

LIFE IN *BALANCE*

Your guide to healthy living.

Giving thanks



The holiday season isn't approaching – it's here. In the midst of all the holiday commercials, Employee Assistance Services wants you to take time to remember Thanksgiving.

This holiday doesn't require you to take out a second mortgage to buy the latest gadget for anyone on your list. This is the holiday to take a moment, look around you, and give thanks for the food on the table (even if it's not traditional Thanksgiving fare), and the loved ones in your life.

Do you have to work on Thanksgiving? Then it may help to think of it as being fortunate to have a job in a tough economy, whether that's producing something, or taking care of someone in need. We understand it's hard to give thanks if things aren't going well in your life for whatever reason – but we encourage you to find even the smallest of things to give thanks for.

Don't skip breakfast

The benefits of eating breakfast are well documented. However, many people still don't eat anything until noon or later in the day. The excuses usually run along the lines of: "I'm not hungry in the morning" or "I don't have time."

While we're not nutritionists, we at your Employee Assistance Services do deal with the second-hand effects of hungry people which can include people being irritable. Eating breakfast can help you be more productive, and in a better mood, during the course of your day.

Food is fuel for the body and the brain. If you're just not a breakfast person, start small. Try a cup of yogurt, a granola bar, a half piece of toast, or a piece of fruit. Try to get up a few minutes early so you can eat breakfast. Food is best enjoyed and better digested when you can sit down and eat. Remember, you're not just starving your stomach by not eating breakfast; you're starving your brain.

So, eat breakfast before you "start your day."



Keeping holidays pleasant with coworkers



The holidays can be jolly and festive at work, but they're also chock-full of opportunities to inadvertently be offensive. Here are some common ways people alienate their co-workers during holidays.

- **Pushing people to contribute to an expensive gift for the boss or peer**

Many stories abound about employees being pressured to contribute money for gifts. Often these gifts are pricey ones or more extravagant than what the employees would buy for those close to them. Workers shouldn't have to spend their hard-earned money to the people with whom they work, unless they choose to.

- **Insisting on knowing with whom someone is spending the holidays, or why your co-worker isn't bringing a date to a holiday party**

Your co-workers have numerous types of relationships and experience many different life events. These things are none of your business, and you will make people uncomfortable if you demand to know who they will be spending time with or why they're attending a function alone.

- **Insisting everyone likes parties**

Not all people are extroverts who enjoy being around many people. It's certainly acceptable for people to bow out of a function if their personality is more introverted. Internal mechanisms like introversion and extroversion are not about how much you like people—it's about how much socialization affects your energy levels.

- **Claiming all the good vacation days for next year before anyone else does**

If your office approves vacation days on a first-come, first-served basis, you might technically have the right to claim all the most popular holidays in the upcoming year before anyone else does. But you can be sure your co-workers notice you do this and resent you for it.

- **Giving a gift of no value in the office gift exchange when everyone else is exchanging real gifts**

You shouldn't feel obligated to participate in an office gift exchange, but if you choose to, you should honor its customs. You should not give a gag gift or the like. You might

think it's funny, but you risk hurting the recipient's feelings or making them resent the work they put into picking out something more thoughtful.

- **Giving an extravagant gift that's well over the dollar limit set in your office**

If your office sets a dollar limit on gifts, it's there for a reason. If you significantly exceed it you'll make everyone else participating feel awkward.

- **Pressuring people who aren't merry enough for you**

Bugging people about why they're not going to the holiday party, not participating in Secret Santa, or questioning why they are not more festive, is a good way to alienate co-workers. Keep in mind: for every person who enjoys holiday rituals, there's at least one who doesn't, especially at a time of year when budgets are often stretched thin, personal tensions arise, and family conflict comes to the forefront.

- **Offending people of different religions than you**

Not everyone celebrates the same holidays, and even those who do might not celebrate them in the same way as you. Don't push people to celebrate in ways they're not comfortable with.

- **Getting drunk at the office holiday party or cajoling others to eat holiday goodies**

While it might look an awful lot like a social function, the reality is that the office holiday party is still a business event. You're there to mingle with co-workers, not to get drunk or otherwise act in a way that calls embarrassing attention to yourself. Also, many people are either choosing to be more health conscious or need to for medical reasons. There's no quicker way to alienate a coworker by insisting they eat your homemade cookies or engage in indulgent potlucks.

The bottom line is always think about how you would feel if roles were reversed. The holiday season can be very sad, lonely, tense or depressing for some people. For them, coming to work can be a respite to forget about those worries. Keeping that in mind can help with choices in how you relate to others in a positive manner during holidays.

Adapted from US News and World Report, 2014





Try to understand what is behind the unwanted behavior.

