

Tips and resources for living well

November 2021

November is both Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month and Diabetes Awareness Month! These two topics go hand in hand as they both involve the pancreas.

Pancreatic Cancer Awareness

The cause of most pancreatic cancer cases is unknown. There is evidence that the following may increase your risk of pancreatic cancer: age, obesity, pancreatitis, smoking, diabetes, and family history.

The symptoms of pancreatic cancer are often vague and may at first appear to be associated with other less serious and more common conditions. Because the symptoms are mild, it is important to get screened regularly, especially if you are at risk. Symptoms can include stomach pain, mid-back pain, unexplained weight loss, jaundice (yellowish eyes or skin), loss of appetite, nausea, indigestion, changes in stool, and new onset diabetes.

Pancreatic cancer has the highest mortality rate of all major cancers. It is currently the 3rd leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States, after lung and colon cancer.

In 2021 an estimated 60,430 Americans will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in the U.S., and more than 48,220 will die from the disease.

This November talk to your doctor about your risk for pancreatic cancer and schedule a screening if recommended. Early screening saves lives!

Diabetes Awareness Month

The two most commonly known types of diabetes are type 1 and type 2. Type 2 diabetes is when the body is unable to process internal insulin well enough to keep blood sugar at normal levels. Type 1 diabetes occurs when the body can't produce any insulin on its own. Insulin is a hormone in the pancreas that breaks down carbohydrates into blood sugar or glucose, for energy. Insulin therapy helps the pancreas to function normally. Both are serious conditions and require careful monitoring to control.

Know your risk factors. You may be predisposed to develop Type 2 diabetes if you are overweight, older than 45, have a history of diabetes in your family, struggle to exercise each week, or you have prediabetes. Losing weight is a key preventive measure! Losing 5-10% of your body weight can reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes as well as lower your A1C. Aim to exercise 30 minutes each day for 5 days a week.





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FUN FACT: An Egyptian manuscript dating around 1500 BC was one of the first documents in history describing diabetes as a disease.

Ask your doctor about your risk for developing diabetes. Take action today by planning healthy, balanced meals and exercising 5 days each week.

Fatty Liver

Fatty liver disease is a chronic health condition that causes fatty deposits to become trapped in the liver. According to Cleveland Clinic, risk factors for fatty liver disease include:

- Being obese or overweight
- Having Type 2 diabetes or insulin resistance
- Having metabolic syndrome
- Taking certain prescription medications such as <u>amiodarone</u> (Cordarone®), <u>diltiazem</u> (Cardizem®), <u>tamoxifen</u> (Nolvadex®) or steroids

Common causes of fatty liver include:

- The consumption or use of alcohol, drugs, and other toxins
- Diet high in fat and/or sodium
- High cholesterol
- Autoimmune disease
- Genetics

There are two different types of nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD):

<u>Simple fatty liver</u>: This means you have fat in your liver, but you may not have any <u>inflammation</u> in your liver or damage to your liver cells. It usually doesn't get worse or cause <u>problems with your liver</u>. Most people with NAFLD have simple fatty liver.

Nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH): This is much more serious than a simple fatty liver. NASH means you have inflammation in your liver. The inflammation and liver cell damage that happen with NASH can cause serious problems such as fibrosis and <u>cirrhosis</u>, which are types of liver scarring, and <u>liver cancer</u>. About 20% of people with NAFLD have NASH.

According to the Mayo Clinic, because NAFLD typically does not cause any symptoms, it frequently comes to medical attention when tests done for other reasons point to a liver problem. This can happen if your liver looks unusual on ultrasound or if you have an abnormal liver enzyme test.

The first line of treatment is usually weight loss through a combination of a healthy diet and exercise. Losing weight addresses the conditions that contribute to NAFLD. Ideally, a loss of 10% of body weight is desirable, but improvement in risk factors can become apparent if you lose even 3% to 5% of your starting weight. Weight-loss surgery is also an option for those who need to lose a great deal of weight. Exercise and following a balanced diet are recommended to lose weight slowly but steadily. Rapid weight loss can make fatty liver disease worse. Doctors often recommend the Mediterranean diet, which is high in vegetables, fruits, and healthy fats.

