QUANTUM

Wellness, Productivity, and You!

BALANCED LIVING

2026-3

Empathy Overload in Customer Service



Customer service effectiveness depends on the ability to show accurate empathy, even when it is not appreciated. Interpreting and responding to emotional cues all day takes great mental effort, so if you're a customer service worker, you have a special job. But dealing with difficult tones, frustration, and customer feeling states like hesitation, urgency, anger, and even rage can create "empathy overload." If you've experienced empathy overload, don't confuse it with burnout but be aware that it is still an energy-depletion state. Although temporary, typical symptoms of empathy overload include lingering fatigue, a short fuse with coworkers, or dreading the phone ringing. Quick and sure rejuvenation tips: Don't wait for symptoms to appear. Plan brief recovery breaks—even a couple of minutes will build resilience. Try meditation, staying hydrated, and a quick walk after tough calls to reset your focus. When things get tough, don't forget the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

The Power of "Exercise Snacks"



If you have only a few minutes to spare at different times during the day, capture the moments to improve well-being with "exercise snacks." Exercise snacks are brief bursts of physical activity that last only a few minutes at most. They boost energy, support cardiovascular health, and counter the effects of prolonged sitting. You may not be able to exercise regularly like you should, but you can sneak in short, practicable movements at opportune moments during the day that will deliver meaningful health benefits. There are dozens of one-to-five-minute exercise snacks. Get a list by googling: "Exercise Snacks Poster." Print and post near your work location.

Congratulations, You're Retiring, But . .



Retirement feels like the dream: total freedom, no deadlines, and enough financial security to do whatever you want each day. But heads up—for many people, that freedom eventually brings a surprising kind of dread. The human brain loves structure, purpose, and identity. Your job likely provided these things, but the need won't vanish. If you ignore this reality, you may discover that days blur together and you lose direction. The excitement of "doing anything" is replaced by subtle restlessness. Boredom may follow. Some may feel guilty for not feeling happier. Prevent this drift by building a new structure with goals, creative projects, volunteering, or learning. Take advantage of employer resources and learn more with *Keys to a Successful Retirement: Staying Happy, Active, and Productive in Your Retired Years*.

Don't Suffer from Inadequate Sleep Syndrome



Finishing work assignments into the wee hours, socializing, or enjoying bedtime procrastination places you at risk for "Insufficient (or Inadequate) Sleep Syndrome." It's a condition caused by lifestyle choices that disrupt sleep, creating daytime sleepiness, fatigue, and poor concentration. During the week, you may get only five to six hours of sleep instead of seven to eight, then catch up on weekends, but that's the problem: Your body can adapt to this pattern in unhealthy ways and incur long-term health risks. Beyond lower productivity and accident risk at work, serious conditions like dementia become more likely. If you're over 40, especially, form brain-protective habits. One is getting seven to nine hours of sleep consistently. Learn more at: nih.gov [at search "sleep, dementia"]

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.

Managing "Background Stress"



Feeling tense when nothing's wrong? It might be "background stress." Background stress is all the stuff that can wear you down but flies under the radar. You aren't fully aware of it, but it's taking a subtle toll on your mental health anyway. Common background stressors include noisy traffic outside, a dripping faucet, or a noisy washing machine. Others include pollution, poor working conditions, pings on digital communication devices that needle you for attention, and forgetting sunglasses on a sunny drive to work. Background stress can wear away at your mental well-being as these grinding irritants make you more irritable, add to your sense of anxiety, and activate your stress response system. The result is feeling more tired, having less resilience, being less tolerant of coworkers, having sleep disturbances, and feeling a vague sense of unease that's hard to shake off. To intervene, take a day to notice what background stressors you've "gotten used to." With this awareness, choose interventions: Digitally declutter by turning off devices, tuning out noise with the help of noise-cancelling headphones, taking two-to-five-minute microbreaks to interrupt the buildup of background stress, or better optimizing your environment to make it more calming and supportive.

Learn more:time.com/6201005/ambient-stress-pandemic-mental-health/

Problem Gambling Awareness Month

Illogical Thinking and Unseen Symptoms



All addictions are destructive, but gambling has unique features that make it especially harmful. Gambling entraps the reward centers of the brain like alcohol/drug addiction, but it is accompanied by severe cognitive distortions, which are completely illogical ways of thinking—for example, "I've lost so much, a huge win must be coming soon." This and many other cognitive distortions trap compulsive gamblers or gambling addicts in states of denial that last longer than most addictions. Shame, anxiety, panic, depression, and feelings of hopelessness also contribute to a far higher risk of suicide than the general population. Apps and online betting platforms allow individuals to gamble privately and secretly, making the behavior largely invisible and leaving few observable warning signs—unlike substance use. Compulsive gamblers have common experiences like failed promises and attempts at quitting, restlessness when trying to quit, constant gambling to cover losses, preoccupation with gambling and past wins, or planning the next bet. If any of these symptoms match your experience, phone the EAP today. They'll assist you in finding your way to becoming a recovering compulsive gambler, and with a commitment to change, your probability of success will have excellent odds.

Communicating with Those with Developmental Disabilities



March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. In daily work life, your words and actions can promote empathy and inclusion for coworkers with developmental disabilities. Demonstrate understanding by listening patiently, speaking at an appropriate pace, and using respectful, person-first language that acknowledges individual needs. Don't turn to a friend, supervisor, or another coworker to speak for an employee with a developmental disability unless the employee has clearly requested or given permission for that support. Affirm employees by saying "I believe in you" or "Would you like to join us?" The bottom line: Think "full participation" in the workplace as a rule. Being authentic is key. You'll be a powerful change agent and help create a culture of belonging that benefits everyone, including your employer's bottom line.

Etiquette rules resource:
worksupport.com/documents/Quick%20Facts%201%20IDD1.pdf

Stress Tips from the Field:

Spot Your Growing Burnout



Ignoring job stress because you feel in control of your workload is a decision you should make with awareness. The path to burnout is a slow boil. It often builds quietly. Manageable at first, physical fatigue, emotional detachment, or reduced effectiveness soon appear, making it clear that the warning signs were easy to overlook. If you are under especially difficult job stress, it doesn't mean you are going to burn out, but it does mean your stress deserves attention before it compounds. Burnout is not a buzzword. It's a recognized occupational phenomenon. Your company's EAP does not require you to be burned out before you explore support, guidance, or the practical tools it offers to manage stress early. It'll help you maintain balance and prevent small pressures from escalating into sustained stress, which increases the risk of burnout.