



Leader Resource Kit

Providing Leaders with Tools to Support Team Members

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
www.mylifeexpert.com

888.243.5744

SANDCREEK EAP
An AllOne Health Company

General Resources:

SandCreek Core Services.....	3
MyLifeExpert.....	4

Emotional Management (Stress, Depression, Anxiety, Substance Use):

Cumulative Stress Webinar	
Cumulative Stress.....	5-6
Managing Our Stress in the Midst of a Pandemic.....	7
Substance Use in COVID-19.....	8
Substance Use Fact Sheet.....	9
12 Tips for Managing Stress Packet.....	10-16

Self Care:

The Importance of Self-Care Webinar	
Moving from Victim To Thriver Webinar	
Coping and Burnout in the New Normal Webinar	
Fostering Resilience: Making it Your Own Webinar	
Mindfulness for Wellness Webinar	
Practicing Mindfulness.....	17
Tips for Coping with Burnout.....	18-19
Learning to Say No As a Form of Self Care.....	20-21
Self-Care Infographic.....	22

Learning Resources:

Resource Locator.....	23
Back to School Planning Guide.....	24
Cloth Face Coverings for Children.....	25
Mental Health & Social-Emotional Wellbeing Considerations.....	26
Preparing for Virtual or At Home Learning Tutoring & Online Learning Resources.....	27
Tutoring & Online Learning Options.....	28

Balance

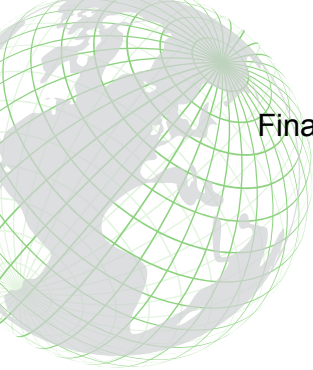
Balancing Responsibilities.....	29-30
Strategies for Working Remotely Webinar	
Working In a Home Office.....	31

Financial:

Navigating Personal Finances.....	32
Managing Financial Anxiety Webinar	

Family:

Managing Relationship Togetherness Webinar Talking to Kids About Current Events Webinar	
Caregiving and Parenting in Turbulent Times Webinar	
Child Home Alone Readiness.....	33
Helping Children Cope with Uncertainty.....	34
Co-parenting through a Pandemic.....	35
Family Rituals.....	36



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Financial worries, aging parents, job stress, health issues - Everyone faces challenges from time to time, with your EAP you don't have to face these things alone.

This includes solutions such as:

ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

Reducing barriers to access through technology

INCLUDES: 24/7/365 Telephone Support, Mobile App with Chat Functionality, Video Counseling and Web Portal

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Our Personal Assistant helps individuals with their "to do" list. It can be difficult to find extra time in the day to manage everyday tasks. We help lighten the load through researching the best options to benefit you and your loved ones.

SERVICES INCLUDE: Entertainment & Dining, Travel & Tourism, Household Errands, Service Professionals

LIFE COACHING

We help employees and their household members meet their personal and professional goals. A life coach works actively to help individuals assess their current situation then develop goals and action steps to meet their stated expectations. A coach is accountability partner and helps individuals overcome obstacles to achieve their goals.

WE HELP WITH: Life Transitions, Creating Better Work/Life Balance, Setting Goals, Improving relationships

MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

When overwhelmed with personal, work or life stressors, mental health counseling can be a lifesaver. Our licensed master's level counselors support you and your household members through difficult times providing confidential assistance 24/7.

WE HELP WITH: Family Conflict, Couples/Relationships, Substance Abuse, Anxiety, Depression

WORK/LIFE RESOURCES

Navigating the practical challenges of life, while handling the demands of your job can be stressful. Work/Life resources and referral services are designed to provide knowledgeable consultation and customized guidance to assist with gaining resolution to everyday hurdles.

RESOURCES INCLUDE: Adoption, Elder/Adult Care, Parenting, Child Care, Special Needs Support, Wellness

MEDICAL ADVOCACY

Medical Advocacy is a new approach to maneuvering through the healthcare system. It offers strategies to promote employee health, productivity, and well-being by serving patient populations throughout the entire lifespan and by addressing health problems in every category of disease classification and in all disease stages.

WE HELP WITH: Insurance Navigation, Doctor Referrals, Specialist Referrals, Care Transition, Discharge Planning, Adult Care Coach

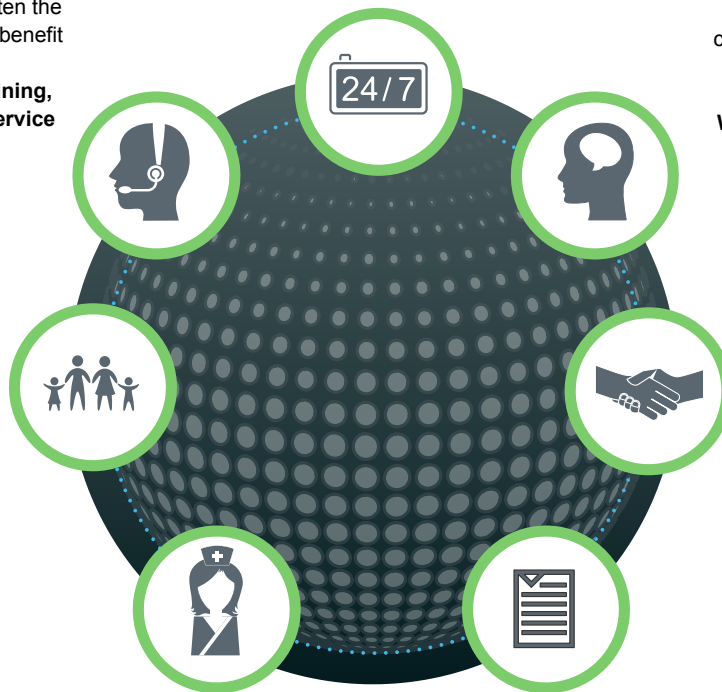
LEGAL/FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Legal and Financial resources and referrals are available to connect employees with experienced, vetted professionals in their topical area of legal and financial needs.

RESOURCES INCLUDE: Divorce/Custody, Bankruptcy, Budgeting, Estate Planning/Wills, Personal Injury/Malpractice, Major Life Event Planning

PRIVATE, CONFIDENTIAL & FREE FOR YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

Your participation with your EAP is voluntary and strictly confidential. We do not report back to your employer about the things you discuss in private counseling conversations.



MY LIFE EXPERT

Feeling Connected & Supported 24/7-365

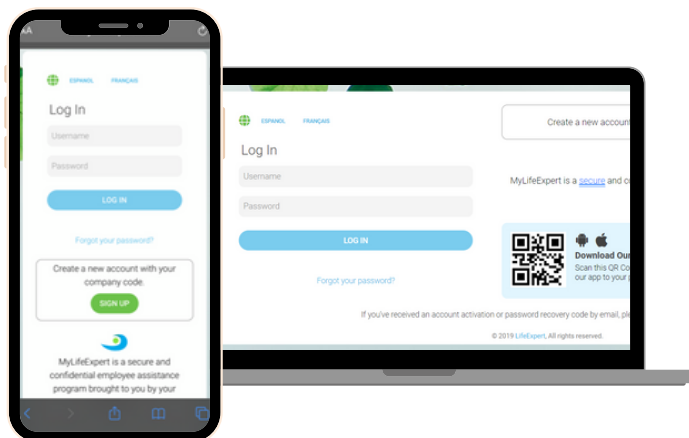
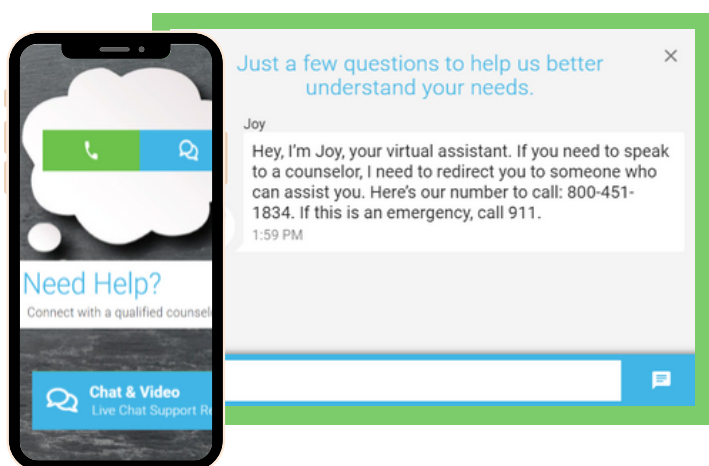
You can download the app to the home screen of your mobile device without even visiting an app store, by simply visiting mylifeexpert.com or scanning the **QR code** at the bottom of this page.

