

CONNECTIONS

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What's New in EAP for 2018

by Hailey Krueger, EAP Specialist

Happy New Year City of Madison employees! With a new year comes new year's resolutions, and as with many businesses, that often takes the form of service goals. We in EAP would like to share with you some of the new and expanded services we are offering to City employees this year, with some still to come in future newsletters. Then continue to read on to learn more about the Neuroscience of Positivity which, though featured in our Leadership Matters segment, can have relevance to all. We have also included an article on how to conquer digital clutter, something I personally will be working on throughout the new year, and for those of you who may have retirement on the mind, please read the article on planning for a successful retirement, to increase preparedness and success when that day comes.

EAP Facilitator Network

EAP staff would like to recognize and thank those City employees who serve as EAP Facilitators. Currently there are 42 EAP Facilitators representing most City agencies and these individuals have attended training on how to refer their co-workers to the EAP Office and/or appropriate resources for personal or work-related problems. All EAP Facilitators have signed a Code of Ethics and will maintain strict confidentiality if they are approached. It is important to note that EAP Facilitators are not trained counselors but they do care about their co-workers and will gladly explain how the Employee Assistance Program works and how to get connected with the help needed.

Peer Support Network

There is growing concern and attention being given to the stresses that are faced by our First Responder population and the resulting impact on wellness, mental health and well-being. When not addressed, these stressors have the potential to have a harmful effect on physical health, friends, family and the agency. Peer Support Programs are an effective way to provide support to co-workers, and to serve as a bridge to behavioral health services and other appropriate resources.

Similar to the EAP Facilitator Network, a Peer Support Network provides a core group of personnel who are trained to provide support, information and referral to employees and family members who are seeking assistance, whether it is related to a critical incident, day-to-day work stress or personal life stress. Members of a peer support team will not provide therapy or counseling, but will act as a referral person to available resources. The Madison Police Department's Peer Support Program is an extension of the City's Employee Assistance (EAP) and Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Programs and has been up and running for several years. Madison's Fire Department will roll out its Peer Support Program in Spring 2018.



What's New cont. on page 2.



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Caregiver Support Services

EAP will be placing an emphasis on supporting City of Madison employees and their family members who are also family caregivers. We acknowledge the toll that being a caregiver and a member of the workforce can take, and we are taking steps to provide added services in the form of more educational opportunities on balancing work and home life for caregivers, individual and group supportive counseling sessions, referrals to community counseling services who specialize in eldercare issues and caregivers of persons with disabilities, and providing contacts to community organizations that help provide supportive services to aging and disabled populations and their caregivers.

Trauma Informed Care

The Employee Assistance Program has begun to delve more deeply into the impact that past trauma can have on current experiences—with employees, co-workers, customers, clients and operational systems. We will be providing trainings and supervisory consultations as requested on the concept of Trauma Informed Care in the workplace, how to better understand traumatic stress reactions by employees and civilians, and how to create a more trauma aware workforce and culture of care. Creating a trauma informed workplace has been demonstrated to improve relationships, communication, collaboration and enhance respect and trust.

Do you know who your EAP Facilitator is?

Here is a list of current EAP Facilitators throughout city departments. If you are in need of assistance for a personal or work-related issue you can contact any of these individuals for a referral or contact the EAP Office directly at 266-6561.

DEPARTMENT	NAME
Assessor	Debra Cray
Attorney	Rebecca Braselton
CDA Housing	Vicky Kutz
	Brittany Neal
Civil Rights	Kate McCarthy
Clerk	Maribeth Witzel-Behl
Common Council	Lisa Veldran
Community Development	Becca Gray-Jurek
Economic Development	Matt Mikolajewski
Engineering	Cindy Hemenway
	Johanna Johnson
Finance	Jen Newcomb
Fire	Joel Kneifel
Fleet Services	Art Meyer
Human Resources	Tory Larson
Information Technology	Barb Nelson
Library	Carl Mickelson
Mayor's Office	Lisa Veldran
Metro	Sonci Clair-Thomas
	Chris Fish
	Travis Hunter
	Aleta Klicko
	Chris Nygaard

