



FrontLine Employee

Wellness, Productivity, & You!

City of Saskatoon Employee & Family Assistance Program 306-975-3327

New to Customer Service by Phone?

If over-the-phone customer service is new to you, you'll discover new challenges. Veteran telephone customer service employees have some advice. One piece is to avoid reacting emotionally—it may be easier to react to antagonism when you are aided by the anonymity and distance that embolden an irate customer. Try smiling while you speak. It can help you be less reactive to antagonistic behavior. Standing or walking back and forth while on the phone may also help you feel more engaged, feel less stressed later on, and improve focus. The unavailability of an empathic ear from a colleague—if you feel the need to vent a distressful experience—might be missed, so use EFAP resources to process work stress. Discussing work experiences in confidence can lead you to better ideas and solutions that ultimately help you find greater meaning in any job.



Use a Site Blocker When Self-Discipline Fails

To stay productive at work, we use self-discipline. However, there are so many digital distractions that only a robot could avoid them. Social media, shopping sites, political news feeds, gaming—these tempting delights burn up irretrievable minutes and hours. Instead of sitting for hours and doing everything but work, use a site blocker. There are many such apps and browser extensions. One of them is "StayFocused." It is free. Find it on your Google Chrome browser. You can find others with variable features by doing a simple search for "site blockers."



Stalking Prevention Month Yes, That's Stalking

Stalking is "repeated unwanted attention and harassment directed at a specific person causing him or her to fear harm." Stalking is a crime. Although similar definitions exist in every state, unfortunately many perpetrators ignore or incorrectly "compare out" of the definition. They believe whatever they are doing isn't stalking. Many behaviors can constitute stalking, including unwanted contacts via social media, sending unwanted gifts no matter how well-intentioned, contacting the victim's friends, hiring an investigator, or even going through the victim's garbage. Could your behavior constitute stalking?



Learn more at LegalDictionary.net [search stalking].

Being Positive May Reduce Memory Decline

Positivity or demonstrating an optimistic attitude has always been a valuable workplace trait in employees. Many research studies have examined its benefits on the bottom line, its ability to favorably influence others, and its affirming effects on general health. Now research shows its benefits for helping prevent memory decline as we age. Positivity is learned, and optimism is a teachable skill. A simple online search will show hundreds of tips on how to develop a more optimistic disposition. Your EFAP can also help, especially if depression or other life circumstances feel like they are robbing you of your ability to feel positive.



www.sesp.northwestern.edu [search "positive memory decline"]

Make Your Goals Happen in 2021



Those who succeed in accomplishing big goals often practice similar behaviors. Since “like behaviors” often produce “like effects,” consider the following: 1) Write down your goal and action steps to accomplish it. 2) Evaluate changes needed in your life to facilitate realization of the goal (e.g., creating a new routine that produces massive action). 3) Create methods to make the goal “top of mind.” You have many goals—important, urgent, big, and small. Each competes for your time and attention. So, preventing defocus and distraction is critical to keeping your goal ever present. If focus does not happen, you risk losing the momentum created the day you decided on your goal. 4) Act on tasks during the time of day when you have the most pep. Many goal-slayers start early in the morning and practice an early-to-bed, early-to-rise routine (the “5 a.m. Club”). If you’re nodding off while working, it’s likely that you haven’t figured out this step. Getting up early helps curb procrastination and provides precious time early, even on weekends, without interfering with work-life balance or risking burnout. Energy, ideas, answers, and motivation are often found in social groups, so hanging out with like-minded goal seekers can be helpful, and those who want to win can keep you focused, but avoid open-ended groups that lack structure and purpose. 5) Reward yourself at incremental steps and measurable milestones along the way.

Are You Glamorizing Overwork?



Stressed? Ask yourself if you glamorize work. There is nothing glamorous about working yourself into the ground. Chronic overworkers can suffer from cardiovascular problems like high blood pressure and a cardiac event.

Those unable or unwilling to draw the line between just enough and too much on-the-clock activity are also more prone to depression and anxiety. Overworking does not make you more valuable, although this association is often learned from parents or caregivers. Likewise, overwork does not beat quality as an indicator of doing a great job. For a healthier you, focus on accomplishments, rather than overworking. You may still work some long hours, but they will be fewer. Set boundaries, but if it’s too difficult, consult with an EFAP professional. Soon you will point to the success of your accomplishments, not the hours you rack up.

