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Identifying and Handling Stress

Stress is everywhere in our lives and plays a role, whether big or small, in our work lives as well as our personal lives. With that said, it is normal to have some level of stress in our lives, but it is how we handle it that can make a difference. According to the American Psychological Association's (APA) annual Stress in America Survey only 37 percent of Americans surveyed said they were doing an excellent or very good job managing stress. At home stress could come from a divorce, loss of a job, moving to a new home, or an increase in financial obligations. A few common sources of work-related stress are low salaries, excessive workloads, having to give a speech in front of colleagues, and conflicting demands or unclear performance expectations to name just a few. Uncontrolled stress can impact your health and overall well-being, resulting in anxiety, insomnia, high blood pressure, overeating, and could even lead to abusing drugs and alcohol.

While it is normal to have some level of stress at work, you can learn how to manage it so that it does not become overwhelming. Making a few small changes could greatly benefit your long professional life and long-term wellbeing. Here are a few ways to manage stress:

Identify your stress triggers: Your personality and other characteristics can influence the way you cope with stress. Situations that cause you stress may not bother others in the least. Start by identifying your stress triggers by keeping track of events and people who may cause you to stress. Ask yourself where you were, who was involved, how did you react, and how did you feel. You may begin to see a pattern which could indicate obvious or not-so-obvious causes of stress. Once the triggers have been identified look at each one carefully to look for ways to handle them. Maybe it is asking for help getting your kids to a game or working with colleagues to set realistic goals and deadlines to help balance your workload.

Develop healthy responses to stress: When you are feeling stressed do your best to make healthy choices to manage it. Exercise, yoga, or any physical activity is always a good choice. Make time for hobbies or an activity you enjoy. Most importantly, make sure you are getting enough sleep each night.

Establish work-life boundaries: Don't feel pressured to be accessible all day, every day. Make a rule to not check e-mails or take calls after a certain time. Creating boundaries that are best for you can lead to a better work-life balance.

Take time off: Don't let your vacation time go to waste--take time off. It is important to take time to relax and not work--and if possible not even think about work. You will come back refreshed and ready to tackle your to-do list.

Relax: This seems obvious but it may not be easy for some people. Meditation, deep breathing exercises, and mindfulness can help melt away stress. Focusing on one activity without distractions will become easier over time and can make a difference in all parts of your life.

Get a different point of view: Talk to co-workers or a supervisor about the stress you are feeling. They may not be aware of your struggles and may be able to suggest ways to cope or changes to make. Sometimes just talking about your feelings can put things into perspective.

In this ever changing, fast paced world we live in, managing your stress is important and can help make a difference in your life and your health. There are many ways available to reduce stress in your life; you just need to find the one that works best for you.

Hot Off The Line

Q - I have an employee who is due to give birth in October 2017 and would like to take 8 weeks of paid family leave in January 2018 to bond with her baby. She has been employed with the company for two years as of 5/1/17 and meets all eligibility requirements. Is she eligible to take the NY State Paid Family Leave in 2018 when her baby is born in 2017?

A - Yes, she is entitled to take eight weeks of paid family leave in 2018 even though her baby was born in 2017. A new mother is eligible to take the leave to bond with the employee's child during the first 12 months after the child's birth, or the first 12 months after the placement of the child for adoption or foster care with the employee.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you are a first-tier government contractor with \$50,000 or more in federal government contracts and 50 or more employees at one location; or, a second-tier government contractor (supplies to a first-tier contractor) with \$50,000 or more in contracts and 50 or more employees at one location you are required to have an Affirmative Action Plan. MACNY can audit your plan, rewrite it, or create one for you as well as complete your Adverse Impact. If you are interested in receiving a quote or would like additional information please contact Patty Clark, HR Services Manager at 315-474-4201 x 10 or pclark@macny.org.

HR Stats & Facts

- 61% of employees agree that they've made healthier lifestyle choices because of their company's wellness program. *Source: 2017 Aflac WorkForces Report*
- 52% of employees would rather be recognized privately by their manager than publicly in front of their team. *Source: www.attacoin.com*
- According to a survey by WorldatWork, 1/3 of employers with severance agreements set a minimum payment of two weeks' pay while 20% offer at least one month's salary. *Source: July/August 2017 Magazine*

CPI

Wage/Clerical	April	March	Pt. Chg. (Mo.)	% Chg. (Mo.)	% Chg. (Yr.)
1967=100	710.2	707.9	2.3	0.3%	2.1%
1982-84=100	238.4	237.7	0.8	0.3%	2.1%
Urban					
1967=100	732.5	730.3	2.2	0.3%	2.2%
1982-84=100	244.5	243.8	0.7	0.3%	2.2%
Unemployment Rates					
April- Onondaga County: 4.3; Metropolitan Syracuse Area (MSA): 4.7					