DEPARTMENT	NAME
Monona Terrace	Sara Carrizal
Municipal Court	Lisa Veldran
Parking Utility	Sue Thompson
Parks East	Kristin Mathews
Parks West	Laura Bauer
Planning Division	Linda Horvath
Police	Lorie Anderson
	Walt Jackson
	Stefanie Niesen
	Donald Postler
Public Health	Catherine Van Hove
	Dawn Henslee
Senior Center	Cristina Wills
	Karen Cator
Streets West	Tony Barlow
	John Forst
	Ryan Ulrich
Traffic Engineering	Keith Pollock
	Caroline Haskin
Water Utility	Jim Garde
	Jennifer Peterson

LEADERSHIP *Matters*

Managers Get What They Give: The Neuroscience of Positivity

by Jeffrey Harris, MFT, CEAP, *Journal of Employee Assistance* (Used by permission of the author)

If I were to tell you that I just experienced a fantastic week, but my Tuesday was awful, what would you ask me next?

Over 90% of people that I give this scenario to will say, "Sorry to hear that, what happened on Tuesday?" This sympathetic gesture will require me to share the setbacks, disappointments, and little crises that made the day rotten. In this way, your question has me reliving the distress of the day as if it were happening in the present moment.

But in my original statement, I told you that 6/7 of my week was fantastic. How might my response and mood have been different had your response been to ask, "Tell me what made your week so great?" You would likely see my eyes light up, and my mood brighten as I regaled you with stories of good food, good friends, and possibly some great outcomes at work.

It is not my intention to shame anyone for a thoughtful and caring inquiry. But the fact remains that the

questions we pose to other people will trigger a neurobiological response, the outcome of which is entirely predictable in either scenario. Put another way, one of my first clinical supervisors told me, "You deserve the answers you get, based upon the questions you ask!"

Managers Get What They Give

Managers who seek the consultation of an Employee Assistance professional about a troubled employee will often report their exasperation at the negativity, defensiveness, and closed-mindedness presented by that employee. They are likely unaware that their own questions or statements in a discussion are setting the course for a negative response.

Far too often, managers try to fix an employee's weaknesses, rather than encouraging development of their strengths. Alternatively, by focusing upon the positives, managers are not denying the negatives but are engaging the employee in desirable performance or behaviors.



The Neuroscience of Positivity

In their book, [Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives](#), authors Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler describe how emotions pass from one person to another due to some interesting human features. First, they report that humans are biologically hardwired to mimic others in their outward expressions, and in so doing, we turn our inner state to be congruent with that display.

When a manager criticizes, is disagreeable, or causes the employee to feel minimized or marginalized, this has the effect of shutting down the part of our brain that does the best thinking. The negatively-charged conversation will activate conflict aversion and protective behaviors. And the manager will likely see the employee become reactive and hypersensitive. In the act of dwelling upon weaknesses, the manager's words may negate prior recognition or praise.

The science on this is really solid. The human brain, sensing conflict, will produce the hormones cortisol and adrenaline, which trigger the fight-flight-freeze response. On the other hand, comments that are positive and encouraging will activate the release of oxytocin, the hormone that produces a sense of well-being. Oxytocin improves our communication skills and activates behaviors such as collaboration and trust building. But oxytocin metabolizes in our body more rapidly than cortisol, so its effects are brief and less pronounced. This explains the catchphrase you've heard, that it takes three compliments to neutralize one negative comment.

B.L. Fredrickson, in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, reports that "Positive emotions momentarily broaden people's attention and thinking, enabling them to draw on higher-level connections and a wider-than-usual range of precepts and ideas. In turn, these broadened outlooks often help people to discover and build consequential personal resources (cognitively, psychologically, socially, and physically)."

According to Christakis and Fowler, induced positive emotion benefits the workplace as it widens the scope of attention, broadens behavioral repertoires, and reduces the lingering effects of negative emotions. Additional benefits to positivity in the workplace include increases in intuition, creativity, flexibility, openness, and the ability to integrate new information.

Furthermore, a positive workplace is associated with a range of team performance-enhancing changes, including greater altruistic behavior, increased creativity, and more efficient decision-making.