Seven Ways to Understand Difficult Family Members

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<p>Come to terms with the fact that your family members “are who they are” and are unlikely to change. You can’t fix them or force them to be different. If you keep hoping for change, you will be open to continual disappointment. Deal with the reality. Expect their usual behavior, then you will know what you’re in for.</p>	<p>Try to step back and see the family system as a whole. Identify the role each person plays, including you. There might “roles” such as a scapegoat, a martyr, a pessimist, a rival, an opinionated teenager, a judge, or a victim. Don’t be reactive; treat it like a soap opera and simply observe as things unfold.</p>	<p>Reflect on how or why these people are still able to get to you. What internal buttons do they push? Are you righteous because you still feel anger towards them? Do you crave their approval? Does your anger clash with theirs? Get help to deal with these weak spots and you won’t be so affected by their issues.</p>	<p>Though it can be difficult, it’s essential to own up to your part in family difficulties. Are you defensive or dismissive? Do you blame them? You can’t change them, but you can manage your own emotions, so don’t bite back. Enjoy the empowerment this self-control brings. Letting go of being the victim in a family drama will give you freedom and relief.</p>	<p>Look on but don’t hook in. Let people play their roles, but remain immune to it. The key is to not lose yourself. Tell yourself: “There’s drama out there but I can remain calm within.” It helps to limit eye contact and keep a physical distance. The aim is to remain pleasant but unengaged.</p>	<p>Try to understand what is behind the unwanted behavior. It is a symptom of hurt that has never been attended to. Dominating behavior and rigidity can come from fear; anger from sadness; high-achieving from inadequacy; martyrdom from low self-esteem. Understand this and feel less imposed upon.</p>	<p>Remain present during family interaction. Focus on your breathing and coach yourself through it with a steady stream of positive self-talk. Affirm and validate yourself so you don’t need approval; develop inner confidence so you don’t need to compare. Don’t give power to the past - be present with yourself, whatever these people used to do.</p>

By utilizing these easy tips, you can overcome being overwhelmed by difficult family. However, if you need some additional assistance, or more tips please visit your helpful folks at Employee Assistance Services, we’re here to help!



Snacks

Snacks are a great way to stay energized, if the right foods are chosen. For people who sit at work for more than 4 hours a day, look for snacks that are around 100-200 calories. For people who are on their feet 4+ hours a day at work, look for snacks around 200-300 calories.

Tips on what to look for in your snack:

- They should be considered mini-meals and not full meals (beware of calorie intake)
- Choose a snack with at least 2 different food groups or have a yogurt which already has everything you need for a balanced healthy snack.
- A great snack will include some carbohydrates with some lean protein or healthy fat. Follow this formula:



<p>Choose One</p> <p>Fruit Vegetable Starch*</p>	+	<p>Choose Fat</p> <p>Nuts Peanut Butter Hummus</p>	OR	<p>Choose Protein</p> <p>String Cheese Cottage Cheese 1 oz. of Tuna</p>
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*Crackers, pretzels, bread, etc.

Snack Ideas:

- Frozen banana with 10 almonds
- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich on whole wheat bread (1/2 sandwich with a desk job whole sandwich if standing and moving for 75% + of workday)
- Fresh Veggies with a lite dressing, peanut butter, or hummus for a dip
- Apple or Banana with peanut butter
- Banana Chips with peanut butter
- 6 inch flour tortilla soft shell with 1/2 of banana slices, 1 tbsp. peanut butter, and 1 tbsp. chocolate chips melted in the microwave for 5-15 sec and rolled up
- 1/2 cup of lite canned/frozen fruit with 1/3 cup of low fat cottage cheese
- 1 cup pineapple cubes with 1 tablespoon of unsweetened shredded coconut
- 1 low fat Fudgesicle pop with 1 tablespoon of choice nut butter (peanut butter, almond butter, etc.)
- 1/2 a whole wheat pita with 2 tbsp. of hummus
- 2 rice cakes with 2 tablespoon of hummus and cucumber slices
- 1 oz. jerky and a pear
- 1/2 a grapefruit with one hard-boiled egg
- 1 cup of watermelon in cubes topped with 1 oz. of feta cheese (or cheese of choice) with chopped dill sprinkled on top
- 5 Strawberries dipped in 1/2 oz. of dark chocolate, melted
- Maple-Pumpkin Yogurt (1/2 cup of low-fat/non-fat regular yogurt with 2 tbsp. of pumpkin puree and 1 tsp of maple syrup)

BH-086 (am 11-4-15)

Confidential Helpline

800.236.4457

Counselors available 24/7



- Oakview Professional Building**
3000 Westhill Dr - Suite #100, Wausau, WI 54401
- Aspirus Stevens Point Clinic**
5409 Vern Holmes Dr, Stevens Point, WI 54482
- Aspirus Doctors Clinic**
2031 Peach St, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495

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