

Your EAP News

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Preventing Cultural Miscommunication



Cultural miscommunication happens when differing norms, values, or communication styles cause misunderstandings or hinder effective interaction at work. It's a growing problem but not a new one. Cultural miscommunication can be reduced with a few practices that deliver huge payoffs for workplace harmony and the bottom line. 1) Educate yourself on diverse cultural norms (see resource below). 2) Practice "active listening" to spot any misunderstandings when they happen—seek clarification quickly. 3) Use simple language to avoid confusion or misinterpretation. 4) Adapt your communication style to match the cultural preferences of others. For example, in some cultures, it is customary to address a new male coworker as "Mr. (last name)" instead of using their first name. Adapting to such preferences can show respect and build rapport. 5) Periodically seek feedback about how communication is working and ask whether adjustments are needed to improve understanding or collaboration.

Resource: "Cultural Intelligence: A Blueprint for 21st-Century Leadership (2025)"

How the EAP Can Help:

Overcome the Emotional Aftermath of Conflict

You had a heated exchange with a coworker and have been stewing over it all day, feeling angry and distracted. This lingering stress and negativity are known as emotional reverberation: the emotional aftermath of conflict. If a workplace conflict is weighing on you, consider reaching out to your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Chances are you are experiencing reverberation, replaying the conflict in your mind with intrusive thoughts. This can decrease your motivation and productivity and possibly lead to a work-related stress disorder. The EAP can help you process these feelings and discuss conflict resolution, and with its support you will regain your focus and productivity.



Survive with 'Situational Awareness'



Situational awareness is the practice of being purposely aware of your surroundings and recognizing something that could be a threat, so you are not caught off guard. It's not about living in fear; it's about actively observing your environment so you can act proactively instead of reactively to a threat or disturbing event. Many professions are taught situational awareness—healthcare workers, police officers, airline pilots, school teachers—but anyone can learn this practical safety skill. While the chances of encountering a terrible threat like a terrorist attack are very low, staying alert in crowded or unfamiliar environments can increase your safety and give you an edge of protection. A simple practice like noting emergency exits is a small step, but it will empower you to stay proactive and a bit better prepared.

Be Your Best Valentine

Self-love is valuing, appreciating, and taking care of oneself. It's essential for personal growth and happiness and crucial for having satisfying relationships with others. But it's often misunderstood. Do you have a strong sense of respect and acceptance for who you are? There are five elements of self-love: *self-compassion*: You're kind to yourself when things don't go right and avoid harsh self-criticism; *boundaries*: You set limits to protect your time, energy, and emotional well-being; *positive self-talk*: You replace negative thinking with positive thinking, recognizing the harm negative self-talk can cause to your mental health; *acceptance*: You accept your imperfections and don't label or view them as detractors that make you less worthy of love and respect; and *priorities*: You don't feel guilty for taking care of your needs, even if others disagree. Learn more with over 60,000 related book titles on this topic!



Easy Ways to Be Kind to Your Heart



Keeping your heart healthy isn't just about intentional exercise and a healthy diet.

Consider the following clinically demonstrated and researched tips and practices that have positive effects on heart health; they're all easy and some may surprise you: 1) Think stairs and short walks. Chances are that healthy heart opportunities arise for you daily. Snatch them up. Even a ten-minute walk will add to heart health. 2) Wash your hands. The flu, colds, pneumonia, and other illnesses are hard on your heart, but washing your hands several times a day will reduce your risk of contracting a viral infection by 20%, according to the CDC—by 50% if you work in a healthcare setting. 3) Add one extra piece of fruit to your diet daily. 4) Stay hydrated to help maintain proper cardiovascular function. 5) Limit screen time. All your screen time is probably not work-related. Slice off an hour and you'll improve heart health by sitting less. (Hint: See #1 above.) 6) Listen to more calming music and relax with it. 7) Practice deep breathing exercises a few times a day to help lower blood pressure. 8) Reflect on positive aspects of your life—yes, this is linked to improved heart health.



High blood pressure is a leading cause of heart disease.



Nearly half of U.S. adults have high blood pressure, which puts them at risk for **heart disease** and **stroke**.

Eat a healthy diet: being overweight or obesity increases your risk for high blood pressure.

Be physically active: helps keep you at a healthy weight and lower your blood pressure.

Do not smoke: raises your blood pressure and puts you at higher risk.

Get enough sleep: helps keep your heart and blood vessels healthy.

Manage stress: Talk with your health care team about potential heart conditions in relation to your mental health.