According to the Cleveland Clinic, fatty liver can be reversed in some cases. Consider fatty liver disease an early warning sign to help you avoid a fatal liver condition like cirrhosis or liver cancer. Even if you don't have symptoms or any liver function problems at this point, it's still important to take steps to prevent fatty liver disease.





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Bladder Health Awareness Month

While anyone can get bladder cancer, it is most common in older adults (over 60-65 years old). Some risk factors for getting bladder cancer include:

- Smoking
- Radiation therapy in the pelvic area
- Arsenic in drinking water
- Chemicals in the workplace.

Hairdressers, painters, printers, and dry cleaners are at higher risk for developing bladder cancer due to the long-term exposure of harmful chemicals. Smoking increases bladder cancer risk by at least 2-3 times compared to non-smokers. When someone quits smoking, their risk goes down, although it may never go back to that of a non-smoker.

The most common symptom of bladder cancer is painless blood in the urine. Although blood may be visible, in most cases it is unseen except under a microscope. In these cases, blood is found when urine is tested by a health care provider. The presence of blood alone does not mean that there is bladder cancer. There could be many reasons for blood in the urine, such as a <u>urinary tract infection</u> or <u>kidney stones</u>. Microscopic amounts of blood might even be normal in some people.

Frequent or painful urination is less common. If these symptoms are present and a urinary tract infection is not found, it is important to talk to a health care provider to find out if bladder cancer is the cause.

Urologists use two tests to find bladder cancer:

- Imaging test (usually a computerized tomography (CT) scan). Imaging looks at your kidneys which can be a source of blood in the urine.
- Cystoscopy (a small camera attached to a long, thin tube is put into the opening of your urethra and into the bladder). Cystoscopy looks at your bladder lining to detect tumors that can be another source of blood.

If you or someone you know are experiencing any signs or symptoms, be sure to talk with your health care provider.

We know it is not always easy to juggle everything & realize simple tips can help provide a different approach.

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Spaghetti Squash Lasagna

Ingredients

- 1 med spaghetti squash divided
- 1.5 cup low fat Ricotta
- 1 egg
- 1tsp dried basil
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder
- 1.5 cup marinara sauce
- 4 cup fresh baby spinach
- ½ cup part skim mozzarella

Directions

- You may want to precook the spaghetti squash. Slice spaghetti squash in half and remove seeds. Bake flesh side down 40 min at 350 degrees.
- Preheat oven to 350
- Combine Ricotta, egg, basil, oregano, garlic powder
- Begin layering by putting ½ cup marinara on the bottom of a greased pan. Then 2 cups cooked spaghetti squash, ¾ cups Ricotta mixture, 2 cups fresh spinach, ½ cup marinara, ¼ cup mozzarella.
- Repeat with same amounts for next layers.
- Bake uncovered 30 min.
- Let sit 10 min before slicing.

Healthy Holiday Tips

Avoid holiday stress and weight gain by planning ahead:

- · Start your healthy holiday meal plans a few weeks ahead
- Buy non-perishables ahead of time
- Make ahead and freeze some casseroles or side dishes
- Schedule exercise into your holiday plans
- Track calories to avoid overindulging

Action: Have family members choose and make dishes to provide for family gatherings.



WorkingSolutions



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How to Be Energized (Not Paralyzed) by Stress

Better diet, journaling, sleep, meditation, exercise—they're ways of managing stress. But have you considered altering your mindset as a stress management tactic? Begin with this question: "How much anxiety will I accept in this stressful situation?" Surprisingly, this question prompts awareness, and it decreases the likelihood you will respond to a stressor in an unhealthy way. Rather than panicking, fleeing, or escaping the stress, you challenge it. You make it a launching pad for higher productivity. The goal: overcome rather than succumb to it. Successful stress management is when you actively are directing a desired outcome. You make stress work for you rather than on you. No stress management tactic works in every situation, but this one demonstrates that mindset matters, and you can direct stress away from taking its toll on your health.

