

Spring  
2017

# 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**

To take a free,  
anonymous mental  
health screening,  
go to:

[http://screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/  
miiaawellness](http://screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/miiaawellness)



### This issue:

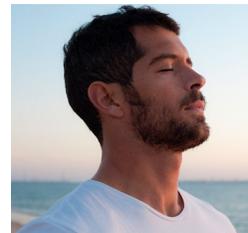
- So Much to Do, Too Little Time
- Using Your Breath to Manage Stress
- Is Pessimism Bad for Your Heart?
- Incivility Begets Incivility
- Is Your Team in Trouble?

## So Much to Do, Too Little Time

Numerous distractions interfere with everyday work. Constant emails, to-dos, and the competing needs of those with whom we must communicate grab at our attention. If you continually end the day having only skimmed the surface of what had to be accomplished, you may be a victim of a work habit called “reactionary workflow.” Reactionary workflow is responding to what’s constantly in front of you and demanding your attention. The result is only skimming the surface of your to-do list and barely touching the most important work. Reactionary workflow is a problem of the modern workplace. Technology keeps a conveyor belt of information, issues, problems, and needs—both personal and business related—coming at us full speed 24/7. To reduce reactionary workflow, practice four intervention steps: 1) Make a list of absolute-must-get-done items with the time needed to complete them each day. 2) Schedule them. 3) Open the “notepad” or WordPad tool on your computer and paste incoming urgent items to this list. 4) Spend the last hour of your day responding to this list of items. This system is not a cure-all, but with practice, it can help turn the table on reactionary workflow.

Source: Statista.com

## Using Your Breath to Manage Stress



Controlled deep breathing is standard in stress management training, and knowing why it works can help you do it more often. One reason deep, slow breaths work so well is brain physiology. When you deep breathe, you use a different part of your brain to control your chest muscles than the part of your brain experiencing the “fight or flight” reaction to stress—the amygdala. Your awareness of what’s going on with your body improves instantly. This calms you, as does the stretching sensation in your muscles associated with the chest wall. The opposite state of stress is the relaxation response. It includes deep breathing, which is a direct stress intervention. This is what makes it a more powerful and effective relaxation method than stress eating, sitting down in front of the TV, or drinking alcohol. Deep breathing can be used anytime, but is especially helpful when you notice that you are under stress. Keep track of your attempts at controlled deep breathing, and try to increase the frequency of its use when you are experiencing periods of stress.

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## Is Pessimism Bad for Your Heart?



A pessimistic attitude can increase the risk of death from heart disease, a new study reports. For 11 years, researchers in Finland followed thousands of men and women ages 52 to 76. They discovered that pessimism toward life events and circumstances doubled the chance of dying of heart disease, and that optimistic persons had few cardiac deaths. To be less pessimistic, don't focus on stopping pessimistic thinking. Instead, practice optimistic responses to both positive and negative events in your life. Positive thinking may not help you live longer, but as this study showed, it may help insulate you from poor cardiac health by giving you better reflexes that improve resilience to life stressors.

Source: <http://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com>  
(search "pessimism")



the following: 1) Trust and ability to be vulnerable with one another; 2) Ability to share and offer ideas freely, without inhibitions, and with acceptance; 3) Forming a consensus, identifying a project, and pursuing it to completion, with each member feeling important to its successful outcome; 4) Silence is shunned and speaking up is a group tradition when a member is performing under par; 5) Achievements are shared. See any issues above that concern you?

## Incivility Begets Incivility

Discourteous and rude behaviors, such as making derogatory remarks, ignoring coworkers, and using a conde-



scending tone, are examples of incivility at work. These behaviors have grown worse in the past ten years. Being victimized by uncivil behavior places you at risk of "paying it forward"—that is, also participating in these behaviors. The earlier in the day incivility occurs, the more likely it is passed along. Incivility causes victims to lose attention at work and expend emotional energy, because they ruminate about the intentions of the perpetrator, mull over how to respond, or spend time thinking or talking with others concerning what to do about it. This frustration and emotional burden, according to one research study, costs \$14,000 per employee per year in lost productivity based on the amount of incivility experienced in the average workplace! Remembering how incivility takes its toll can help employees participate in it less.

Source: [http://www.researchgate.net/  
publication/304498950](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/304498950)

## Is Your Team in Trouble?

Work teams can be powerful tools for productivity, but they lose impact when dysfunction affects five critical areas. Diagnose your team's health by examining how well your team performs on each of