TO LOGIN:

- Click "create a new account with your company code"
- Insert your company access code
- Follow instructions included in the activation e-mail
- Play, learn, and discover!

LIVE COUNSELING:

Download the Life Expert app for 24/7 connectivity to live counselors. This functionality includes live access to a counselor via chat, video, and toll-free phone support.



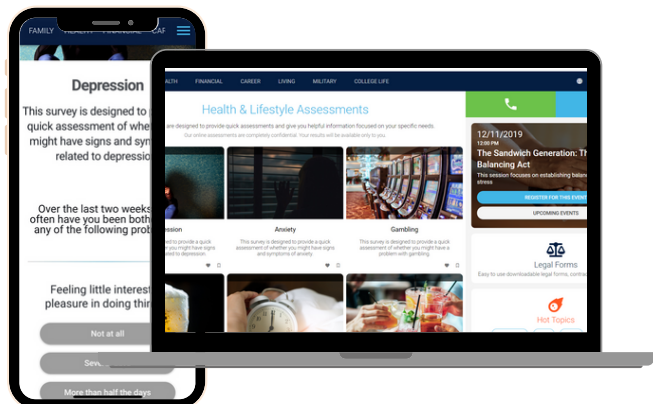
WORK & LIFE RESOURCES:

Life Expert provides access to thousands of up-to-date topic-related articles, videos and worksheets. Some topics include: Financial & Legal, Family, Education, Health, Wellness, Career, Military, everyday living and much more.



HEALTH & LIFESTYLE ASSESSMENTS:

Surveys are provided to you with a quick assessment on financial, health and addiction issues. These surveys are designed to deliver targeted resources and information to meet your needs. You can save these assessments and recommendations to your profile for future use.



INTERACTIVE CHECKLIST:

Life Expert provides you with interactive tools to help with issues such as family, health, and other life situations. You can save these checklist to your personal profile for future use.



Download The App at: www.mylifeexpert.com
Toll-Free: 888.243.5744

SANDCREEK EAP
An AllOne Health Company

CUMULATIVE STRESS OVERLOAD IN 2020

WHAT'S STRESSING EVERYONE OUT?

SANDCREEK_{EAP}

An AllOne Health Company

In today's climate there is certainly no shortage of stressors. The psychological impact of these public events — and the way it impacts all areas of our lives — cannot be overstated.

HOW DO WE KNOW WE'RE STRESSED?

The effects of stress pose a serious concern to one's well-being. Before we go further, let's consider a few definitions:

- **Stress** is mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances.
- **Burnout** is defined as the accumulation and total sum of stress that includes emotional exhaustion or withdrawal associated with increased workload or institutional stress.
- **Compassion Fatigue** is the emotional residue/strain of exposure to working with those suffering traumatic events. This type of fatigue can include physical symptoms, such as difficulty sleeping, and emotional symptoms, such as loss of self-worth or anger.

WHAT DOES STRESS LOOK LIKE?

Consider these possible signs & symptoms:

- *Isolation and withdrawal*
- *Being disengaged or unmotivated*
- *Physical exhaustion*
- *Nightmares and flashbacks*
- *Loss of empathy or compassion*
- *Relationship issues*
- *Substance misuse and abuse*
- *Recurrent sadness or depression*
- *Resistance to feedback*
- *Resistance to change*
- *Reduction in meaningful work product*
- *Reduced job satisfaction*

MOST OF THESE
SIGNS &
SYMPTOMS CAN
BE TRACED BACK
TO DEPLETED
ENERGY...

HOW CAN SELF-CARE HELP?

A tangible approach to the devastating consequences of the current environment and the stress each person is experiencing is self-care for mental health.

First, let's consider what self-care even means? Self-care is not an exercise regimen or seeing a counselor (although it could encompass those things). Rather, it's a conscious process of considering our needs and seeking out activities and habits that replenish our energy—so that we can continue to move forward. This last part is often difficult to understand. We often lead ourselves to believe that we do our best when we commit all our resources to something, working ourselves harder and harder. But that's not always true.

We only have a finite amount of energy each day to expend, so it's important to consider how this relates to self-care. We must acknowledge that self-care is a perishable skill, just like driving, or maintaining our health. We must practice self-care in order to be successful in maintaining good mental health.

3 SELF-CARE TOOLS

1. Remember to also cultivate a life outside of work. Creating time for relationships and activities outside of the work environment is not always easy to do. It can be helpful to take a step back for yourself and family because it can be hard to let go of what we experience at work even when we are at home. You may at first need to schedule planned activities with family and friends. Otherwise, you may find that you spent yet another evening stewing over the day's events while your kids played games on their tablets in the other room. Also remember, that “alone time” is beneficial. Find activities— watching a TV show, playing a game with a family member or friend, taking a walk, calling a friend or loved one, swimming, reading, bird watching, listening to music—that you enjoy and make time for them, too.

2. Develop good physical health habits. It is also suggested that committing to a physical exercise strategy that you can maintain will support your emotional well-being. Consider whether you need to improve your diet, too. Without a conscious effort it can be difficult to make wise choices in the moment.

3. Practice mindfulness and meditation. Visualization, meditation and mindfulness could improve everyone's mental health. Visualization is a type of meditation about a specific activity or outcome and is widely used by professional athletes to focus on performance. Consider visualizing a way to connect with your community or family positively or visualizing internal peace. Meditation is focused on trying to empty one's mind of everything so that it can re-charge or clear the memory of negative thoughts.

If you are finding implementing these tools challenging, please contact your EAP to consult with a coach or counselor to create an action plan that will help you focus on your self-care, prioritizing your well-being in an environment that has made that challenging.

Final thought: **remember to be mindful of the things you can and cannot control.** You cannot control the reactions of others, only your own response, and that is where our power exists.



Managing our Stress in the Midst of a Pandemic

Feeling connected to the people and world around us is a key part of good mental health. After months of social distancing for COVID-19, we are still spending less time with others as the pandemic continues. If canceled plans like festivals, family reunions, and other gatherings have made it challenging to keep your spirits up, you're not alone.

Here are some simple ways to help boost everyone's mood during the pandemic:

Lighten up: Sunshine can help brighten mood.

Get plenty of sleep: Find a bedtime routine that works for you and keep technology out of the bedroom.

Talk it out: Talk with your family regularly and be a good listener.

Use food as fuel: Include protein rich foods for breakfast and lunch. Protein helps keep your blood sugar stable and gives your brain the fuel it needs.

Go for gratitude: Focus on the positive. Research shows that regularly expressing gratitude helps boost overall happiness, leading to lower rates of stress and depression.

Step it up: When we exercise, our bodies release chemicals that can help boost mood.

Lend a hand: Helping other people makes us feel better about ourselves. It can be as simple as calling a neighbor or family member who is home alone or putting up a sign thanking people who deliver the mail.

Manage screen time: Don't allow the computer, tv, or phone be the driving force of your non-working hours

Address stress: Try meditating or other relaxation techniques such as yoga to help decrease stress and improve mood.

When we don't manage stress, we are at greater risk for increasing depression. If you are experiencing signs and symptoms of depression, consider calling SandCreek to connect with a counselor. Below are some additional tips to address increasing signs of depression:

Hints to Reduce Depression

- See your family physician for a complete checkup. Discuss any depression symptoms with the doctor.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol. Research shows drinking or using can cause or worsen depression and lower effectiveness of antidepressant medications and cause dangerous side effects.
- Break down tasks into smaller, more manageable "chunks" and set realistic goals for accomplishing them.
- Avoid major life decisions until things seem clearer.
- Understand it takes time for depression to develop and time for it to go away. Blaming yourself for not being better doesn't help.
- Ask friends and/or family for their support
- Try to be with people you like as much as possible – being alone can increase negative thinking.
- Learn more effective ways of communicating.
- Find where to get good professional help and stick with the treatment plan.