Thinking about Alcoholism Treatment

Many people considering alcoholism treatment are stopped by fear. This includes the prospect of giving up drinking entirely and the mystery of treatment itself—what it might entail. Today, treatment closely follows a chronic disease model. This is dominated by education, supported by overwhelming research on the biogenic nature and inheritability of risk for the disease and fewer psychological processes. Education dispels myths while motivating the patient to not just want but also to be excited about abstinence. Most patients wonder why they did not do it sooner.

Human Interaction with Plants Reduces Stress

For years, people have assumed that plants in the workplace can reduce stress, but scientific studies now confirm it.

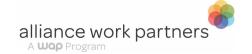
Here's the technical explanation: "Results suggest that active interaction with indoor plants can reduce physiological and psychological stress compared with mental work. This is accomplished through suppression of sympathetic nervous system activity and diastolic blood pressure and promotion of comfortable, soothed, and natural feelings." For plant options that don't need sunlight, go to https://joyfulderivatives.com [search "no

https://joyfulderivatives.com [search "no sunlight"].

Source: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov [search "PMC4419447"]

Delta-8 THC (Just Don't Use It, Too)

Delta-8 THC—derived from cannabis—has been in the news lately. It is also an intoxicant, but sellers bill it as "pot-lite." It's not less harmful. Between December 2020 and July 2021, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reported adverse effects in 22 consumers who required emergency room or hospital intervention for side effects including hallucinations, loss of consciousness and vomiting. Note that the FDA has not approved any psychoactive form of pot for any medical condition. Federal regulations prohibit employees from using THC if they have regulated, safety-sensitive positions, and over 150 research studies (and there are many more) have demonstrated the harm and risk of cannabis use. See the list: www.independentsentinel.com [search bar: "150 scientific studies'] Source: www.FDA.gov [search "delta-8"]



Support for Military Families

Military families face many stressors, especially when separated by deployment. For years, surveys have sought to identify these stressors and rank them, with the goal of improving support programs. Military spouse unemployment, especially in 2020, was the top stressor, but a multitude of stressors associated with family life consistently dominate the list. These include isolation, limited social support, and the stress of separation. What makes military family stress important is its link to sustaining military readiness. The ability to focus on one's job while deployed is lessened and risk on a mission is increased when the family back home is in crisis. Everyone has a stake in family wellness. You can play a supportive role. Do you know of a military family separated by the miles? Many spouses and partners suffer in silence. This may be compounded by elder care/caregiver responsibilities. Reaching out, discovering needs, pitching in, and being a good neighbor can make a huge impact. There are hundreds of volunteer organizations that serve military families—from direct aid to distribution of toys to children. You can find most at charitynavigator.org, where you can identify ways to participate and examine organizations, including their financial profiles, mission, impact, and transparency.

Source: www.bluestarfam.org/#findings

Making Seasonal Family Gatherings More Joyous

Family holiday gatherings and celebrations may be more popular this year. Indeed, many people seek to make up for time lost because of their inability to make close and personal visits because of the pandemic. Relatives often stress each other out at such gatherings, and volumes have been written that offer advice on coping with annoving spats. Practically speaking, helpful intervention suggestions boil down to a few key ideas. Consider the following if conflict is on the horizon this season. 1) Preempting: Before a visit, ask that certain subjects (like politics or "Are you dating someone yet?") remain off-limits. 2) Stay cool: Triggers happen, but with a bit of practice, you'll avoid reacting to them. Practice role-plays with a friend that test your triggers and build resilience to difficult topics you wish to avoid. 3) Assertiveness 101: Be direct and respectful but clear about your wants and needs. "Rise above" your trigger with a well-practiced request: "Aunt Sally, I'd like to talk about something else. Let's discuss "

