QUANTUM

Wellness, Productivity, and You!

BALANCED LIVING

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Feeling Singled Out at Work?



A common complaint among employees is feeling singled out at work—more scrutiny, negative feedback, more work, and higher expectations than asked of peers. This experience is stressful and can leave you uncertain about your future. The good news is there are constructive ways to navigate it, leading to a better relationship with your supervisor. Experience shows these steps work best: 1) Give yourself permission to consider whether any feedback, however uncomfortable, might be useful. This can be difficult because when you feel attacked, the tendency is to defend yourself rather than consider the other person's point. 2) Request a calm, private one-on-one with your supervisor to clarify expectations. 3) Talk to a trusted coworker who can offer an honest outside opinion. 4) Meet or speak with the EAP. They can help you sort through issues, stay objective, and prepare for a productive conversation with your supervisor.

Recognizing Alcohol Creep



Do you unwind in the evening with a drink after work? Has it become a nightly pattern you increasingly look forward to? If you notice needing more alcohol than before to achieve the same relaxing effect, it may be an early sign of growing alcohol use disorder (AUD)/alcoholism/addictive disease. This "alcohol creep" can begin years before a diagnosis and may reflect nervous system adaptation to alcohol. AUD is widely understood to involve biologic processes or genetics as primary influences in progression of the illness, and stress or personal problems are often blamed for increased drinking. Be especially mindful if alcohol-related problems run in your family, and seek clarity about your drinking through your EAP. Doing so will help you better understand AUD, interrupt growing dependency, and reduce denial that later makes treatment more difficult.

Learn more: asam.org/quality-care/definition-of-addiction

Stress Tips from the Field:

Intervene Early in the Stress Spiral



Most people do not get help with workplace stress or burnout right away. It's human nature to assume it is part of the job or that the stress you're experiencing will pass soon. But it's important to have awareness of the ability of your body and mind to adapt. Adapting to stress can be a slippery slope because the process is to normalize irritability, fatigue, poor concentration, sleep problems, or emotional exhaustion (which means denying its severity). This is called the "stress spiral." Intervene with this syndrome early. You want to reverse the pattern before it affects your health, relationships, and job performance. Get early help from your EAP. Effective early help is easier to apply and works faster!

Learn more: apa.org/topics/healthy-workplaces/workplace-burnout

Ghosting and the Workplace



Ghosting means ending contact without explanation, especially when future communication was expected. Although often linked to dating, ghosting happens at work. Employees may ghost customers, coworkers, emails, or difficult conversations. Have you been a ghoster or the ghostee? Research suggests that 75% of people have ghosted or been ghosted. The person ghosted often experiences confusion, self-doubt, and anguish. Many view ghosting as psychological mistreatment. People remember who follows through and who disappears. Consequently, ghosting can damage reputations and opportunities. If you ghost others, it may cause others to see you as unreliable. Fear, immaturity, low empathy, poor communication skills, conflict avoidance, and a culture with less social accountability may contribute. If disappearing feels easier than facing an unpleasant interaction, consider how the EAP can help.

Learn more: routledgeopenresearch.org/articles/2-3

Information in *Quantum Balanced Living* is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health or legal professional. For further help, questions, or referral to community resources for specific problems or personal concerns, contact a qualified professional. Add "http://" to source links to follow. Link titles are always case sensitive.

Perfect Friend Syndrome: The AI Relationship Trap



Don't be tempted to form artificial relationships with artificial intelligence (AI) that substitute for real human connection. Although engaging with AI online may feel satisfying because it can appear to offer empathy and patience, AI does not know you as a real person. Research shows what experts long theorized: These digital relationships cause psychological harm. The risk of connecting to AI as a substitute for a real person is losing social skills or not developing a deeper sense of interpersonal need and vulnerability that we all need. And loneliness can worsen. This is called "parasocial attachment to AI." This behavior can be defined as a one-sided emotional bond in which a person develops feelings of closeness, trust, and connection with AI that cannot genuinely reciprocate or even recognize the relationship. AI's responsiveness can create the illusion of a mutual relationship, making the attachment feel real. This "perfect friend syndrome" doesn't push back. It doesn't experience bad days. It never demands something from you. This "no friction" experience is the problem, as real experiences are what make us human. AI can simulate conversation, but it will never offer warmth, share life history, or invest in you as a person. This is what makes human connection so special and irreplaceable. Is finding a meaningful relationship a goal in your life? Talk to the EAP to discover how to build real human connections that matter most.

unesco.org/en/articles/ghost-chatbot-perils-parasocial-attachment

Communication Habits that Backfire



Communication habits cause many problems at work. The following are infamous for creating conflict and regret and contributing to a less-than-positive workplace. Do you recognize them? 1) Responding to an email when you're angry. Typing that pithy reply feels like a release when you are doing it, but experience shows it's better to draft it, save it, and then sleep on it. 2) Copying your boss's boss on an email to expose your supervisor or make a point. Trying to gain leverage through a next-level manager often backfires. Most leaders see it as manipulation or an attempt to undermine authority, and your reputation can suffer regardless of the concern. 3) Going silent when you can't make a promised deadline. When a deadline slips, don't make people wonder—give a heads-up early rather than making them wonder what's going on. 4) Being more selective with the phrase "That's not my job." Remember: Even if it isn't your job, people may remember your response long after the task is forgotten.

Learn more: dalecarnegie.com/blog/eight-tips-for-effective-communication-in-the-workplace/

Men's Health Month:

Unhealthy Habits that Hurt Men Later



Guys, your body won't let you forget unhealthy habits formed in younger years. Later in life, men often regret earlier health choices. 1) Don't ignore routine medical check-ups. Thinking "no symptoms, no problems" can shorten your life. Many conditions—including high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, coronary artery disease, and liver disease—have few early signs. These can damage your body for years even while you're feeling fine. 2) Don't ignore sleep issues or chronically sacrifice sleep. It can lead to weight gain, memory problems, faster aging, and heart issues. 3) Build habits for managing stress now. Denying or internalizing stress creates irritability, fatigue, anxiety, unhealthy coping, and relationship strain. 4) Don't ignore exercise. It helps fight disease, depression, and declining energy, but it gets harder to start over time. 5) Watch poor eating habits. Convenience foods and large portions add up and contribute to long-term health problems.

Learn more: medlineplus.gov [search "Screening Tests for Men Quiz"]

Building a Positive Reputation at Work



Being unflappable, competent, and nearly unerring can take you far in your career, but the real leverage is a strong reputation built through how you interact with and treat others. The most powerful ways to achieve a good reputation are being reliable, communicative, and consistent. These qualities have everything to do with how others experience you on the job. They cost nothing to achieve, but they shape whether you are perceived as trustworthy and valuable. Being reliable means following through consistently. Being communicative means that you share information clearly. And being consistent means you show high-quality performance over time. Here's the leverage: When people can count on you to follow through, communicate clearly, and show up consistently, you're trusted and recommended—so when opportunities arise, your name is more likely to be considered first. These habits help your team, but their power comes from how they influence conversations about you.

Learn more: blog.talentech.com/en/10-qualities-of-good-employees