

EAPworks

A newsletter to promote employee health in the workplace.



 UnityPoint Health
Allen Hospital

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What does Allen EAP offer?

Allen Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services are a free benefit provided by your employer to help you and your family deal with life's problems and the stress caused by these problems.

You can talk to an EAP counselor about:

- Job stress
- Depression or anxiety
- Family or marital conflicts
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Relationship difficulties
- Grief & loss issues
- Parenting issues
- Financial problems

When should I call Allen EAP?

Does a problem occupy a lot of your time? Does it interfere with your normal activities at work or at home? Have symptoms persisted for more than two weeks? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, it's time to get help.

How do I make an appointment with Allen EAP?

To schedule a confidential appointment, call (319) 235-3550 or toll-free at 1-800-303-9996, Monday - Thursday, 8:00 am to 8:00 pm and 8:00 am to 3:00 pm on Friday. Identify yourself as part of your company's Employee Assistance Program. We'll schedule an appointment to meet your needs. Evening appointments are available.

What if it's an Emergency?

If a personal crisis occurs when our office is closed, call (319) 235-3550 or toll-free at 1-800-303-9996. An EAP counselor will contact you within one hour of your call to help you stabilize the situation.

Treating the Aftermath of Trauma



All of us handle stress differently, including traumatic stress—experienced when a severe injury or the threat of severe injury or death occurs, or while witnessing these things affecting others. Believability of the threat and fear are key factors that produce traumatic stress. How you react to traumatic stress does not demonstrate weakness or other personality flaws. However, lingering symptoms may cause you to think, “I should snap out of this.” Caution: Overcoming traumatic stress is not necessarily a do-it-yourself project. This avenue of thought could lead you to avoid the best form of help—counseling with a professional who could help you return to a pre-trauma state. If you experience sleep disturbances, intrusive thoughts, mood swings, flashbacks, or are easily startled following a traumatic event, talk to a professional counselor or your doctor. Like a cut or other physical injury, traumatic stress left untreated or ignored can fester too. Not with bacteria, of course, but with bothersome symptoms that may cause additional issues if they remain chronic. Proper treatment approaches exist to help you overcome traumatic stress and prevent it from interfering with your life.

Never Too Late to Start Exercising

Middle-aged men waiting for motivation to start an exercise program have some good news—the exercise does not need to be that vigorous or take that long to do a lot of good. And, if you weren't an exercise dynamo in your 20s or 30s, you haven't lost ground in preventing heart disease. The key is to start now. Twenty minutes a day is enough to get solid benefits—a 21% reduced risk of heart failure! Inactivity raises your risk 69% for early heart failure. You don't have to overdo it. The same study also showed that heart-failure risk is higher for those who over exercise—and the negative returns equaled the risk for those who are inactive! Researchers believed the findings would also apply to women. Source: heartfailure.onlinejacc.org



Know Your Strongest Skills

Could you quickly describe your skills and abilities in a chance encounter with a CEO? Be the expert on yourself, and improve self-awareness by periodically taking inventory of your skills. Take a look at the free online Dictionary of Occupational Titles (www.occupationalinfo.org). Search your job (or a similar one). Notice the skills listed, and whether there are some you possess but have never considered. Repeat with your past jobs, and a job you'd like in the future. Now examine soft skills. A list can be found at bit.ly/softskills123. Soft skills are closely linked with emotional intelligence, and those who hire know they can predict job success. Their importance can't be overstated. Consider all you've gathered about yourself. You now have a renewed understanding of yourself, how to advance your career, and how to sell your most important product—you.

When You Discover Teen Drug Use

The discovery of a teen's drug use can create overwhelming fear and concern for parents, but there are no boilerplate best-intervention steps. Age, circumstances, the substance used, frequency of use, your child's current school status, and even your family's medical history of risk for dependence on substances can figure into an effective response. There are four key factors to weigh in your response.

1) Avoid the decision to say or do nothing.

This includes minimalizing the use (e.g., "thank goodness it was only pot"), because there is risk associated with any kind of substance abuse. 2) Assess the situation.

Attempt to discover when the drug was used, how often it was used, who it was used with, how it was acquired, how much your teen possessed, and the circumstances of use. This assessment process will probably lead you to a decision on how to respond. 3) Consider family goals, standards, values, hopes, expectations, and legal implications.

Reflect on them to help craft your response. 4) Do not allow the desire to avoid conflict thwart your better judgment to intervene. Winning this inner battle comes with the territory of parenting. 5) Turn to professional counseling or guidance—for yourself—if you are unsure how to respond or believe your intervention was not effective. This step can be a tough one, but may save years, even decades, of anguish.



Am I Under Too Much Stress?



Could you be under too much stress and not realize it? Being overstressed (in distress) doesn't necessarily include worry, dread, anxiety, or sleep problems. Though common, these symptoms are not experienced by everyone. Instead, you might experience rashes or diarrhea, bicker more with a life partner, have neck pain, or become disorganized and forgetful. Being quick to anger ("snappiness") is a sign of increasing distress, but self-awareness for spotting it may be minimal. Others are more likely to point it out. Reaction to stress stems from the body's "fight or flight" response to a perceived threat. This response can manifest in different ways, but because life stress is often psychological (fear of being fired, late to work, etc.), there is nowhere to run. Stress therefore will take its toll on your body. When undesirable symptoms of stress appear and don't relent, it's time to intervene. Find a large list of stress symptoms at www.stress.org/stress-effects.

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EAPworks is published quarterly by UnityPoint Health – Allen Hospital for Allen EAP clients to provide reliable information on health-related topics. It is not intended to provide medical advice on personal health matters, which should be obtained directly from a physician.