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Wellness Wire

www.caresworklifesolutions.com

Published by CARE's WorkLife Solutions to help employees with life management issues.

SPRING 2008



Regain The Art of Listening

You need to make a conscious decision that you are going to listen. Unless you make the choice that you are going to pay attention as a conversation begins, you will miss the full message. To help you stay focused:

Implement a "Teach me, Teach me" attitude. Keep thinking, "Teach me, Teach me," as you are listening. By doing so, you will be more apt to listen and focus on the speaker and what they are saying and what their body language is conveying.

Embrace the silence. If a conversation sputters to a halt, be respectfully quiet. Resist the urge to step up and talk. Maintain friendly eye contact and body language during the silence to signal that you're comfortable waiting to hear more. That's when speakers will most likely reveal what's truly and honestly on their mind.

Breaking down the walls. Some people are naturally shy or hesitant to speak up. They may say very little and leave you filling in the details. Instead of over-talking, make brief comments such as, "Sounds like you may be on to something. Please, tell me more," or "Wow, you seem to know a lot about this subject. I'd like to learn more." Then allow them to respond.

Admit distractions. Often times, it is difficult to completely block out distractions, or ignore them all together. A more realistic approach is to acknowledge the distractions as they arise, address them and then resume when you're able to concentrate.

Are you up to the Challenge?

Struggling to lose weight can be a depressing process. So, when I brought up the idea to my coworkers to start a "Biggest Loser" contest, the enthusiasm took me a bit by surprise. We started out with 11 contestants and our group lost 76 lbs and 3.60% of our body fat. Each contestant paid a \$25 fee and as we weighed in each week, the person who did the best that week was recognized through our company email and given a small prize (100 calorie snack or walking pedometer). One of my coworkers lost 30 lbs in 3 months and has continued to succeed in her weight loss. The grand prize was \$275 which was quite rewarding for all that hard work.

Weekly weigh-ins are done by one person and the actual weights are kept confidential. Only the **percentage** of weight loss is shared with the group so that individual employees can keep their actual weight personal. One of the most interesting discoveries for me was how we transitioned from being embarrassed to have someone see our weight, to seeing that this was not really an issue anymore because we recognized that we are so much more than a number!

We have since continued to do quarterly contests and many of my coworkers are sharing low-fat recipes and ideas for healthier cooking. It's been encouraging to see less snacks and sweets brought into work and more oranges and other fruits sitting on desks. On January 31, we started our fourth "Biggest Loser" by incorporating a partner concept—it has been helpful and fun as we continue to tease yet encourage each other's success.

If you are interested in starting a Biggest Loser contest at your work, call me, Paddy Laske, at CARE's WorkLife Solutions 866.888.1555

Spotlight on Safety STEPS to Keeping Your Workplace SAFE

DATE: Wednesday, October 15, 2008

TIME: 7:30 AM—12:15 PM - Includes a Full Breakfast

PLACE: Macomb Intermediate School District, Garfield Road, Clinton Twp.

COST: \$15 for CARE's WorkLife Solutions contracted clients

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Paddy Laske, Trainer & Consultant
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Trouble in Paradise?

Unfortunately, relationships don't come with instructional manuals. If you and your spouse or loved one are having problems in your relationship that are causing conflict, anger or a sense of betrayal, call CARE's WorkLife Solutions. Our Master's Level Clinicians can provide up to five sessions, when clinically appropriate, for couples experiencing problems that don't resolve themselves. Do something good for your relationship – call today! Remember, the earlier a problem is identified, the easier the solution.

COPING WITH CHANGE

In today's rapidly changing market, employees and their families know change is unavoidable. Companies are merging or going away, and many long time employees are retiring or going in their separate ways. Some of these changes were voluntary and some may not have been. One thing for sure: business as usual is no longer usual. Add this with the ongoing plethora of predictable changes like marriage, new homes, new babies, divorce, and bereavement, and you have a "domino effect" one falling on the other, causing a chain reaction of events that often falls out of our control. It's not unusual for you to feel emotional at this time. Below are a few suggestions you may find helpful in coping with the impact of change.

- **Expect to have a reaction.** Don't be hard on yourself or others for having feelings. It's normal to feel emotional or moody. Allow for space and increased understanding.
- **Know that all changes come to an end.** Every change, no matter how big or small, starts to feel familiar. When you are in the middle you begin to see there is an end in sight.
- **Go with the flow.** Flexibility is the concept here. Think of yourself as a branch. It bends with the wind and allows the leaves more movement to get the nourishment the whole tree needs. If it were to stay rigid it would snap.
- **Welcome the familiar.** Remind yourself of what is staying the same, and stick to your routines.
- **Find someone to lean on.** Friends and family are good support. You can't do it alone; it's important to talk about your feelings with someone you know and trust.
- **Divide it up.** Divide major changes into smaller steps. A divorce, moving or job change typically involves several stages. Concentrate on accomplishing one step at a time and acknowledge each step as you complete it.
- **Learn to laugh.** After all, you can laugh or cry – given the option. Try laughing first.
- **Learn from the past.** It is through changes that we grow and learn how to make better decisions.

You have most likely overcome adversity before. You can certainly do it again. Each time you will gain knowledge and develop a stronger "emotional muscle." Focus on the positive and keep your mind open for opportunities to grow.

Balancing Work and Family

We all know that many employees have difficulty finding the right balance of work and home life. If left unbalanced, people may begin to feel frustrated and resentful which could eventually lead to burnout, both at home and at work.

One of the biggest challenges affecting home life is working late and/or taking work home. At the same time, one of the biggest challenges in the workplace is having employees bring their personal problems from home to work.

Supervisors say, "We need people to show up to work ready to get the job done." Employees say, "When I go home I need to be able to spend more quality time with my family and friends." Unfortunately, time gets blurred and employees can find they are taking their personal life to work with them, and not accomplishing what they need done at work. Often too, they are spending time at home trying to catch up on work. It becomes a vicious cycle. There must be a better way....

CARE's WorkLife Solutions offers a workshop on "Balancing Work and Family." The goal of the workshop is to help participants recognize what areas they feel "unbalanced" in and set short-term and long-term goals for resolution.

Areas of stress are identified and employees learn how the quality of their personal life has a direct impact on the quality of their professional life, and vice-versa. A stable personal life allows employees to direct their attention and energy toward your work, customers, and teammates, allowing for better physical and emotional health and productivity.

Call CARE's WorkLife Solutions at 866.888.1555 today to schedule a workshop for your team!

Join us for an

International Tea & Luncheon Experience ENTERTAINMENT* AND RAFFLE

Sunday, May 18, 2008 from 12:30 - 3:30 p.m.**
Sterling Inn Banquet and Conference Center
34911 Van Dyke, Sterling Heights, MI 48312

Tickets are \$35 per person for a delightful afternoon. If you are interested in hosting a table of 10, please contact CARE for more information including discount and decorating options.

Purchase tickets by calling 586.541.0033 or online at
www.careofinacomb.com/events.php

* Entertainment provided by Dakota High School Choir.

** You may arrive earlier to decorate your table.

CARE's WORKLIFE SOLUTIONS CAN HELP WITH MANY CONCERNS

**Family Problems - Child Care - Personal/Job Stress
Alcohol/Drug Abuse - Marital Tension - Elder Care
Emotional Problems - Legal and Financial Referral**

**Services are CONFIDENTIAL & FREE
to employees, their spouses
and dependents**

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