888.243.5744
www.mylifeexpert.com

SANDCREEK EAP
An AllOne Health Company

SUBSTANCE USE IN COVID-19

Risks for those with Substance Use Disorders and Impact of COVID-19

Individuals with substance use disorders (SUD) are at risk population for contamination due to multiple factors:

- clinical/psychological
- physical
- psychosocial conditions

Moreover, social and economic changes caused by the pandemic, along with the traditional difficulties regarding treatment access and adherence—will certainly worsen during this period, therefore aggravate their condition. Severity of COVID-19 has been associated with some clinical and demographic characteristics, such as chronic respiratory diseases, diabetes, hypertension and immunosuppression—which knowingly increase the lethality risk for COVID-19. Individuals with moderate to severe SUD—who are already an important risk group, could suffer major impacts, since they have been previously associated with all these conditions. The fact that drug users frequently abuse these substances in combination with other drugs can cause additional risk. Elderly patients are also in the main risk group, and it is important to note that the prevalence of SUD in this population is higher than ever in the world, including both licit and illicit drugs. Therefore, substance use could increase the risk to this already vulnerable age group when associated with these clinical comorbidities.

Coronavirus could make addicts more vulnerable to complications of substance use. Chronic respiratory diseases have been linked with increased overdose mortality due to opioids, a substance that can depress breathing. Mild symptoms of COVID-19 threaten this population. Although no studies have been conducted yet about the implications of COVID-19 in respiratory complications of drug users, it is probable that the infection will severely be manifested in individuals with SUD involving these specific means of drug use.

The Impact

While drug use can increase the risks associated with a corona-virus infection, the social and psychological risks of the pandemic can favor and intensify drug abuse, in a potentially catastrophic cycle. Social distance, isolation or quarantine are essential measures to help prevent corona-virus transmission - however, these strategies, and the pandemic outbreak itself, have been associated with negative emotions, such as irritability, anxiety, fear, sadness, anger or boredom. These conditions are known to trigger relapse, even in those long-term abstainers, or intensify drug consumption. Withdrawal symptoms elicited during lock down could also jeopardize these preventive strategies, as it could drive individuals to go outside for drugs. In addition, medical assistance for these symptoms will be limited, since the major medical efforts are geared towards the COVID-19 pandemic. Even in the case of hospitalization, it may be difficult to maintain voluntary stay, generating more stress to healthcare workers, already overburdened because of the pandemic. Homelessness can also compromise preventive strategies, as individuals tend to wander during the day and sleep in crowded places during the night, making them potential vectors of transmission. In all these scenarios, drug seeking behaviors could increase exposure to infection for addicts, their families and healthcare professionals.

Conclusions

Addiction care must be reinforced, instead of postponed, in order to avoid complications of both SUD and COVID-19 and to prevent the transmission of corona-virus. For substance use, strategies must take into consideration clinical, demographic and socioeconomic factors. These efforts could help not only individuals with SUD, but also in the control of the pandemic and so, the society as a whole. If you or a loved one are struggling with substance use in the midst of uncertain times, contact us for support!

Substance Abuse In COVID19 Facts Sheet

Do People with a Substance Use Disorder (SUD) have a greater risk of contracting COVID?

There is still a lot to learn about COVID-19, including how it affects people who smoke or vape, or who have an SUD. However, it is known that these individuals are more likely to have suppressed immune systems, are at greater risk for respiratory infections, and may have lung and heart diseases. This could present a greater risk for COVID-19 infection, or more serious cases of the disease.

Potential Risks for individuals with a substance use disorder?

Access to health care may be limited in some locations, and people with addiction may not be able to get care when they need it. If hospitals and clinics are pushed to their capacity, it could be that people with addiction—who are already often stigmatized and underserved by the health care system—will experience even greater barriers to treatment for COVID-19.

A high percentage of individuals with a SUD experience homelessness, and vice versa. Among countless other difficulties and risks faced by those who have housing instability, increased risk for disease transmission in homeless shelters is particularly important now.

The same is true of incarceration. More than half of U.S. prisoners have a SUD, and prison populations are at great risk for disease transmission during this pandemic.

What should I do during the pandemic if I have a substance use disorder:

Here are some suggestions and resources:

- Stay as safe as possible from contracting COVID-19 by following the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Call your doctor if you experience symptoms of COVID-19. Individuals with an SUD may be at higher risk for serious effects.
- If you are in treatment for substance use, maintain contact with your provider. Learn how the necessary COVID-19 distancing policies impact your treatment to ensure you continue with care.
- It is normal to experience stress during this difficult time, but stress can also increase substance use. Effective coping strategies can reduce the impact of stress and fear, and alleviate anxiety, depression, and other difficult emotions.
- How can I help a loved one during the pandemic who has a substance use disorder?
- While it is normal to experience stress and fear during this difficult time, changes in routine and physical distancing policies may be especially hard for people with a SUD. Those in recovery may face heightened urges to use substances and could be at increased risk for relapse.
- If you know someone who is experiencing or recovering from a SUD, now may be a good time to reach out to them to see how they are and to remind them that they are loved.
- You can also encourage your loved one to use effective coping strategies to reduce the impact of stress and fear, and alleviate anxiety, depression, and other difficult emotions. If your loved one is increasing their use of substances or decreasing treatments during this pandemic, help them connect to supportive resources.



12 TIPS FOR MANAGING STRESS

1. TAKE A FEW DEEP BREATHS

When you're under stress, your breathing becomes rapid and shallow. By lowering the supply of available oxygen, this can contribute to your increased generalized muscular tension. Stop what you're doing and focus on your breathing. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose, letting your abdomen expand as much as possible. Hold your breath for a few seconds before exhaling and repeat this breathing process three or four times. This is a great way to relieve stress quickly when you have no time to spare.

2. TRY SOME STRETCHING EXERCISES

When time permits, loosen up your muscles, starting with a neck roll. Gently lower one side of your head to your shoulder, then slowly roll your chin onto your chest, up to the other shoulder, and back again. Repeat this a few times. Next, stretch your upper back and shoulders by moving each arm up and over your head in a climbing motion. Finally, to release tension in your lower back, stand with your legs slightly spread and your hands supporting your lower back. Gently arch your back and, without straining, hold that position for about five seconds.

3. PAY ATTENTION TO THE MESSAGES YOU'RE GIVING YOURSELF

The way you think about a situation can influence whether you talk yourself into or out of a crisis. Negative thinking can quickly wear down your confidence and self-esteem. Critical statements like, “I’ll never get caught up with my work”, “I’m a terrible nurse” and “I wish I could just go home” can deplete your energy and make you feel helpless. Positive thinking can bolster your self-esteem, enhance your problem-solving ability, and boost your confidence. Positive affirmations include, “**Slow down – you can handle this situation**”, “**Take things one step at a time**”



4. ASSESS YOUR IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

After considering all the demands on your time, develop a plan of action by figuring out what to do next. Break up your tasks into small steps and continually reevaluate your progress as priorities and needs shift.



5. FOCUS ON YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS RATHER THAN UNCOMPLETED TASKS

By dwelling on what you still haven't done, you're likely to feel guilty and anxious. Being preoccupied with unfinished business can exacerbate your stress and ultimately lead to negative thinking. By redirecting your energy in a more positive direction, you can shift your immediate attention to focus on your accomplishments. One way to achieve this is to keep a "to-do" list for your shift or day, and cross off tasks as you complete them. Each time you refer to the list, you'll see – in addition to what's left – all the things you've already done.

6. TACKLE YOUR MOST UNDESIRABLE TASKS EARLY

If there are some tasks you're less fond of than others, get them over with early on, rather than putting them off to the end of your shift. Working toward achieving your goals will give you a sense of momentum, while procrastinating will only raise your level of tension and make you feel more stressed.

7. SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FOR YOURSELF

In some situations, it's impossible to accomplish everything you need to do or to do it all according to your expected performance standards. If you've prioritized correctly, leaving some low-priority tasks undone won't result in any negative consequences. To set realistic expectations, consider what you can accomplish given the time frame and resources available. When you evaluate your performance, base your judgment on how well you accomplished these goals, rather than on what you might have achieved with unlimited time and tools.