Building Your Positivity Toolkit

Consider exploring the behaviors that are most likely to produce oxytocin and give them a try.

These include:

- Being receptive to having difficult conversations;
- Painting a picture of mutual success;
- Stimulating discussion and curiosity;
- Showing concern for others; and
- Starting meetings by asking, "What went well today?"

When working with a challenging employee, jot down the things that you appreciate about him or her. What talents, strengths, or good characteristics does he/she have? Everyone typically has at least some good characteristics. Be diligent in your search for their strengths!

Jeffrey Harris, MFT, CPC, CEAP, has provided management consulting to a wide variety of organizations throughout his 22-year career in employee assistance, including corporate, government and union organizations. The author also has extensive experience as a manager and executive coach, from which he draws insight for his consulting. Jeff currently serves as Program Manager of EAP & WorkLife at the University of Southern California.



For additional ideas on increasing positivity in the workplace, contact your Employee Assistance Office at 266-6561.

How to Conquer Digital Clutter

by Kara Baskin, **meQuilibrium** (Used by permission of the author)

Digital clutter, just like physical clutter, can make life more complicated and stressful. Whether it's a desktop that feels more like a junk drawer, a phone full of rarely used apps, or an email inbox you'll never see the bottom of, digital disorganization doesn't just slow your computer down—it slows you down.

Clutter is linked to stress and distraction, and it becomes easy to trade physical clutter for digital clutter when your gadgets are overloaded with things you don't need. Think about it: Spending a large portion of the day staring down a virtual stack of unread emails and unfiled documents or toggling between Internet tabs with chat windows pinging can be just as frustrating and time-consuming as sifting through a jam-packed closet.

What's in your space (and on your screen) reflects what's in your head—and **clearing it out can have a big impact on your focus and stress levels**. These guidelines will help you streamline your virtual life, once and for all:

1. If you don't use it, lose it.

Unlike "real" stuff, there's virtually no limit on the amount of digital stuff, and therefore clutter, you can accumulate. Just as fear drives us to hang onto things we don't need, deleting documents can feel frighteningly permanent—after all, you never know when you *might* need them, so it feels easier to save. This might be true for items like tax files (which should be retained for seven years) and medical records (which you should keep indefinitely). Beyond that, though, do the six-month check: Have you referred to the document in the past six months? If not and it pertains to work, file it in the cloud or on an external backup drive, and then delete it on your hard drive. If not and if it pertains to a personal project—say, an old newsletter from your child's school—delete it. The same is true for apps on your phone and old emails, too. You don't save clothes that don't fit, so you shouldn't save files that no longer fit your life, either.

2. Separate work and home.

Maintain your work files on your work computer, and retain your personal items exclusively on a home laptop. Email files to yourself if necessary, for saving on the appropriate device during down time. Not only does this keep tasks compartmentalized, it also keeps workplace stress from trickling into your home life.

3. Get your inbox under control.

Experts often recommend tackling emails at the beginning and end of the day to start and end with a fresh slate. That's great, except when your email is rife with almost-spam: sale messages from stores you shop at occasionally, subscription offers, bank reminders, etc. Create an email account devoted solely to messages that you might want to see but don't need to check or respond to daily.

Then, develop a plan to deal with incoming emails you do need to check and respond to: Every week, take a few minutes to clean up your inbox. It's best to do this around the same time each week. Categorize emails by action, such as "to-do," "follow up," and "flagged for future reference" and spend some time each day making your way through these lists. You'll reduce stress while staying more focused and up-to-date.

4. Slim down your social feeds.

Go through your social media accounts and phone and cull your contact lists. Decide which matter based on three buckets: career, hobbies, and friends. Bucket the accounts that you need for work—say, from news media or businesses that you rely on to stay current in your field. Lump pages that apply to your down time, whether it's home design or skiing, into another bucket. Finally, put your friends into another list. Unsubscribe, delete, or unfollow the rest.

5. (Don't) keep tabs.

Instead of keeping multiple tabs open on your browser—which makes your computer sluggish and simply feels overwhelming to look at—delete them. Then, use bookmark folders for important sites: regularly visited media, articles to read later, important industry websites, personal vendors, banking information, and so on. Determine the categories that work for you, and make a 10-minute date with yourself at the end of every week (set a reminder, if you need to) for organizing them and clearing your Internet cache.



