



Front Line

aspirus.org

an employee assistance program newsletter

Group Therapy Power

A recent survey by Vida Health found that one out of six people sought professional counseling in 2020. If the price of individual counseling is beyond your reach, don't dismiss group counseling via Zoom. Group therapy is less expensive, and it has advantages that include experiencing support from others, and accelerated self-awareness as you reflect on how others manage their problems and cope with stress. You may be aware of roadblocks and personal issues hindering your desired changes, and the power of peer influence and constructive criticism is powerful within the group setting. Also, you may identify solutions by observing others solving similar problems, and you will be less likely to intellectualize and discard helpful ideas and suggestions as "not relevant to me." Ask your EAP about group counseling resource directories and let them help you connect.



Source: www.vida.com/mental-health-in-a-pandemic-winter/

Edible Cannabis Products How Much Do You Know?

Legalized cannabis brings with it sellers of homemade concoctions like candy and beverages. Potency and effects in these methods of cannabis ingestion are not very predictable, and consuming too much is a risk because the high is delayed. This can lead to accidents and injuries if someone is suddenly intoxicated at the wrong time, in the wrong place. Edibles can also produce hours-long, frightening psychoses—a sometimes reported experience for first-year college students with no history of drug use (pot sellers prefer the term "bad high"). Be better informed by learning more.



Source: www.justthinktwice.gov [search "marijuana edibles"]

Language That Empowers Workplace Diversity

Welcoming diversity includes adopting language that empowers workers and reduces stigmas. Do the terms "wheelchair bound," "stuck in a wheelchair," or "confined to a wheelchair" sound familiar? Replace this language with "uses a wheel chair" or "wheelchair user." This simple modification of phrasing helps overcome the stigmatizing language of yesteryear. 2021 marks 30 years since regulations for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) were issued. Celebrate the anniversary with a commitment to a positive, diverse, and welcoming workplace with this simple language

Source: www.newmobility.com



Men—It's Okay to Talk about Your Feelings

Not all men shy away from talking about their feelings, but it's still a common male trait. It stems from the modern culture, learned behavior, and the subtle message that is not okay to show vulnerability, dependency, or weakness. Did you know, however, that Navy Seals are trained in emotional resilience to not deny feelings and emotions, but to instead pay attention and respond appropriately to them? For both men and women, the ability to express feelings is often a gateway to the next step: reaching out for help with problems like depression, which can be a risk factor for suicide (two-thirds of which are committed by men).



Resource: www.sofrep.com [search "4 steps to emotional resilience"]

Getting Out of a Couples Rut

You would not overlook changing the oil in a new car—preventive maintenance. But what about your love relationship? Do you practice preventive maintenance with it? Many couple therapists say one of the biggest mistakes couples make is not giving as much attention to *the relationship* as they do their partner. There is a difference. Bliss will only take a relationship so far. A car without proper care will sputter and eventually break down. The normal ups and downs of a healthy relationship can also become mostly sputters without due care. “Warning lights” of relationship trouble are fighting more often, feeling bored, and losing interest in showing intimacy and affection. To practice preventive maintenance in your relationship, invest in it by practicing behaviors and engaging in activities that produce the following: 1) more positive thoughts about each other, 2) more frequent feelings of confidence that “this is the right partner for me,” 3) a desire to behave more affectionately toward each other, 4) feelings of satisfaction following sharing projects, activities, and challenges with each other, and 5) general feelings of happiness and life satisfaction about your relationship when you are alone or sharing time together.



New Resource: The Couple's Activity Book: 70 Interactive Games to Strengthen Your Relationship; Sept. 2020; Rockridge Press

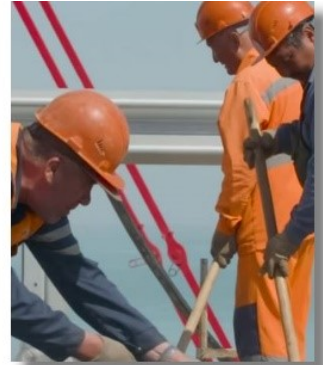
Don't Give Up on Your Goal

Is motivation for your new year's goal starting to wane? Tried and true ways of getting back on track to achieving a goal that is falling by the wayside exist. 1) Spend an hour or so recalling and refreshing the benefits of your goal. Find images, articles, and videos that make an impact and allow you to feel the renewed motivation. 2) Discover all the “whys” that make it worthy to achieve your goal. 3) Divide your goal into stages. Then divide the stages into steps and the steps into pieces. This increases “do-ability.” 4) Identify roadblocks that are interfering with your goal and reduce or manage their interference. For example, are you watching too much TV that fuels procrastination? Then cut back on your TV time. 5) Seek out radical accountability. For example, don't just tell one friend your goal to have him or her hold you accountable. Instead, mail a letter stating your goal to 25 friends! 6) Preplan a lot of rewards for achieving “mini-wins” along the way to meeting your goal.



Opioids in Construction Trades

Opioid addiction is still a national emergency, with 130 related deaths each day. Construction workers are the most-affected occupational group according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) because pain from injuries is often treated with opioids. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends asking your doctor key questions if an opioid is recommended. How long do you expect my pain to last? Is there a non-opioid option that will work as well? How long will I be taking this medication? Reduce your risk of dependency by letting your provider know about any personal or family history of addiction. Dependency on opioids can happen quickly, and many users will seek out other opioid-related substances if a doctor resists further prescriptions, even from questionable sources.



Resource: Download this doctor questions checklist: www.fda.gov/media/132343/download.

How to Help Someone Stop Smoking

The American Cancer Society has tips for family members supporting smokers trying to quit. Although the smoker is in charge, consider the following (among other tips):

- 1) Ask the person quitting whether he or she wants you to check in with them about how they are feeling as they face withdrawal challenges.
- 2) Let the person know you are available to give them encouragement.
- 3) Spend time participating in healthy distractions with the person who's quitting.
- 4) Be empathic, and do not express any doubts that the smoker will succeed.
- 5) Remove triggers (ashtrays, lighters, etc.).
- 6) Work toward getting rid of smoke smell in everything, including clothing, rugs, and drapes.
- 7) Help out with any child issues, chores, and problems that create stress for the person trying to quit.
- 8) Celebrate progress and be patient with nicotine withdrawal issues like irritability.



Source: www.cancer.org [search “helping smoker quit”]