Your Stress Management “Urgency Kit”

There are many techniques for managing stress, but you may only be aware of a few, such as exercising, meditation, journaling, or talking things over with a friend. Experimenting with different ways of managing stress can help you discover a collection of dependable techniques that fit your life and work for you—a personal stress management “urgency kit.” Try these quick, “on the fly” stress management techniques to see if they qualify for your kit. 1) Peel an orange. Studies show the smell of citrus can help reduce stress; 2) take a walk in green space; 3) listen to classical music for five minutes; 4) drink black or green tea; 5) try a guided imagery exercise using all five senses; 6) declutter your desk;

7) spend ten minutes in the sun. Discover a thousand ideas in the book *Simplicity: 1,000 Ways to Reduce Stress and Simplify Your Life* by Glen Mizrahi.



Have a Workplace Injury-Free Year

Approximately 5,000 employees die from workplace-related injuries each year in the United States. The “fatal four” (not including automobile accidents) are falls, electrocution, being struck by an object, and getting caught “in between.” These



awareness tips can help ensure you don’t become a victim: recognize hazards, use proper safety equipment, maintain a safe distance, respect barricades, correct an unsafe situation without delay, monitor a huge or heavy moving object, get the proper training, avoid rushing, and don’t shortcut safety measures. And if the thought “Should I stop what I am doing and go get the proper safety equipment?” crosses your mind, do it! Statistics: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

NEGLECT: The Silent Killer of Committed Relationships

The effect of neglect on a committed relationship is insidious and accumulates over time. A common thought is that the harmful overt behaviours of people are what bring relationships to their knees. Addictions. Betrayals of a sexual, emotional or financial nature. Physical, sexual or emotional abuse. While all of these, of course, can result in irreparable damage to a relationship, the less obvious form of destruction to a relationship is neglectful and passive behaviour.

Examples of neglect and passivity are:

- Not listening deeply to your partner's thoughts and feelings
- Forgetting your partner's birthday, anniversary and other significant events
- Lack of expression of appreciation
- Lack of sexual intimacy
- Withholding affection
- Lack of initiation of "dating" behaviours
- Not sharing in the domestic division of labour
- Not keeping the romantic part of your relationship alive

While I have named just a few, there are many more ways that people are neglectful and passive. The significance of talking about this is that when one or both people in a relationship take their partner for granted, and don't nurture the relationship, this results in loss of feelings for the other. This is a very slippery slope toward the end of a relationship.

As a therapist, I often hear expressions such as "I don't have loving feelings for my partner anymore," "How can I get these feelings back?" "Can I get these feelings back?" "I feel lonely," "We are like roommates," "I'm not interested in sex with my partner."

People are no longer staying in relationships when they are unhappy. "Til death do we part" is an outdated commitment. If you want to maintain a strong heartbeat in your relationship, nurture your relationship every day. Seek professional support when you start to feel distance in your relationship and are having difficulty getting back into connection.

We can become more loving by being open to what is important to the other person and by cultivating an interest in the other's needs. It is one thing to feel love toward someone, but another thing to communicate this feeling into behaviours and words that make the other feel loved. Relationships are a labour of love that require skill, care, imagination and devotion.

Barbara Morrison, BSW, MSW, RSW
Clinical Social Worker

Broadway Counselling and Therapy

Co-Author of: "Fully Half Committed: Conversation Starters for Romantic Relationships"

EFAP NEWS

City of Saskatoon Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP) Office
For the unforeseeable future, Maria and Barb are working remotely from their homes.

Email address: Maria.besenski@saskatoon.ca

Phone: 306-975-3327

Website—www.cityofsaskatoonefap.com

Upcoming Meetings

EFAP Peer Advisor mtg - January 13, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Microsoft Teams mtg.
Penney Murphy will present on the Power of Positive Emotions
EFAP Admin Committee mtg - January 11, 1:00 p.m. Microsoft Teams mtg.
EFAP Board of Director's mtg – March 18, 2020, 1:00 p.m. Microsoft Teams mtg.

2021 Board of Directors Meetings

Board of Director's meetings are typically held the **3rd Thursday** of **March, June** and **September** and the date for **December's** meeting is to be determined..

2020 Peer Advisor Meetings

Meetings are held the **2nd Wednesday of each month** at **1:00 p.m.**

To access counselling services, please call the counselling agency directly to book your appointment. The contracted agencies are:

Broadway Counselling & Therapy — 306-653-3232

Crossroads Therapeutic Solutions — 306-665-6661

Family Counselling Centre — 306-652-3121

Penney Murphy & Associates — 306-242-1010

Professional Counselling and Associates — 306-934-5898

Professional Psychologists and Counsellors — 306-664-0000