8. GET HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT

If you're having trouble responding to multiple demands, don't panic – ask for help. This may mean letting a colleague know you're “sinking” or calling your supervisor for assistance with managing the tasks at hand. Rather than regarding these actions as a sign of defeat or a negative reflection on your competence, view them as an illustration of your management capabilities. By acknowledging that you have an unmanageable workload, you'll be able to take the proper measures to get the job done. When help arrives, delegate tasks to others – not just the simple ones, but some of the more complex assignments as well. The goal is to lessen your load so you can work on the priorities at hand, using your skills efficiently and effectively to meet your workplace demands.

9. ALTERNATE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL TASKS

Varying the type of activity, you're engaged in will help you restore your sense of emotional equilibrium, reduce fatigue, and conserve your energies. Rather than saving all your busywork for a certain part of your day, which can be mentally draining, switch off between simpler and more complex tasks.

10. MAKE A HABIT OF TAKING YOUR BREAKS AND MEALS

Even if you feel you're too busy to leave your work space, allow yourself some time out during your shift. By resting, you'll be more productive over the long run, have better concentration, and increase your chances of being in – and staying in – a good mood. You need to invent ways of stealing time to calm down and approach the situation sensibly. For example, you might stop by the water fountain for a drink. While there, pause for a few minutes and think about what you were doing. When you return to work, you'll feel calmer and more focuses on the task at hand.



11. AVOID STIMULANTS

Watch what you eat or drink before coming to work and while you're there. Fatty foods such as donuts, refined sugar products such as cake or candy, and caffeine products such as coffee, tea, cola, or chocolate provide quick energy boosts, but can lead to equally quick energy letdowns. Complex carbohydrates – whole grains, cereals, bread, pastas, fruit, and vegetables – provide long-lasting energy. Maintaining an adequate water intake is important as well when you're under stress. Dehydration can increase clotting factors, interfere with body temperature regulation, and affect normal gastrointestinal function.

12. REVIEW PAST CRISES FOR FUTURE LEARNING

After a stressful event has occurred, revisit it later. Ask yourself: What would have made the situation better, or worse? Then think about what you could have done to ensure a better outcome. To do this, visualize yourself

dealing with the situation in slow motion. When you reach a point where you might have said or done something different, play out various scenarios in your mind. Imagine yourself initiating each option and see how other individuals might have reacted. By reviewing situations that have already occurred, you can prepare yourself to respond differently the next time you're faced with a similar situation.

Implementing a variety of stress-reduction strategies can help you feel in control, be in control, and manage your stress.



Practicing Mindfulness

What is Mindfulness?

Being fully present in the moment, aware of where we are and what we

are doing **Easy Ways to Practice Mindfulness:**

1. Pay attention to what is going on around you using your senses – touch, sight, sound, smell, and taste.
2. Live in the moment, bringing attention to everything you do
3. Accept yourself and treat yourself with respect
4. Focus on your breathing during negative thoughts

Simple Mindfulness Exercises:

Belly Breathing. Breathe from the belly, not the chest. To learn how, sit in a chair and lean forward placing your elbows on your knees. Breathing naturally in this position forces you to breathe from the belly. This stimulates the vagus nerve, activating your relaxation response, reducing your heart rate and blood pressure, and lowering stress levels.

Starting the Day with Purpose. Sit in a relaxed position and focus on your seated body. Take three slow belly breaths and set your intention for the day (*for example: Today I will be patient with others, eat well, and have fun*). Be sure to check in with yourself throughout the day.

Body scan meditation. Lie on your back, palms facing up. Slowly bring attention to each part of your body, working from head to toe. Be aware of any sensations, emotions or thoughts associated with each part of your body.

Walking meditation. Begin to walk slowly in a quiet place. Focus on the experience of walking, being aware of the sensations of standing and the subtle movements that keep your balance.

Mindful Eating:

1. Eat when your body tells you – learn your hunger cues and listen to them, avoid emotional eating.
2. Set yourself up for success- think about and prepare meals and snacks rather than wandering around when hungry.
3. Nourish your body - When we eat a variety of healthier foods, we are less likely to binge or comfort foods.
4. Stop when full – eat slowly and listen to your body to allow your brain to catch up.
5. At mealtimes only eat - distractions such as watching TV or paying bills, leads to not listening to your body's need.
6. Consider where your food comes from – we often think of food as an end product, try considering all of the time and effort that went into creating a meal. Express thanks to the people who grew and harvested, the ancestors who shared recipes, etc.



888-243-5744

www.mylifeexpert.com

Tips for Coping with Burnout

It may not be just one tip that helps you recover from burnout, choosing just one to think about incorporating into your life is a good place to start. Please don't hesitate to call us here at SANDCREEK. We would love to partner with you in taking that first step!

DEFINITION OF BURN-OUT

Burn-out is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions:

- feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion;
- increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job
- reduced professional efficacy

TIPS TO BUILD RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF BURNOUT

DEVELOP SELF-AWARENESS:

Knowing yourself means having the ability to understand your feelings, having an accurate self-assessment of your own strengths and weaknesses, and showing self-confidence.

- Do a 'U-turn': A "U-turn" is a gentle, non-judgmental turn inward, to our body, our thoughts, our feelings in order to begin to address what might be in our control. It is turning away from the external environment and what we wish were different, and inward in order to better cope.

PRACTICE EMOTIONAL REGULATION:

Emotion regulation is the ability to enhance or decrease one's emotions as needed.

- Stop, find, and label our feelings: Being able to identify what we are feeling gives us a better perspective about our emotional lives.
- Body Scan: key into the physical sensations that clue us in to the emotional experience we are having.
- Express the feeling: Expression can be in the form of journaling, creating art or music, or simply expressing it to ourselves or to another person.
- Practice using "I" statements which involves both identifying what you are feeling, and expressing it appropriately (even if it is inside your head!): practice noticing your feelings and then using an "I" statement such as, "I am feeling frustrated."
- Get Perspective: When feeling upset, take a step back and ask yourself, on an emotional scale of 1-10 (with 10 being highly emotional) should I be feeling an 8 or 9 over this incident that is more of a "3" situation?
- Speak about your feeling as opposed to from it: When we speak from an emotion, our message often gets lost, for example, "I hate when you always do that!" But when we speak about our feeling, our tone and words are often more calm and accurate, for example, "I feel frustrated that you did that. Can we talk about that?"

GET ANXIETY UNDER CONTROL:

Anxiety tends to pull us from the here and now and into the past or the future. We often get pulled into the past wishing we, or something else would have happened in a different way. Or, we get pulled into the future with questions of “What if...” which often leads to worst case scenarios. In order to combat anxiety, try the next 3 tips:

- Practice Mindfulness. Mindfulness is defined as a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.
- Develop boundaries. I often use the analogy of a white picket fence that surrounds our bodies to represent emotional boundaries. Having that fence is important for two main reasons: it creates a personal space which is all ours to keep beautiful, with calm, positive, and reassuring thoughts. And, the fence keeps other people's negative statements, emotions, or behaviors outside of that space. Better boundaries allow for better internal balance.
- Focus on Gratitude. Slow down, take a breath in and out, and notice what in your life are you grateful is in your life.

BONUS TIP!

Develop a “purpose and meaning” mindset where the belief that one's life has meaning is associated and positively linked to just about every aspect of our lives by using the 3 Question Exercise:

“What do I care about?”

Try taking a minute every morning to reset your purpose by focusing on what it is that you care about. This question asks you to take a moment to reflect on how your job provides meaning to your life. As we have done throughout this presentation, it is an invitation to turn inward to focus on your mindset rather than the external world which we can't always control.

“What did I like to do as an 8 year old?”

I often hear people talk about an activity that they did as a kid that made them feel free, happy, or lost in time that they no longer do! Reconnecting with a part of yourself that makes you feel like you in some connected way can be a game changer for finding passion and play in your life.

“How would co-workers describe you?”

Living a purposeful life means others can see it. Think about what value you would wish to put into that question, If I want to be seen as ambitious, spiritual, honest, family oriented, successful, etc..., what do you do each day that demonstrates that?

Resources:

Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ by Daniel Goleman www.mayoclinic.org

Hope and Help for Your Nerves by Dr. Claire Weekes

When to Say Yes, How to Say No To Take Control of Your Life by Henry Cloud, John Townsend

Let Your Life Speak by Parker Palmer



Learning When to Say NO as a Form of Self-Care

As we enter a season that is looking more like none we have entered before – adjustment is a tool that we can use to our benefit. It will be critical that we practice self-care and continue to refine our expectations of ourselves. Learning to say “no” is a crucial form of self-care and is an adjusted mentality for many of us. While we often hear the phrase, “self care”, figuring out when to say no isn’t talked about quite as often.

