



DECEMBER 2007

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Holiday Stress Tips

These practical tips can help you minimize the stress and depression that often accompany the holidays.

- Take a breather. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that clears your mind, slows your breathing and restores your calm.
- Don't abandon healthy habits. Don't let the holidays become a dietary free-for-all. Some indulgence is OK, but overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt. Continue to get plenty of sleep and schedule time for physical activity.
- Learn to say no. Believe it or not, people will understand if you can't do certain projects or activities. If you say yes only to what you really want to do, you'll avoid feeling resentful and overwhelmed.
- Stick to a budget. Before you go shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend on gifts and other items.
- Set differences aside. Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all your expectations.
- Seek professional help if you need it. Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, unable to sleep, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for several weeks, talk to your doctor or call HMS.

Source: www.mayoclinic.com

Helping Organizations Retain Their Most Valuable Asset



Are there too many things on your calendar each day to get done? If your answer is "yes," you may be guilty of a common assumption made by many people, say researchers.

According to a study reported by the American Psychological Association, research reveals that people over-commit because we expect to have more time in the future than we have in the present. Of course, when tomorrow turns into today, we discover that we are too busy to do everything we promised. Keep this fact in mind. It will help you to better-plan your days and avoid unnecessary frustration.

Three ways to improve your productivity at work

How can you improve your productivity and get more things done each day? Here are three strategies that can help:

1. Schedule your time for work

Be consistent. Don't do personal things when you are scheduled to work. Make a "To Do" list and prioritize your tasks. A list is most effective for those of us who need to consult a reference or see it in writing. When you have completed a task, cross it off your list. You'll get a real sense of completion and satisfaction as you see your list getting shorter and shorter.

2. Do the most-difficult, time-consuming, least-favorite job first

It may sound crazy but you'll be doing it when you have the most energy and motivation. If you tackle the toughest job first, the rest of your tasks will seem that much easier.

3. Don't allow yourself to get interrupted by other people's "emergencies"

How many times have you had your tasks and activities planned, so you could finally get caught up with your own work, and all day long other people keep coming to you with their last minute problems that only you can fix? You don't want to say no, you want to be a team player, but you have stuff to

24 Hours a day: 800-343-2186 www.hmsincorp.com

get done too, right? Remember, that being a team player also means respecting others' time and realizing that others have responsibilities too. If your co-workers can't grasp this, you have to. Learn to say no in a polite but firm manner: "I would really like to assist you with that, and I know you have a deadline. Unfortunately, I have a project which I must complete for my boss today. If you can come back tomorrow or another time, or better yet, schedule some time with me so that it is on my calendar, I would be more than happy to help you."

HMS is here to help

Remember, Human Management Services (HMS) is always available to help you or your dependents with any personal, family or work-related concern. All HMS services are FREE and strictly CONFIDENTIAL. If you need help, why not call an HMS counselor today? We're here to help.



Does Your Anxiety Feel Out of Control?

Money and Death of a Family Member Top the List of America's Biggest Worries.

Worries about finances and the death of loved ones are the leading causes of anxiety for Americans, according to a survey conducted by the Anxiety Disorders Association of America. Thirty-six percent of people are "very" or "extremely" worried about their financial status; 31 percent are anxious about a loved one dying.

Anxiety is a normal response to situations of uncertainty, especially if there is a possibility of a bad outcome. However, for many, severe and unprovoked anxiety adversely affects their daily lives. If excessive or chronic anxiety is negatively affecting your personal, family or work life, the guidelines below can help you.

Helpful Guidelines For Coping With Anxiety

- Recognize and admit that you are feeling anxious.
- Become aware of your body's symptoms. Don't let them scare you; let them "talk" to you.
- Try to pinpoint what it is you are anxious about. What happened yesterday? What were you thinking about before you went to bed? If you can't pinpoint the source, don't worry about it and try to move on.
- If you do know what it is that is bothering you, what can you do to eliminate or minimize the situation in some way so that it isn't so stressful?
- More important, how can you react differently so you won't be so affected by this situation?
- Give yourself permission to feel anxious about whatever it is that is bothering you. "Of course I feel anxious about this problem. Anyone would."
- Listen to the dialogue within yourself. Are you filling yourself full of negative thoughts about a certain situation? What could you say to yourself that would feel more comforting and soothing.
- Are you overwhelming yourself with "shoulds" and high expectations? If so, which ones could you eliminate?
- Are you blaming someone else for your anxieties, unhappiness, poor health, lack of success or other issues? How can you take responsibility for yourself and make some positive changes?

HMS is here to help

If you would like additional help – for you or a dependent – you can call Human Management Services (HMS) for confidential counseling and/or referrals. HMS is always available to help you or your dependents with any type of personal, family or work-related concern. We're here to help you.

HMS SERVICES

PROVIDED BY YOUR EMPLOYER FOR YOU AND YOUR DEPENDENTS

This confidential prepaid program is designed to help employees and their eligible dependents resolve problems which may be interfering with their personal, work or home life. HMS offers help for marital and family issues, substance abuse, job concerns, emotional problems, life adjustments, legal issues, financial matters, and elder care and child care referrals.

If you're experiencing problems which are causing concern, you and your HMS counselor can work as a team to find solutions.

Call HMS for Help:

24 Hours a day: 800-343-2186

www.hmsincorp.com

