cholesterol levels checked at your annual physical.



Take control of your heart health now by following these steps:

1. **Never miss your annual physical.** This is a great time to get lab work drawn, and have your numbers evaluated by a physician.
2. **Make healthy food choices.** Limit your intake of saturated fats, and instead choose foods naturally high in fiber and *unsaturated* fats.
3. **Stay active every day.** Find opportunities to move throughout the day. It is recommended adults get at least 150 of moderate intensity exercise *weekly*. That's just 30 minutes, 5 times a week!
4. **Quit smoking.** Smoking damages your blood vessels, and hardens the arteries, which increase your risk for heart disease.
5. **Talk with your healthcare provider.** Your physician can accurately evaluate your risk and prescribe medication if needed.
6. **Know your family history.** Talk openly with your family and note if high cholesterol runs in your family (parents or immediate family members). Knowing your risk means you can better manage your cholesterol.
7. **Take your medication as prescribed.** If your doctor prescribes a medication to lower your cholesterol, take it as directed and do not stop taking it without first consulting your doctor. Never hesitate to ask questions about your medication.

This month make your health a priority! A simple blood draw or doctor's appointment could be the lifesaving step you make for yourself. Take a moment to learn more about your cholesterol. Managing your cholesterol is a team effort and your health is worth it.

# "5 A Day" for Your Health

Fruits and vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet, yet many people don't get near the recommended amount per day. Many have also heard to eat "5 A Day" for your health. You may also have heard to eat a rainbow of colors. This is because the many colors provide different nutrients for your body.



There have been research studies conducted to evaluate how fruit and vegetable consumption affects mortality. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a team led by Dr. Dong D. Wang at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School examined the relationship between fruit and vegetable intake and mortality. The researchers gathered data from one study of more than 66,000 women from 1984-2014 and another of more than 42,000 men from 1986-2014. They included participants who were free of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer when the studies began. Participants answered questions about their diets every two to four years.

The team also conducted a meta-analysis, combining their data with published results from 24 other studies. The work was funded by NIH's National Cancer Institute (NCI), National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), and National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). Results appeared in *Circulation* on March 1, 2021.

As expected, mortality decreased as fruit and vegetable intake increased. Eating an average of five servings per day was associated with a 13% lower risk of death than eating only two servings per day. Beyond five servings per day, eating more fruits and vegetables wasn't associated with further reduction in mortality risk. A meta-analysis of 26 studies, which involved a total of more than 1.8 million participants, yielded similar results.

As you can see, there is scientific evidence that eating "5 A Day" is good for your health so start adding servings of fruits and vegetables to your diet today!

Sources: <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/fruit-vegetable-consumption-reduce-risk-death>

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# Sweet Potato Black Bean Enchiladas

## Ingredients

- 1 15oz can black beans
- 1lb frozen spinach, thawed and drained
- ¼ cup salsa
- 8 corn tortillas
- 1 15oz can enchilada sauce
- ½ cup shredded cheddar
- 2 med. Sweet potatoes microwaved until tender

## Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 400
2. Dice cooked sweet potato and add to a bowl with beans, spinach and salsa. Stir to combine.
3. Divide evenly between tortillas and roll up.
4. Pour enchilada sauce over top and sprinkle with cheese.
5. Bake about 20 min.

Serves: 4 | Serving Size: 1/4 recipe; Per serving: Calories: 377



## *Health Tip:*

## Aging Gracefully

- Eat and drink healthy; focus on whole foods.
- Move more, sit less; take a walk with a friend.
- Get regular checkups; preventive care is the key to good health.
- Be aware of changes in brain health; talk to your doctor about any memory issues.

**Action:** *Focus on your health to remain active and independent for as long as possible!*

# Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. It is observed by health experts and advocates, along with individuals concerned with men's prostate health and prostate cancer. Prostate cancer is the most common non-skin cancer diagnosed in men, and the second leading cause of cancer deaths in men, after lung cancer.

The prostate is a gland in the male reproductive system located just below the bladder and in front of the rectum. It is about the size of a walnut and surrounds part of the urethra (the tube that empties urine from the bladder).



Prostate cancer is more common in older men and is more likely to occur in men with a family history of prostate cancer and in men of African American descent. Other risk factors include smoking, being overweight, and not getting enough exercise. In the United States, about 11% of men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer at some point during their lifetimes.

According to the National Cancer Institute, prostate cancer often has no early symptoms. Advanced prostate cancer can cause men to urinate more often or have a weaker flow of urine, but these symptoms can also be caused by benign prostate conditions. It's recommended to begin prostate screenings at age 40. However, if you have other risk factors, such as family history, your physician may suggest that you start screening earlier.

The two tests commonly used to detect Prostate Cancer are:

- [Digital rectal exam \(DRE\)](#): A doctor or nurse inserts a gloved, lubricated finger into the rectum to estimate the size of the prostate and feel for lumps or other abnormalities.
- [Prostate specific antigen \(PSA\) test](#): The most common test measures the level of PSA in the blood. PSA is a substance made by the prostate and the levels of PSA in the blood can be higher in men who have prostate cancer. PSA levels may also be elevated in other conditions that affect the prostate.

Because of effective screening options for prostate cancer, the disease is often caught before it spreads. Be sure to speak with your healthcare professionals about recommended screenings and any issues or concerns.