There is a large population that has struggled with saying “no” to plans, opportunities, and commitments. And in our culture, we often say “yes” until we begin feel an overwhelming sense of guilt until we have eventually overcommitted ourselves.

Recognizing that when we say “yes” to things that we wish or want to say “no” to means that there is less space to say “yes” to the things that bring us the most joy, hope, opportunity and self-love.

As priorities shift, obligations mount and the internal reflex of “yes” overwhelms us consider a few of the tips below as you navigate through this season.

Helpful Tips in Learning How to Say "No"

Listen To Your Gut:

We all have internal directors, voices, and intuition. Although this strategy isn't 100% accurate every time, following your instincts can go a long way. Next time you're unsure of whether or not you want to pursue an opportunity, listen to yourself with intent.

Assess Your Current Obligations:

Many individuals are guilty of spreading themselves too thin. Have you built any time into your calendar to recharge or rest? This is a critical step to reducing the risk of burning out.

Practice:

It can be difficult to gather the courage to say "no." Honestly, you are less likely to be able to execute a "no" if it's a foreign word in your vocabulary. Rehearsing what you're going to say will help you gain confidence in your decision.

Say Yes AND No, Emphatically:

Once you've made a decision, avoid going back and forth. If you say no on time doesn't mean you have to say it the next time, but when we allow ourselves to feel guilt over our "yes" or "no" we exhaust ourselves at a much quicker rate. It's beyond unreasonable to think we can say "yes" every time. It's common to second guess and wonder if what we just said "no" to was a mistake. Keep in mind that it's not feasible to say yes to everything. On top of that, just because something is a wonderful opportunity doesn't necessarily make it the right opportunity. Free yourself by letting go of "what ifs" and "maybe I should have's".

Prioritize Yourself:

Eleanor Brown once said, "Self care is not selfish. You cannot serve from an empty vessel". If you do not prioritize yourself...no one else will.

Always Speak Kindly to Yourself:

This means not beating yourself up, but rather focusing on building yourself up. Imagine you were talking to a best friend. What would you say to them?

Know Your Motivation:

Ask yourself: am I only saying yes for others? Sometimes, we find ourselves overcommitting to things out of obligation or guilt. We don't want to let anyone around us down and end up saying yes. Before making a decision, ask yourself: am I saying "yes" because I want to? Or am I doing this to please the people around me or meet unrealistic expectations, set by myself or someone else?

Continue Checking in with Yourself:

Remember that learning when to say "no" and trusting yourself is a process. If you find yourself over-committing again, take a step back and focus on your wellbeing first. Build in an accountability check on a regular basis to assess where you are.

WELL-BEING STARTS WITH SELF CARE

Tips for being the best you possible

Most of us, in some form or fashion spend time taking care of others throughout the day. In order to keep up with all that life offers or demands of us, we also need to learn to take care of ourselves. Self-care is important for our body, mind and soul. In order to be the best version of ourselves, we need to nurture and take care of ourselves. We know self-care can help us become more effective and energetic and manage stress better. Below are several ways that we can take care of ourselves.

LEARN RELAXATION TECHNIQUES:

DEEP BREATHING

While sitting, lying down or standing, close your eyes and breathe in slowly. Let the breath out for a count of 5-10 seconds. Take ten of these super-relaxers any time you feel tense.

MEDITATE

Start by breathing in and out slowly. One cycle should last for approximately 6 seconds. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, letting your breath flow effortlessly in and out of your body. Let go of your thoughts for a minute. Let go of things you have to do later today or pending projects that need your attention. Simply let yourself be still for one minute.

MINDFULNESS

Focus on the here and now. Be present.

STRETCHING

Practice simple stretches such as the “neck stretch”: stretch your neck by gently rolling your head in a half-circle, starting at one side, then dropping your chin to your chest, then to the other side.

CREATE A PLAYLIST

Try songs or nature sounds that sound relaxing to you. Research shows that listening to soothing music can lower blood pressure, heart rate, and anxiety

CONSIDER MEETING WITH A SAND CREEK CONSULTANT REGARDING SELF CARE AND WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU!

Trained professionals are available to assist you and provide tools so you can achieve the work-life balance necessary for optimum self-care. These services are both FREE and CONFIDENTIAL.

SELF CARE FOCUS POINTS

- PHYSICAL EXERCISE
- LEARN RELAXATION TECHNIQUES
- EAT HEALTHY
- DEVELOP BETTER TIME MANAGEMENT HABITS
- PLAY
- GET PLENTY OF SLEEP
- SMILE MORE
- COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS
- CONNECT WITH OTHERS
- SIMPLIFY
- SET PERSONAL GOALS
- GIVE YOURSELF A SENSE OF PURPOSE
- FORGIVE
- PRACTICE OPTIMISM AND POSITIVE EXPECTANCY

MY LIFE EXPERT

SANDCREEK EAP
An AllOne Health Company

GET INSTANTLY CONNECTED WITH RESOURCE LOCATORS

Our locators instantly give you and your employees access to over a million nationwide providers and services focused on child care, education, aging, and medical & health which include the following topics:

- Child Care
- Public Schools/Colleges/Universities
- Home Care/Hospice
- Rehabilitation Facilities
- Nursing Home/Senior Housing
- Pharmacies & Suppliers
- VA Medical Facilities
- Public Health Departments
- Urgent Care/Hospitals

Conveniently located within relevant topic areas & at the bottom of the mylifeexpert.com home page!

**Search by city,
state, or zip!**



888-243-5744

www.mylifeexpert.com





Back to School Planning: Guiding Parents, Guardians and Caregivers

SANDCREEK EAP

An AllOne Health Company

For many families, back to school planning will look different this year than it has in previous years. Your school will have new policies in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19. You may also be starting the school year with virtual learning components. Whatever the situation, these checklists are intended to help parents, guardians, and caregivers, plan and prepare for the upcoming school year.

Some of the changes in schools' classroom attendance or structure may include:

- **Cohorts:** Dividing students and teachers into distinct groups that stay together throughout an entire school day during in-person classroom instruction. Schools may allow minimal or no interaction between cohorts (also sometimes referred to as pods).
- **Hybrid:** A mix of virtual learning and in-class learning. Hybrid options can apply a cohort approach to the in-class education provided.
- **Virtual/at-home only:** Students and teachers engage in virtual-only classes, activities, and events.

Planning for In-Person Classes

Going back to school this fall will require schools and families to work together even more than before. Schools will be making changes to their policies and operations with several goals: supporting learning; providing important services, such as school meals, extended daycare, extracurricular activities, and social services; and limiting the transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Teachers and staff can teach and encourage preventive behaviors at school. Likewise, it will be important for families to emphasize and model healthy behaviors at home and to talk to your children about changes to expect this school year. Even if your child will attend school in-person, it is important to prepare for the possibility of virtual learning if school closes or if your child becomes exposed to COVID-19 and needs to stay home.

CDC has created a checklist to help with back to school planning for school year (SY) 2020-2021. If your school uses a hybrid model, you may want to review both the in-person and virtual/at-home learning checklists.

Actions to take and points to consider:

- Check in with your child each morning for signs of illness. If your child has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, they should not go to school.
- Make sure your child does not have a sore throat or other signs of illness, like a cough, diarrhea, severe headache, vomiting, or body aches.
- If your child has had close contact to a COVID-19 case, they should not go to school. Follow guidance on what to do when someone has known exposure.

Identify your school point person(s) to contact if your child gets sick.

Name of school point person(s):

Contact information:

Be familiar with local COVID-19 testing sites in the event you or your child develops symptoms. These may include sites with free testing available.

My local testing options:

Cloth Face Coverings for Children

If your school is requiring or encouraging the use of cloth face coverings, think about the following actions. Consider asking what steps your school will take to minimize the potential for students to be singled out or teased for wearing or not wearing a mask. Appropriate and consistent use of face coverings may be challenging for some children. Wearing cloth face coverings should be a priority when it is difficult for students to stay 6 feet apart from each other (e.g., during carpool drop off or pick up, when entering the building or standing in line at school, or while on the bus).