Why You Need to Plan for a Successful Retirement

by FEI Behavioral Health

Retirement, just like choosing a career or a life partner, is a major life transition—one that requires careful thought and planning. Yet most of us are too busy working and dealing with everyday life to give it much thought. Some people feel that they won't be able to retire for financial reasons. There are many myths and misperceptions surrounding the term and what it implies. Retirement by definition means to withdraw and retreat. However, people who are well prepared are retiring "to" something rather than from work. They are pursuing their dreams, responding to new opportunities, looking for fulfillment and finding their own sense of purpose and meaning. Planning ahead gives you time to consider options and make informed choices. You may be retired up to one third of your life. It is important to stress that you should not leave this important time of your life to chance.

What does retirement mean to you? When do you think you want to retire? How much money will you need? Do you want to continue working part-time? Whom can you trust to help you through this transition? It is never too early to plan. People are often reluctant to think about retirement because they don't want to think about getting older—they dread feeling useless or fear they will not be able to afford to retire. Planning ahead gives you time to examine different options and make choices to meet your needs and desires.

Obviously, there is no exclusive model of retirement that fits everyone. The key is that it has meaning for you. Most people think that retirement planning is just about saving money and investing for a time when they'll cease to work. But while the financial aspect of retirement provides the security; lifestyle planning provides the happiness. The old view of retirement as an "endless vacation" is changing to one in which people see retirement as an active and engaged phase of life that includes work and community service.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?



Choosing a Lifestyle

Planning for retirement starts with taking a good look at yourself. What do you like to do? What are your dreams and goals? The most important predictor of a long life is staying active—staying involved in meaningful activities. Taking the time to answer these questions is the first step.

Write Down Your Goals

- When do you want to retire? (Most 60 and 70 year olds still want to work in some capacity.)
- Do you want to stop working altogether?
- Would you prefer a phased retirement—reducing the number of hours at your current job?
- Would you like to begin a whole new career or start your own business?
- Where do you want to live? Do you enjoy being in the hustle and bustle of the city? Or, do you want to live in a more rural, quiet environment?
- Is living in a warmer climate important?
- Consider what types of services you may need or want (healthcare, educational, social, and cultural) before choosing where to live.

Consider Your Personal Relationships

As your working role changes in retirement so does your relationship with a significant other. Chores and responsibilities may be divided differently. Talk to your partner about expectations and identify new roles. Be sure to give each other space. Having a support network of friends and relatives is critical to your emotional as well as physical well-being. Make sure you stay in touch with those people who mean the most to you. Work now to develop and strengthen those relationships.

In addition to a paycheck, a job offers a feeling of accomplishment, a chance to socialize, structured time, the opportunity to demonstrate competency and a chance to enjoy a healthy self-esteem. Are these things important to you now? Then it stands to reason that they should be a part of your life in retirement.

The key to planning for retirement is in finding other activities that offer similar benefits. You need a clear sense of purpose—a reason to get dressed in the morning. Start now by listing those activities that can offer the similar intangible rewards you receive from your job. What have you wanted to do if only you had the time and the resources? Time is your most precious gift in retirement. You need to use it wisely.

Include time for:

- Learning and growth – take classes, learn a new skill or hobby, and keep physically and mentally fit.

- Sharing with others – through either paid or voluntary work, start a new career, explore alternative working arrangements.
- Having fun – socialize with friends, participate in sports, cultural and recreational activities, hobbies, exercise – any activity that's pleasurable to you.

Be sure your plan includes the basics of good health—eating right, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep and maintaining a positive attitude toward life.

Now is the time to gather all the information you need to build your plan. There are many great resources out now to help guide you. Libraries and book stores offer many good publications. Ask for help. Talk to retirees. They can be invaluable in offering their wisdom.

Remember, retirement is a process, not an event, and as such will require a lot of thought, planning and adjustment in order for it to be successful.



*Thanks for reading,
we hope you found the information useful!*

**You can reach any of us by calling the
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**External Available 24/7:
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