Recapture Your Energy after Work

Consider dozens of ways to recapture your energy if you're frustrated by being too tired after coming home from work. A quick search will locate many energizing strategies, but experiment with a combination of the following, which are frequently mentioned in workplace wellness articles: 1) Drink a glass of water and exercise for ten minutes or more. 2) Try a healthy, low-glycemic snack. 3) Take a short 20-minute power nap (set a timer so you don't nap longer). 4) Meet up or exercise with positive people (they'll energize you). 5) Meditate—no, it won't put you to sleep. Engage in rejuvenation activities immediately upon arrival at home. See a doctor if you feel chronically tired and fatigued or get a consult if you struggle with getting proper sleep.

Helping Someone Seek Help for a Mental Illness

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the most common untreated mental illness affecting those in the workplace is depression. Depression can make it difficult for a person to finish tasks, and it can interfere with their ability to process information and think clearly on the job. Only 57% of employees who are diagnosed with moderate depression receive treatment, and only 40% of employees reporting severe depression get help, savs the CDC. This makes it likely that you will interact with a worker who suffers from untreated depressive illness. You can't make a diagnosis, but you can encourage a coworker to visit the EAP or a community-based mental health provider when you hear statements of hopelessness or feeling trapped or you witness isolating behaviors and withdrawal from social connection with others at work.

Source: www.cdc.gov [search "workplace mental health"]

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LOOKING AT HAPPINESS AS A CHOICE

Are you a person who can act on tough questions? Questions like: What am I grateful for? What choices do I have? What actions can I take to improve my life? What are my primary strengths? How can I live a more balanced life?

People who can act on these questions likely also describe themselves as happy.

"Happiness is neither a mood nor an emotion. Mood is a biochemical condition, and emotions are transitory feelings," says Dan Baker, Ph.D., director of the Life Enhancement Program at Canyon Ranch in Tucson, Ariz., and author of *What Happy People Know*. "Happiness is a way of life, an overriding outlook composed of qualities like love, optimism, courage, and a sense of freedom. It's not something that changes every time your situation changes."

People often think happiness is something you're born with, but you can learn the qualities of happiness by mastering Dr. Baker's happiness tools described here.

Appreciation

This is the most fundamental tool. It is a form of love that asks for nothing and gives everything.

"Taking time each day to appreciate what you have, to think about people who have made a difference, to acknowledge the love you have or have had. Each of these things can turn your attention to the good in your life," says Dr. Baker. "This process shifts your attention away from fear, which is often the basis of unhappiness."

Choice

Feeling as though you have no choices or options in life is like being in jail. It leads to depression, anxiety, and learned helplessness.

"Unhappy people make the mistake of giving in to fear, which limits their perception of the choices they have," says Dr. Baker. "Happy people turn away from fear and find they have an array of choices they can make in almost every situation."

Personal Power

Personal power has two components: taking responsibility and taking action. It means realizing your life belongs to you and then doing something about it.

"When you're secure in your personal power, it keeps you from becoming a victim," says Dr. Baker. "When you have it, you know you can handle whatever life dishes out."

Leading with Your Strengths

Focusing on your weaknesses reinforces unhappiness. By focusing on your strengths, you can solve problems and improve situations.

"Building and broadening your talents and positive qualities feels good and improves your rate of success in every endeavor," says Dr. Baker. "People get energy from building on their successes, not fighting their failures."

Power of Language

You think in words, and those words have the power to limit you or set you free. Similarly, the stories you tell yourself about your life eventually become your life.

"Self-talk is powerful, so it's important to choose your words carefully," says Dr. Baker. "If you use destructive or critical language, you'll push yourself deeper into fear. Even something as simple as calling an unexpected situation a possibility instead of a problem can change the way you look at it."

A good rule to follow in self-talk is to talk to yourself the way you want others to talk to you.