Actions to take and points to consider:

Have multiple cloth face coverings, so you can wash them daily and have back-ups ready.

Choose cloth face coverings that:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
 - Completely cover the nose and mouth
 - Are secured with ties or ear loops
 - Include multiple layers of fabric
 - Allow for breathing without restriction
 - Can be washed and machine dried without damage or change to shape
-
- Label your child's cloth face coverings clearly in a permanent marker so that they are not confused with those of other children.
 - Practice with your child putting on and taking off cloth face coverings without touching the cloth.
 - Explain the importance of wearing a cloth face covering and how it protects other people from getting sick.
 - Consider talking to your child about other people who may not be able to wear cloth face coverings for medical reasons (e.g., asthma). As a family, model wearing cloth face coverings, especially when you are in situations where physical distancing is difficult to maintain or impossible.
 - If you have a young child, help build their comfort wearing a cloth face covering and become comfortable seeing others in face covers.
 - Praise your child for wearing a cloth face covering correctly.
 - Put a cloth face covering on stuffed animals.
 - Draw a cloth face covering on a favorite book character.
 - Show images of other children wearing cloth face coverings.
 - Allow your child to choose their cloth face covering that meets any dress requirements your school may have.

Consider providing your child with a container (e.g., labeled resealable bag) to bring to school to store their cloth face coverings when not wearing it (e.g., when eating).

Mental Health & Social-Emotional Wellbeing Considerations:

Since the school experience will be very different from before with desks far apart from each other, teachers maintaining physical distance, and the possibility of staying in the classroom for lunch, it is unlike anything your child is used to. Before school is in session, you may want to talk to your child and explain that all these steps are being taken to keep everyone safe and healthy. The list below provides actions and considerations regarding your child's mental health and emotional well-being as they transition back to in-person school. In addition, if your child seems to need mental health or behavioral services (e.g., social skills training, counseling), you may want to ask your school administrator for more information on these services.

Actions to take and points to consider:

- Talk with your child about how school will look different (e.g., desks far apart from each other, teachers maintaining physical distance, possibility of staying in the classroom for lunch).
- Talk with your child about how school is going and about interactions with classmates and teachers. Find out how your child is feeling and communicate that what they may be feeling is normal.
- Anticipate behavior changes in your child. Watch for changes like excessive crying or irritation, excessive worry or sadness, unhealthy eating or sleeping habits, difficulty concentrating, which may be signs of your child struggling with stress and anxiety.
- Try to attend school activities and meetings. Schools may offer more of these virtually. As a parent, staying informed and connected may reduce your feelings of anxiety and provide a way for you to express any concerns you may have about your child's school.
- Ask your school about any plans to reduce potential stigma related to having or being suspected of having COVID-19.
- Check if your school has any systems in place to identify and provide mental health services to students in need of support. If so, identify a point of contact for these services at your school.
- Check if your school has a plan to help students adjust to being back in school. Students might need help adjusting to how COVID-19 has disrupted their daily life. Support may include school counseling and psychological services (including grief counseling), social-emotional learning (SEL)-focused programs and curricula, and peer/social support groups.
- Check if your school will provide training for students in mindfulness, incorporating SEL into classroom curriculum (either virtually or in-person), or support a child's ability to cope with stress and anxiety. If not, consider asking about ways to add this to your child's at-home learning.

You can be a role model for your child by practicing self-care:

- Take breaks
- Get plenty of sleep
- Exercise
- Eat well
- Stay socially connected



Preparing for Virtual or At Home Learning

Things to consider as you get ready

Virtual learning may be a choice or part of a child's educational experience this year, and it may be necessary if your child has certain underlying health conditions or is immunocompromised. In a hybrid model, learning may occur virtually during part of the week and occur in-person for the rest. Or, the school year may start with virtual learning but switch to in-person learning for the remainder or certain times of the school year. Going back to school virtually may pose additional challenges with staying connected to peers, since students may have less frequent or no in-person interactions to each other. You may want to talk to school staff to learn more about what they are doing to support connection among students, interactive learning with feedback, building resilience, and social-emotional wellbeing for students who will not be onsite.

Setting up for Virtual or At-Home Learning

Actions to take and points to consider:

- Try to attend school activities and meetings. Schools may offer more of these virtually. These meetings can be a way to express any concerns you may have about the school's plans.
- Create a schedule with your child and make a commitment to stick with it. Structure and routine can greatly help your child from falling behind with assignments. Discuss your family's schedule and identify the best times for learning and instruction, as well as family-oriented physical activity, such as walks outside. A family calendar or other visuals could be useful for keeping track of deadlines and assignments.
- Try to find a space where you live that's free of distractions, noise, and clutter for learning and doing homework. This could be a quiet, well-lit place in your dining room or living room or a corner of your home that could fit a small table, if available.
- Identify opportunities for your child to connect with peers and be social—either virtually or in person, while maintaining physical distance.

Here are some things to look for when reviewing your school's plan for virtual or at-home learning. Some of these action items and points to consider might warrant additional conversations with your school administrators or healthcare provider.



Actions to take and points to consider:

- Find out if there will be regular and consistent opportunities during each day for staff and student check-ins and peer-to-peer learning.
 - Find out if students have regular opportunities for live video instruction by teachers or if they will primarily be watching pre-recorded videos and receive accompanying assignments.
 - Ask if the school will offer virtual or socially distanced physical activity. If not, identify ways to add physical activity to your child's daily routine.
 - Ask your school what steps they are taking to help students adjust to being back in school and to the ways that COVID-19 may have disrupted their daily life. Supports may include school counseling and psychological services, social-emotional learning (SEL)-focused programs, and peer/social support groups.
-
- If your child participates in school meal programs, identify how your school district plans to make meals available to students who are learning virtually at home.
 - If your child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan or receives other learning support (e.g., tutoring), ask your school how these services will continue during virtual at-home learning.
 - If your child receives speech, occupational or physical therapy or other related services from the school, ask your school how these services will continue during virtual at-home learning.
 - If your child receives mental health or behavioral services (e.g., social skills training, counseling), ask your school how these services will continue during virtual at-home learning.
 - If you anticipate having technological barriers to learning from home, ask if your school or community can provide support or assistance for students without appropriate electronic devices for schoolwork.
 - If your school offers a hybrid model, be familiar with your school's plan for how they will communicate with families when a positive case or exposure to someone with COVID-19 is identified and ensure student privacy is upheld.

Learning Resources

ONLINE LEARNING RESOURCES

Open Culture:

This site provides access to free resources for preschool thru 5th grade. There is an option for a monthly or annual subscription that offers additional resources 1st grade thru 8th. Resources include video instruction, e-books, printable worksheets and more.

Khan Academy:

This is a non-profit that is offering some free online courses for PreK through 12th grade. There is also online tutoring available

PBS For Parents:

This is a non-profit that is offering some free online courses for PreK thru 12th grade. There is also online tutoring available.

Scholastic:

This site offers online learning games for younger children and a free weekly newsletter for ideas regarding at home learning. To receive the newsletter, you have to subscribe.

Quill:

This is a resource for 4-10 year olds. There is a monthly fee to access the resources. There are books, videos, vocabulary exercises, and activities included.

National Council of Teachers of English:

This site provides resources to help students (elementary thru high school) with their writing and grammar skills.

Casio:

This is a resource for an online math software that is currently being offered for free. There are math lessons for K thru 12th grade and live webinars.

TUTORING RESOURCES

K-12 Online Tutoring

There is tutoring available for several subjects. Pricing options can be found on the website and include a per session rate or a package rate.

Sylvan Learning

Sylvan is now offering online and in-person tutoring. Rates can be found on their website

Reading Success Plus

This program is to assist kids who may be struggling with dyslexia. They provide resources specific to meet individual needs when it comes to reading, writing, and math.

Learn To Be

This is a non-profit that offers free tutoring nationwide. There is an application process to start services.

SANDCREEK EAP
An AllOne Health Company

888-243-5744

www.mylifeexpert.com



Balancing Responsibilities

With the threat of COVID, many of us have found ourselves in an unusual life-work situation. As we adjust to our new normal, it is important that we also find new ways to balance work, family and everyday routines. Balancing all our responsibilities can be a big drain on our physical and emotional health. Creating a balance helps family members find time to nurture, support and enjoy each other. It is physically impossible to do everything and to be everywhere. What can you do to help find balance?

