

Winter  
2009

# Frontline Employee

## MIIA Employee Assistance Program

### Confidential Counseling

- Addiction
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Family Issues

### Resources & Referrals

- Legal
- Financial
- Child Care
- Elder Care

### Stress Management

- Personal Concerns
- Professional Issues

800.451.1834



### This issue:

- Emotional Intelligence and Customer Service
- Put the Freeze on Job Burnout
- Is ADHD Getting in the Way?
- Action and Attitude
- Eating Disorders Awareness Month

## Emotional Intelligence and Customer Service

You may be smart, but if you have an outstanding reputation as a customer service professional, it's probably your "emotional IQ" (EIQ) that deserves a lot of credit. Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, describe, understand, and work effectively with emotion. You're what's known as a "people person." If you don't see yourself as a "people person," here's how to boost your EIQ: 1) Practice analyzing customer emotions. When you witness undesirable emotions, respond with a voice tone or statements that communicate your assurance that they will experience satisfaction. 2) Validate your customer's feelings by using empathetic language like "I can certainly understand your concern about this matter." 3) Practice "upstream thinking" by anticipating and acting on your customers' needs even before they recognize them. 4) Be aware of your body language. The way you stand, use your hands, or nod your head can send powerful messages of enthusiasm or indifference to customers, which they'll feel - and remember.



## Put the Freeze on Job Burnout

Avoiding burnout is helped by understanding how it progresses and adversely affects your vigor and energy. Like the onset of hypothermia in cold weather, burnout creeps up slowly as you struggle to adapt to increasing stress



associated with work overload. Guard against burnout by adding simple strategies to a prevention regime before you begin to feel the onset of burnout's effects:

1) Find start points and end points between job tasks so you get breaks, even if they are short. This helps prevent "chain-tasking," or continuous, overlapping tasks without a let up in stress. 2) Think "delegation." What can you give away? 3) Avoid a work cycle characterized by only commuting, working, sleeping, eating, and repeating. Create a "third leg" of activity unrelated to work, much like the third leg of a stool, to balance your day. 4) Make "overwhelmed" a destination you refuse to reach. Become an expert at living by one master to-do list.

## Is ADHD Getting in the Way?

Nine million adults in the United States suffer from ADHD. Left untreated, adult ADHD can make it difficult for sufferers to maintain steady employment. Here are some signs to watch for at work: inability to stay focused during meetings, difficulty finishing projects, poor time management, disorganization, and difficulty maintaining concentration. Treatments for ADHD include medication and psychological and behavioral therapies. There are also other approaches to the problem. Don't stay frustrated. Instead, seek help from your doctor, employee assistance professional, or other qualified professionals.

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## Action and Attitude

Everybody wants to manage stress more effectively, but many struggle to do it well. The solution lies in taking action. If you have been trying to "will" yourself into feeling or just thinking differently about stress, these mental efforts will only have a short-term effect. This will only lead to more futile attempts. The relief you want can only come with action. For example, if you are always running late for work, take time at lunch to jot down an itemized list of the things you must do in the morning before you leave the house. Does it take 8 minutes to shower, 20 minutes to dress, and 25 minutes to get everyone out the door? Add driving time, errands, and some contingency time. Then plan buffer time for unforeseen events, and if they don't happen, view the extra time as a bonus when you arrive at work early. Slot every activity into its required time. Determine what time you must go to bed and get up. Reward yourself and the rest of your morning crew for sticking to this schedule, even for one day. Plan a bigger reward for two days in a row, and claim the big prize for a week without a skipped day. Keep going. With a newly acquired good habit, you will soon be teaching others how to tackle stress.



## Eating Disorders Awareness Month

### What is an eating disorder?

Eating disorders involve serious disturbances in eating behavior, such as extreme and unhealthy reduction of food intake or severe overeating, as well as feelings of distress or extreme concern about body shape or weight. People with eating disorders often use food and the control of food in an attempt to compensate for feelings and emotions that may otherwise seem overwhelming.

### Types of Eating Disorders:

#### 1. Anorexia Nervosa

Resistance to maintaining body weight at or above a minimally normal weight for age and height. Intense fear of gaining weight or becoming fat, even though underweight.

#### 2. Bulimia Nervosa

Recurrent inappropriate compensatory behavior in order to prevent weight gain, such as self-induced vomiting or misuse of laxatives, diuretics, enemas, or other medications (purging); fasting; or excessive exercise.

#### 3. Compulsive Binge Eating

Recurrent episodes of binge eating, characterized by eating an excessive amount of food within a discrete period of time and by a sense of lack of control over eating during the episode.

If you think you or a loved one suffers from an eating disorder, you can call your Employee Assistance Program and talk to an EAP consultant.

For more information, go to  
[www.nationaleatingdisorders.org](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org)  
or call the National Eating Disorders Association at  
800-931-2237