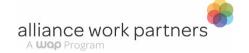
Multidimensional Living

There are three primary components of life: relationships, health and purpose, and work. Many people, though, put all their energy into just one area.

"But doing so never works," says Dr. Baker.

"Happiness comes from living a full life."

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HOW TO SET AND ACHIEVE PROFESSIONAL GOALS

If you want to accomplish something instead of drifting aimlessly, you have to set goals. Nowhere is this more relevant than in today's workplace.

"Setting professional goals is a game plan for yourself and your company," says Frank Arnold, D.P.A., associate professor of public administration and management at Saint Leo University in Saint Leo, Fla. "Knowing precisely where you're going and what you want to achieve puts you in the driver's seat. It helps you plan for your training and educational needs."

Moreover, goal setting is important in a team-oriented workplace. "You help your work group by ensuring your skills are current," says Paula deLong, a licensed psychologist and a counselor in the employee assistance program at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia.

Goal setting is one of life's most difficult responsibilities-not because goals are so hard to establish, but because you may lack the motivation or courage to ask yourself what you want. "If you're like most people, you can't picture yourself outside of the safety and familiarity of your current comfort zone," Dr. Arnold says. Yet setting goals and achieving them can boost your effectiveness, increase your satisfaction in your accomplishments and deepen your self-confidence.

Keys to success

Keep the following guidelines in mind when setting professional goals:

- First, ask yourself what will satisfy you and make you happy. Self-reflection requires you to face your dreams, fears, limitations and obligations to others
- Identify which skills you're proficient in and consider whether they can be used elsewhere in the organization.
- Research what's involved in meeting your goals.
 Get a clear understanding of the skills, information or assistance you'll need to attain them.
- Identify the incremental steps and deadlines involved in attaining your goals. If you want to attend graduate school for additional credentials, for instance, you must study for the entrance exam, take the exam, then apply for admission to the school.
- Set specific goals. Setting goals that are vague or too large can result in frustration and discouragement and cause you to give up. "To become an expert in computers is a broad goal that could be overwhelming. Narrow your goal to make it more manageable," Dr. Arnold says.
 "Completing one course in Microsoft Word at the local community college is more reasonable."
- Make your goals measurable. "This allows you to see progress and keeps you motivated," Ms. deLong says. "Increase my sales quota by 10 percent this year' is an example of a measurable goal."
- Set a time limit for achieving your goals, otherwise, you'll never see closure, only a long, pointless grind.

Stay motivated

To stay motivated, acknowledge your progress and reward yourself along the way. Congratulate yourself for completing your first semester toward an advanced degree. Praise yourself for being promoted.

It's also important to remain flexible and positive. Your goals will change as you refine your career plan or as roadblocks appear that cause temporary detours, Dr. Arnold says, "goal setting is a dynamic, ongoing process that should always be part of your professional life."

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MAKING GOOD HEALTH A HABIT

Habits can be good for you, and then there are ones with some room for improvement. You'll find only benefits when you add the following health-saver habits to your daily routine for the rest of your life. The earlier in your life you begin many of the following suggestions, the greater the benefit.

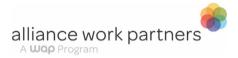
- Eat a raw vegetable or piece of fresh fruit. Adding just one extra serving of produce to your daily diet can reduce your risk of some cancers.
- Engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity for 30 to 60 minutes most days of the week. This activity is healthful even if performed in 10- or 15minute increments throughout the day.
- Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Shallow breathing makes your heart beat faster. Deep belly-breaths slow your heart rate and reduce stress.
- Bend your knees when you lift. Doing so protects your back from stress, strain, and injury.
- Read the label directions and warnings before taking any medication.
- Stand up and stretch. Raise your hands over your head and stand on your tiptoes. Bend your knees and touch the floor with your fingers. Stretching improves circulation and reduces muscle tension.
- Check out your toothbrush. Replace it if the bristles are frayed or discolored.
- Add soy milk or soy flour to your recipes. Eating soy foods regularly can reduce your risk of heart disease and may reduce the risk of some cancers.
- Wear a helmet when appropriate (such as in-line skating or riding a bicycle). Doing so will significantly reduce your risk of head injury.
- Drink tea, which contains antioxidants that can help reduce your cancer risk. Teas such as oolong are reportedly more beneficial than black tea.
- Pet a pet. People who spend time with cats, dogs, and other pets have lower blood pressure than those who don't.