Detach yourself from work once you're done: When you go out to work, you have a clear line between work and life after work. If you are staying at home, this line can get blurry and you may find yourself “at work” all day long. Make efforts to turn your computer off at the end of the workday, stop checking emails at a certain time, and put your phone down. Disconnecting will improve your wellbeing.

Find out when you are most productive: As humans, we function in cycles, and these cycles determine how productive (or not) we are at different times. You may find that you are most productive and do your best work at a certain time each day. Try doing your most demanding and creative tasks during your most productive hours of the day in order to be make the most of your time. If you are working from home and have kids, your productivity may come when your kids are sleeping. It may not always be ideal, but it can help to work before they get up, during naps, or after they go to bed.

Keep your routine: Continue waking up and going to bed at the same time every day. Keep consistent mealtimes. Try to remain consistent in the majority of your daily tasks, this helps us maintain control and reduce anxiety.

Make a schedule: Write out a visible schedule on a piece of paper or white board. This brings about a sense of control and allows you to set expectations, which helps to relieve anxiety. If you have kids, schedule time to play with them, so they know when they will have special time with you. Take breaks and eat lunch/snacks together.

Have clear boundaries: If working from home, consider creating a stop light system for your office space, especially for your older kids can be a helpful way to maintain productivity. A green light means come on in! Red means you are in a meeting or on a phone call. It lets them know when they can access you.

Prioritize: Look at what is really important to you. In two to three minutes, brainstorm a list of all the things you think you should do, write them down if that would be helpful. Now, number all those items on your list in order of most important to least important. Now, look at your “shoulds”:

- Are they positive or negative?
- What is the most important thing?
- What is the least important thing?
- What can you do to make the most important things happen?
- What can you do to let go of the least important ones?

Communicate and Negotiate: Communicating is more than talking. It involves understanding, listening and sharing information. Sometimes when we are overwhelmed, we forget to let others know what is going on. When you negotiate, you work to create a win-win situation for all involved. Try taking a collaborative approach to work together in order to achieve the goals or expectations communicated.

Delegate: When you delegate, you give some of your work to others. You can lighten your load, while others can learn new things. Many of us have a hard time asking for help because we feel like no one can do the job as well as we can. Or, we may feel guilty asking for help. Remember, one person cannot do it all!

Balancing all the responsibilities that are expected of us can really take a physical and emotional toll. Remember to be easy on yourself, give yourself extra kindness, and practice self care. By focusing on some of these tips, you can take control over your responsibilities and ease the anxiety that comes with all the roles you play.

WORKING IN A HOME OFFICE

Working from home has its advantages and disadvantages. Working in a home office and maintaining work-life balance requires preparation and regular evaluation of your work practices. If you are not careful, your home office can take over your life. By following a few guidelines, you can avoid burnout as you take advantage of working at home.

Setting Up a Home Office

It is important to set up the home office properly in the beginning. A poor work environment will only harm productivity. So, make sure that you are comfortable and have all of the tools that you need to do your job well.

The Set Up:

- **Location:** Choose a separate room or a location that is out of the way. This will help prevent distractions and create a professional work environment. You also need to make sure that it is well lit.
- **Equipment:** Make sure that your equipment is functional and that you have everything you need.
- **Clear out the office:** Remove items from the office that are not work related. It is not a storage shed.
- **Organize:** Organize supplies so that they are accessible, easy to use, and functional.
- **Make it a workspace:** Limit the office use for work. It is not a play area.

Setting Boundaries

It is difficult to establish boundaries in a home office; people do not view a home the same way they see the work office. Because you do not have company policies to prevent distractions, you need to create your own boundaries. You can base these boundaries on the rules and boundaries of your old workplace. For example, do not take personal calls while you are working. Just like other boundaries, expect people to challenge them. You must stick to your boundaries, however, in order to be effective at your job and keep your work life in balance.

Dealing with Distractions

It is easy to become distracted while working from home. There is no one to supervise, and your family can easily forget that you are working. Fortunately, a few safeguards will help you avoid distractions.

- **Avoiding Distractions:**
- **Limit access:** Ask your family to stay out of the office while you are working. Family, children especially, can be very distracting.
- **Use a timer:** Schedule breaks for activities like social networking. Do not constantly surf the internet.
- **Turn off the television:** Even if you need a television for work, it does not have to be on all the time. Turn it off to avoid distractions.
- **Set aside time to talk on the phone:** You cannot allow yourself to be distracted by every phone call.

Make a Schedule and Stick to It

Working from home gives you the chance to create your own schedule, but you do need to create it. If not, you will have trouble accomplishing tasks on time. Most people find a schedule that sets tasks for each hour helpful, but you may use any format or time block you like.

No matter how you create your schedule, you must stick with it. It is too easy ignoring your schedule when no one is monitoring your performance.

NAVIGATING THROUGH PERSONAL FINANCES AND COVID-19

Tips For Financial Survival

K JH 'H YfYWBhW Ub[Yg'hc'ci f'Yj YfmXUm`j Yg'Xi Y'hc'7 CJ-8!% Dg'ja dUWicb'ci f' XU]mik cf_ž a UbmidYcd`Y'a][\ h'VY'Yl dYf]YbW]b['Z]bUbW]U'\ UfXg\]d'Ug'UfYgi `h W Ub[Yg']b']bWc a YžUgdci gYfg'Ya d'cma Ybhc'f'XYW]g]cbg'VY]b['a UXY'UWci h WUf]b['Zcf'W]XfYb"'K \]Y'H]g'g]h U]cb'gYYa g'hc'W Ub[Y'XU]nž\ YfY'UfY'gca Y' VUg]W]hdg'Zcf'f'm]b['hc'a]h] UH'U[U]bghZ]bUbW]U'\ UfXg\]d.

- ▽ Go through your current budget to determine income and household expenses to identify areas that you might be able to modify.
- ▽ If you have shared expenses, sit down and communicate with your partner regarding any changes to your current budget and/or spending habits so that communication stays consistent and transparent on how to manage expenses.
- ▽ Check with your local County Health and Human Services department to see if you might qualify for any state or federal aid should your income drop significantly. Also, reach out to local charities or non-profits that might have resources available.
- ▽ Reach out to a financial counselor to gain insight to a short-term plan to address your budget and/or debt.
- ▽ If you foresee difficulty in paying your mortgage or creditors, contact them directly to see if they have implemented any hardship programs or deferments due to the current status of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- ▽ Cut down on excess spending and revert to a "crisis budget" where only immediate household obligations are met (food, shelter, utilities).
- ▽ For those with childcare concerns check out <https://childcare.gov/>
- ▽ For some, using credit cards to help supplement any temporary loss of income is inevitable. If so, use only for necessities and things that are critical to the sustainment of your household. If you have questions on any financial concerns please contact us to schedule a time so speak with a financial consultant.

If you have questions on any financial concerns please contact us to schedule a time to speak with a financial consultant.

Contact Us @ **888-243-5744** or login to **www.mylifeexpert.com** and click on the **Financial** tab for articles, calculators and more!

Assessing Your Child's Ability To Stay Home Alone

At some point all parents will consider if their child can be left home alone. There are different aspects to take into consideration when making this decision. These aspects include how long the child will be home alone and the child's skills and maturity level to stay home safely. Staying home alone can be a positive experience for both parents and the child when the child is well-prepared and mature enough to handle it; however, it is necessary to be aware of the risks of an unsupervised child at home. Taking into consideration the potential concerns, the child's comfort level and ability to deal with any difficulties that may arise.

Before deciding to leave your child home alone you will need to consider your child's mental, emotional, physical and developmental well-being; additionally, you'll need to explore your child's willingness to stay home alone. There are also specific laws and policies in place for each state. To find out more information about the laws in your state contact your local Child Protective Services (CPS) agency.

Important Considerations:

Age & Maturity:

Children mature at different rates; as such, age should not be the only deciding factor when deciding if your child is ready to be left home alone. It is helpful to evaluate your child's maturity based on how they have demonstrated responsibility in the past.

A few questions to help evaluate:

- Does your child follow rules and demonstrate good
- Is your child mentally and physically able to care for him-or-herself?
- Does your child get scared or upset easily?
- Can your child reach items in your home? Can your child access safety supplies?
- How does your child react to stressful or unfamiliar situations?
- Is your child anxious or comfortable with the idea of being home alone?

