

Fall
2009

Frontline Employee

MIIA Employee Assistance Program

Confidential Counseling

- Addiction
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Family Issues
- Grief/Loss

Resources & Referrals

- Legal
- Financial
- Child Care
- Elder Care
- Work/Life

Stress Management

- Personal Concerns
- Professional Issues

800.451.1834

MIIA MASSACHUSETTS
BASED
MEMBER
DRIVEN



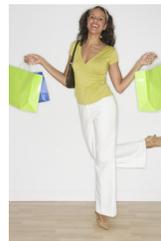
This issue:

- Talk Less, Listen More, Gain Much
- Compulsive Buying Can Be Beat
- Thinking Backward to Achieve Goals
- October Is National Depression Awareness Month
- Psychotherapy: Not What You Think
- Occupational Hazard: Sitting Too Long

Talk Less, Listen More, Gain Much



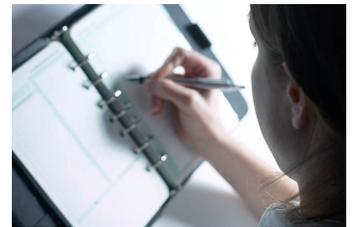
Take one day at work to practice this self-awareness exercise: Spend 75% of any conversation listening instead of speaking. This is what conflict resolution and negotiating expert Robert Mayer calls the “75/25 Partnering Secret.” The exercise forces you to participate in more active listening. It’s been observed that if we listen more in our relationships, we experience less conflict. Note any discoveries of increased workplace harmony, reduced conflict, or interruption of negativity that your experiment produced.



Compulsive Buying Can Be Beat

Do you find shopping at the mall fun? Many people do. But do you find shopping and spending intensely exciting, and have you linked this activity to feelings of happiness or empowerment? Do you use shopping to change or improve your mood? These feelings can be so strong that a compulsive pattern may emerge for some people. Compulsive buying, an addiction-like behavior, is followed by feelings of anxiety, guilt, and stressful behavior, such as hiding purchases. Don’t put off getting help if this sounds familiar. Stopping compulsive buying is not a simple willpower exercise. Don’t let denial and embarrassment stand in the way of getting help. Contact your EAP or health care provider to learn more.

Thinking Backward to Achieve Goals



Most people know it’s important to have goals, but they don’t write them down. Those who do often neglect to describe them in detail. As a result, people remain frustrated by vague longings and desires that never materialize. Because they have not put their goals down on the page, they have found it difficult to formulate the steps necessary to achieve them. Here’s an exercise worth trying: After envisioning your goal, make it specific. Decide *what, when, where, how much, etc.* Now, work backward to formulate your steps. For example, if your goal is to buy a house, what must happen before you can do it? You need a date, of course. So decide on the date you will buy your house. Keep going—what comes before that? You need to choose a house. And before that, you need a real estate agent. And before that, you need to qualify for a loan. And before that, what must happen? Keep going backward, asking, “Before event X, what must occur?” You will uncover the numerous incremental steps required to achieve your goal. The more steps you write down, the more attainable your goal will become. Each step is likely to be more manageable. This approach to goal attainment establishes a realistic timeline, which is essential to your success. It also transforms your longings and desires into specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-specific goals. Watch your excitement mount. It will fuel your energy and your intention to achieve what you want.

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October Is National Depression Awareness Month

Depression is more than just feeling sad for a few days as a response to known events. It is a serious illness that involves one's mood, thoughts, body, function, and relationships. It can last weeks, months, or even years. It is not a sign of personal weakness or a condition that can be willed or wished away. With appropriate treatment, however, most depression can be alleviated. The following is a list of depressive symptoms. Not everyone who is depressed experiences every symptom; some experience a few, others may experience many. Additionally, having any one symptom does not mean you are depressed.

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed, including sex
- Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down"
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight loss or overeating and weight gain
- Thoughts of death and suicide, suicide attempts (please call your EAP or other mental health professional immediately for assistance)
- Restlessness, irritability
- Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as headaches, digestive disorders, and chronic pain

The above list may have you wondering about yourself or someone close to you. There is no need to suffer when help is only a phone call away. Please contact your Employee Assistance Program at **800-451-1834** for information about assistance with depression.

Psychotherapy: Not What You Think

If you think all professional counseling is the same, characterized by what's depicted in movies and comic strips, rest assured: you've gotten the wrong idea. There are many different approaches to professional counseling, but by far the most popular is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). This counseling approach focuses on the important areas of what you think, how you feel, and what you do. The goal is to achieve the changes you seek in your life. CBT has been extensively studied, and it works. It's frequently brief, time-limited, action-oriented, and measurable. You start with a goal, track your progress, and "team" with your therapist to get the job done. If you've thought about professional counseling, but stigma and comic strip images are holding you back, talk to your health care provider or employee assistance professional to learn more about an approach to counseling that will work for you. It might be CBT.

Occupational Hazard: Sitting Too Long

Are you getting 30 minutes of daily exercise but spending 15 hours sitting—at a computer, behind the wheel of a car, or in front of the TV? Health guidelines view you as a "physically active person," but this may not be an accurate description. This sedentary lifestyle increases the risk of gaining weight and can lead to cardio-metabolic health risks. Can you engineer more physical activity into your job? If you're feeling a bit guilty about not getting more exercise, grab opportunities that pop up during the day to get more physical activity. They are probably more plentiful than you think. Walk farther to your car, take the stairs, straighten up your office, walk a bit farther to a different coffee shop, or walk to the next office to consult on a problem rather than using e-mail or instant messaging.

