

Summer  
2016

# 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:

[www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening/miiawellness](http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening/miiawellness)



### This issue:

- Increasing Your Intrinsic Motivation
- Soft Skills to Know: Collaboration
- Chronic Pain and Substance Abuse
- Be "Healthy Competitive"
- Build a Stress Management "Took Kit"

## Increasing Your Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is inner drive. It is your ability to do something without being prompted by an external stimulus. It is also the ability to act according to *the way you think* instead of succumbing to *how you feel* at the moment. Thinking you should exercise, for example, and summoning intrinsic motivation to do it instead of slouching on the couch is intrinsic motivation in action. To acquire more of this life-changing behavioral trait, follow these steps: When deciding on a goal, come up with as many "reasons" to do it as possible. This is called finding the "big why." The more reasons produced, the more urgency you'll feel. Also list positive feelings you have for your success. This will multiply the effect. Break your goal into small pieces to overcome mental resistance to this new behavior. If daily exercise requires getting off the couch to put on running shoes, write it down as a step. If the very next step is putting your hand on a door knob to leave, write it down. This highly conscious process can start you toward having better reflexes to respond immediately to goals with action steps. That old internal debate of "should I or shouldn't I" will diminish or vanish. Practice is the key to developing intrinsic motivation, but acquiring this skill will lead you to the achievements you seek.

## Soft Skills to Know: Collaboration

If you are a good workplace collaborator, you are prized by your employer because you are a goal achiever. Effective collaboration is a learned skill to maximize productivity by teaming up with others. Don't confuse collaboration with simple cooperation. Both are positive behaviors, but collaboration is proactive and heavy on taking initiative. Think of bicycle pedals. One pedal does not "cooperate" with the other. Instead, it is an equal push. This is collaboration. Enhance your ability to collaborate with the following tips: 1) Know what each team member's role will be. 2) Have fast and efficient ways of communicating to address key issues. 3) Create a tradition of team members seeking immediate clarification when unsure or unclear about tactics, tasks, or goals. 4) Spot conflicts early, and resolve them before moving forward. 5) Put group goals above an individual member's personal reward for success. Failure to do so will create hidden agendas, adversely affect communication, and lessen your achievements. 6) Good team collaborators are tolerant of each other's quirks and shortcomings, but when personal behaviors threaten progress, make them a group concern for problem resolution.

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## Chronic Pain and Substance Abuse



Opioid addiction and prescription drug abuse are national problems, and one research study discovered that 87 percent of opioid or related medication addicts are self-medicating pain. Does this sound like you or someone you know? Note these warning signs for needing help: 1) You are using the medication not just for pain, but also to achieve a feel-good state. 2) Your prescribed dose seems way too low. It takes more to feel the effects. 3) Your pain has subsided, but your desire to use the medication you were given is growing. You say you're worried about the pain coming back, but the effect of the drug is really the motivating factor. 4) The medication has become part of your life, and you are planning and coordinating your life around obtaining and using the medication, even to the detriment of your family, things you enjoy, and parts of your life that you value. If you are concerned for yourself or someone else, reach out to the EAP for assistance.

<http://www.bumc.bu.edu> [search: "prescription abuse"]

## Build a Stress Management "Tool Kit"

Do you have a personal stress management program—a collection of techniques to use when stress hits? Or do you cope with anxiety and tension without a strategic approach, searching for relief only when it becomes too much? With a thoughtful approach to stress management, you can reduce the risk of harm from prolonged stress, and avoid unhealthy ways of coping with it. To build your stress management "tool kit," first identify factors central to your stress response pattern. When stressed, do you lose sleep, get headaches or neck pain, eat poorly, eat more, not eat, become irritable, head for salty snacks, or have GI problems? See the long list of stress effects at [www.stress.org/stress-effects](http://www.stress.org/stress-effects). Once you pin down these effects, focus on how to fight back. Research intervention strategies, and try enlisting the help of a professional counselor or your EAP.

## Be "Healthy Competitive"

The word "competitive" gets a bad rap in the workplace because it often describes pushy, manic, or aggressive behavior. But there is another type of competitive employee—the one who champions reaching for the gold in healthy ways. Healthy competitiveness is a learned skill and an energetic approach to work that shows you are proactive, focused, and positive. You seek to top *your* best, not that of others. Employers are clamoring for employees with a healthy competitive spirit, because they are engaged workers. Grow your competitive spirit by 1) Giving yourself permission to be competitive. Overcome any false scripts suggesting competitiveness means not being fair to others. 2) Identify strengths and skills that are unique to you. Spot opportunities to apply your skill set and establish goals that will add to your achievements while lifting up your employer. 3) Be a "conscious collaborator" by showing your ability to share work, elevate others, and share credit. Being competitive is an easily spotted trait, and you risk irking people if you do not demonstrate humility in this way. 4) Be confident about your skills, use hard work to achieve your goals, and avoid fear of failure. Share the final glory with those who lent a hand along the way, even if you believe their help was not significant.