Timing & Independence

- How long will your child be home alone?
- Will it be during the daytime or evening?
- Will your child need to prepare a meal to eat?
- Is your child able to clean-up any messes that may occur?
- Does your child demonstrate responsible decision making?
- Does your child know what to do if an unexpected visitor arrives?



Environment and Home Safety

Is your home safe and free of hazards? Do you have:

- Working smoke alarms
- Properly stored chemicals, firearms, medications and alcohol
- Water hazard protection – pools, lakes, etc.
- Do you reside in a safe, low-crime, neighborhood?
- Are there other adults nearby (friend, family, neighbor) that you trust and is available to provide immediate help if there is an emergency? Can they be easily contacted?

Your child needs to know who, and how, to contact if there is an emergency. This information should be written out so the child is able to read/understand it and stored in an accessible location that is known to the child. Additional safety considerations include considering:

- Your child should have a basic knowledge of first aid and know where first aid supplies are kept in your home. If your child needs more education on this topic, the American Red Cross offers safety courses.
- Does your family have a safety plan for emergencies?
- Is your child aware of and able to follow this plan?
- Is the plan reviewed/practiced regularly?
- Does your child know where you are and how to contact you at all times?
- Does your family have an emergency contact that is aware that the child may contact them in case of an emergency?
- Does your child know to call 911 in case of an emergency?
- Does your child have access to a cell phone, or a land line and do they feel comfortable using it?

More than One Child at Home Alone

When there is more than one child at home it can be challenging to determine if the older child (who has demonstrated they are able to stay home alone) is capable of also supervising and caring for younger child(ren) independently. There is not a specific way to determine this but discussing the questions below with your child may help to make this decision.

- Do you feel comfortable handling being in charge and not abusing this power?
- Can you calmly handle any problems or emergencies?
- Are you willing to be responsible for the safety of your sibling(s)?

In addition to this discussion there are a few other things to consider:

- How old are the younger siblings?
- What are the sibling dynamics?
- Do the younger siblings have any special needs? If so, is the older child able to accommodate these needs

For assistance, call: 888-243-5744

Helping Children Cope With Uncertainty

INITIATE THE CONVERSATION

- Just because children are not talking about a tragedy, doesn't mean they're not thinking about it

REASSURE THEM

- Tragedy can rattle our sense of safety and our children's

LISTEN

- This means giving them your full attention and not jumping to judge or minimize what they are saying **FIND**

OUT WHAT THEY KNOW

- The key purpose of this conversation is to correct any misconceptions and offer concrete information.

ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO SHARE THEIR FEELINGS

- Sadness, anxiety, fear, stress, even excitement – show understanding and acceptance

SHARE YOUR FEELINGS

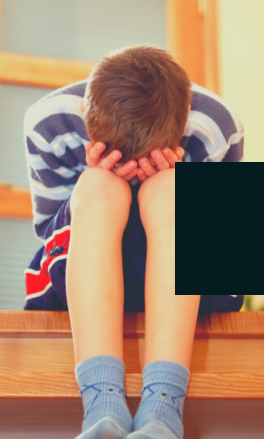
- Honestly express emotions, such as: "you seem sad when we talk about this; I feel sad too."

FOCUS ON THE GOOD

- Where there is tragedy, there is also heroism – acts by police officers, doctors or ordinary citizens that restore our faith in humanity when it is shaken

ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO ACT

- Encouraging children to do something about what they're feeling can give them an outlet and restore some control



Co-Parenting and the Coronavirus:

How separated parents can bridge their differences during the pandemic

Co-parenting has always required focus, intentionality, a depth of good-will and a willingness to assume positive intent. The impact of corona-virus is changing many aspects of our life, and this includes the way we co-parent our children. Social and physical distancing looks different in various households, decisions about how to return to school may not be unanimous and you may find yourself wondering what you can do to make this seamless for you, your child(ren) and parenting partner.

Be proactive. Whenever possible try to have conversations ahead of whenever decisions have to be made. Agree to hear each other's perspectives fully. If necessary, take time between conversations and decision making to thoroughly digest and process your parenting partner's perspective.

Be patient. This is a challenging situation for everyone. The more generous you are with yourself and with others, the smoother things are likely to go.

Be flexible. Work hours, school schedules, family trips, and social calendars have all been affected. Because of this, custody agreements, and parenting time may be impacted. When possible, stay flexible and do your best to work with one another. Make short-term compromises with the understanding to find long-term solutions later.

Stay healthy and safe. Follow the CDC guidelines for washing hands, wiping down surfaces, and social distancing. If one parent has signs of COVID-19 or may have been exposed to COVID-19, work with each other to find ways to keep everyone healthy and safe.

Be kind (and don't sweat the small stuff). Now is the perfect time for you and your co-parent to be on the same team, and attempt to create an "it's us against the virus" attitude. Think and rethink about what conversations are necessary right now. If you feel upset or frustrated, let those emotions pass before you pick up the phone or send an angry email. Now more than ever, your kids need you to stay calm and grounded. Children pick up on the energy between their parents, so be aware of how you are acting. Your job as a parent is to ease their anxiety, not add to it.

Be honest. Whether it's changing work hours, concerns about return to school plans, your child's requests to be involved in a social activity, a need to renegotiate child support, or a possible exposure to COVID-19, transparency can go a long way towards problem-solving. Be honest with your children as well; let them know that circumstances are likely to continue to change and that you will keep them informed as decisions are made and schedules created.

Tread carefully. Think and rethink about what conversations are really necessary right now. If you feel upset or frustrated, let those emotions pass before you pick up the phone or send an angry email. Now more than ever, your kids need you to stay calm and grounded. Children pick up on the energy between their parents, so be aware of how you are acting. Your job as a parent is to ease their anxiety, not add to it.

Be practical. If no one is showing symptoms of COVID-19, stick to court-ordered custody agreements whenever possible. However, if one household has been exposed to the corona-virus or a member of the family is showing symptoms, be practical about what is best for your children. This isn't about being right or having more power, it's about what is safest for everyone involved.

Communicate with intention. Right now, it's more important than ever for you and your ex to be on the same page. Talk about schedules, hygiene protocols, and what you are telling the kids about the current health pandemic. Err on the side of too much communication rather than not enough, and ask questions when something is unclear.

Get clarity and external guidance if needed. With so many changes happening at such a rapid pace, it may be a good idea to have an attorney draft up a written agreement with the temporary changes for both of you to sign.



SANDCREEK EAP
An AllOne Health Company

FAMILY RITUALS

THE NEW SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

As we continue to navigate the many changes brought on by COVID-19, we have seen the importance of social connectivity while maintaining physical distance. The new “abnormal” touches people in so many different ways. Families are all different and each circumstance brings new challenges. Some people are experiencing the shutdown alone at home. Others may be elderly and shut in with limited access to assistance. Many families are working from home while caring for children or the elderly and guiding children through the world of online learning.

GRIEF

Fall brings many developmental rituals that are part of family life; birthdays, return to school, sports seasons, anniversaries, days becoming shorter and cooler, and so many more. These are real losses that cannot be discounted. Some might minimize these losses in the face of the number of corona virus deaths, job loss and other large societal losses. Yet these pieces of life's journey are important to talk about and acknowledge the impact of the loss. It's not about ranking losses as more or less important than other losses, each are valid and worth honoring.

WHY DO WE HONOR SHARED RITUALS?

Psychologist Shira Gabriel states:

“Rituals give us a feeling of going beyond the ordinary—of having a moment that transcends that, turning events into something special and meaningful,”

These rituals create a bond that strengthens the sense of community and togetherness. We feel part of the greater community and our family shared history. Many will grieve the loss of these special events and that feeling of connectivity and shared experience. In some ways the entire world is experiencing the impacts of COVID-19 and this brings some shared experience. As we enter a new season with new challenges, we need to revisit how we can uphold rituals in a way that works for all. Using creativity and finding alternatives to support the intent of our rituals and traditions is important for the wellbeing of individuals and family systems. The research has shown that everyday connectivity and interactions can create that shared special meaning. When we feel connected to others through this special meaning anxiety and depression decrease.

Creating even small daily rituals of connectivity help with grief and loss while decreasing anxiety and depression. So much is out of our control under the current circumstances, yet we can control how we connect with others to promote well-being.

Contact SandCreek today!

888-243-5744

www.mylifeexpert.com