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- Check your skin for ticks after spending time outdoors. Removing ticks quickly can reduce your risk of Lyme disease.
- Check your home smoke detectors. Replace any that don't work after you change the batteries.
 Change the batteries annually.
- Regularly clean your contact lenses thoroughly and disinfect your lens case. Doing so can reduce your risk of eye infections.
- Wear sunglasses when you're outdoors. Doing so can preserve your sight by shielding the retina from ultraviolet rays that can cause cataracts and other sight-stealing diseases.
- Drink a tall glass of water. Most Americans drink half as much water each day as is recommended. The resulting dehydration can cause fatigue, headache, and constipation.
- Adjust your car seat as far back as you can and still drive comfortably. Doing so will reduce your risk of injury from an inflating airbag.
- Check your body for signs of skin cancer. Look for moles that are asymmetric, bigger than a pencil eraser, multicolored, or that have changed.
- Drink 3 glasses of skim milk or have 3 servings of other low-fat dairy products a day. Doing so provides calcium, which can lower your blood pressure and reduce your risk of osteoporosis.
- Take a break from typing and other repetitive tasks and massage your hands and forearms.
- Take a multivitamin once a day.
- Clean out your medicine cabinet; throw out any medications that are older than their expiration dates.

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Managing Holiday Stress

The holiday season often brings unwelcome guests — stress and depression.

And it's no wonder ... the holidays present a dizzying array of demands — parties, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining, to name just a few.

You can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays ... you may even end up enjoying the holidays more than you thought you would.

Tips to prevent holiday stress and depression

When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past.

- 1. Express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.
- 2. Reach out. If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. Volunteering your time to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships.
- 3. Be realistic. The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well.
- 4. Set aside differences. Accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. And be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry.
- 5. Stick to a budget. Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget.

Try these alternatives:

- Donate to a charity in someone's name.
- Give homemade gifts.
- Start a family gift exchange.

system is under assault.



- **6**. Plan ahead. Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list.
- 7. Learn to say no. Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity.
- 8. Don't abandon healthy habits. Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt.

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Try these suggestions:

- Have a healthy snack before holiday parties so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks.
- *Get plenty of sleep.*
- *Incorporate regular physical activity into each day.*
- 9. Take a breather. Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm.

Some options may include:

- Taking a walk at night and stargazing.
- Listening to soothing music.
- Getting a massage.
- Reading a book.

different.

10. Seek professional help if you need it. Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

Take control of your holidays, instead of letting the holidays control you.

Don't let the holidays become something you dread. Instead, take steps to prevent the stress and depression that can descend during the holidays. Learn to recognize your holiday triggers, such as financial pressures or personal demands, so you can combat them before they lead to a meltdown. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays.



'Tis the Season ... for your EAP

With the shortened winter days, there is less daylight to get you moving and time for holiday work and family obligations. You may start feeling sluggish or experience a lack of motivation. It is common for stress levels to rise and the EAP is here. By speaking with an Intake Counselor, you can get help with:

Community Resources
Counseling Services
Eldercare Resources
Family Support
Financial Issues
Health & Wellness

Legal Concerns
Loneliness
Occupational Strategies
Stress | Anxiety
Teen Support
... and more

Accessing the EAP is easy, confidential and there is no cost. Give us a call to speak with an Intake Counselor today!

The Holiday Season has a variety of emotions, challenges, expectations and possibilities. Your EAP has free and confidential resources to address the issues you face so you can enjoy the full potential of the New Year.

1-800-343-3822 | www.AWPnow.com

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