Stop Interrupting!

What aspect of workplace communication do you find most annoying? If it's being interrupted, you're not alone. Nearly 30% of employees agree that being interrupted is the most common and frustrating issue in conversations. If interrupting conversations is a habit for you, try applying the principles of "active listening." (Key in active listening is understanding that it is more about behaviors than it is about "hearing." Also critical is avoiding preparing a counter argument or rejection while listening.) Steps: Give your full attention, remove distractions, and make eye contact with the speaker. Next, show engagement by periodically nodding or verbally demonstrating (e.g., "hmmm...") that you are "tuned in" to what's being said. This proof of reflection and thinking causes the speaker to feel validated. Then, give feedback by way of asking questions, paraphrasing, or making other comments during a pause (i.e., "Did you say the other driver ran the red light?"). Finally, respond back.



Voluntary: You decide when to use the program services.

Confidential: Your personal information will not be shared with your employer or anyone in your family. Only you know when you call for assistance.

Convenient: EAP offers services with professional providers with offices nationwide. Services can be accessed in-person or virtual.

No-Cost: Services under the EAP are available to you, your spouse/partner and your dependents under the age of 26.

Practice healthy living habits to help prevent high blood pressure



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WELLNESS @ MINUTE

February 2025



HEART HEALTH MATTERS: YOUR GUIDE TO A HEALTHY HEART
SUPERFOODS FOR A STRONGER HEART
HEART-HEALTHY LENTIL SOUP
WALKING FOR HEART HEALTH

HEART HEALTH MATTERS:

YOUR GUIDE TO A HEALTHY HEART

February is Heart Health Month, a time to focus on the importance of cardiovascular health and take steps to protect your heart. In this month's Wellness Minute, we explore strategies to keep your heart strong and healthy.

WHY HEART HEALTH MATTERS:

Heart disease remains the leading cause of death worldwide, but many cases are preventable through lifestyle changes. A healthy heart is essential for overall well-being, ensuring your body gets the oxygen and nutrients it needs.

KEY TIPS FOR A HEALTHY HEART:

- **Eat a Heart-Healthy Diet:** Focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats.
- **Exercise Regularly:** Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week.

- **Manage Stress:** Practice mindfulness, meditation, or deep breathing to reduce stress levels.
- **Avoid Tobacco:** Smoking significantly increases your risk of heart disease.
- **Know Your Numbers:** Regularly check your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels.

SPOT THE WARNING SIGNS:

Pay attention to symptoms like chest pain, shortness of breath, and dizziness. If you experience these, seek medical attention immediately.

This February, prioritize your heart health by making small, impactful changes to your daily routine. Every step you take toward a healthier lifestyle benefits your heart.

Sources:

1. American Heart Association - Life's Essential 8
<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living>



SUPERFOODS FOR A STRONGER HEART

Your diet plays a crucial role in maintaining heart health. Incorporating these heart-healthy superfoods can reduce your risk of heart disease and improve overall well-being:

- **Leafy Greens:** Spinach, kale, Swiss chard are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that support heart health.
- **Fatty Fish:** Salmon, mackerel, and sardines are high in omega-3 fatty acids, which reduce inflammation and lower cholesterol.
- **Berries:** Blueberries, strawberries, and raspberries are packed with antioxidants that protect against oxidative stress and heart disease.
- **Nuts and Seeds:** Almonds, walnuts, and chia seeds contain healthy fats and fiber that support cholesterol levels.
- **Whole Grains:** Oats, quinoa, and brown rice provide fiber that helps lower bad cholesterol (LDL) and maintain healthy blood pressure.

Incorporate these superfoods into your daily meals to nourish your heart and improve your overall health.

Sources:

1. Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health - Foods for Heart Health
<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/foods-for-your-heart/>

HEART-HEALTHY LENTIL SOUP



Warm up this February with a comforting and nutritious lentil soup. Packed with fiber, protein, and heart-healthy ingredients, this dish is perfect for supporting cardiovascular health.

INGREDIENTS (4 SERVINGS):

- 1 cup dried lentils, rinsed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) diced tomatoes (no added salt)
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 cups fresh spinach
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Lemon wedges for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion, carrots, and celery. Sauté until softened, about 5 minutes.
2. Stir in the garlic, ground cumin, and smoked paprika. Cook for 1 minute until fragrant.
3. Add the lentils, diced tomatoes, and vegetable broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 25-30 minutes, or until the lentils are tender.
4. Stir in the fresh spinach and cook for an additional 2-3 minutes until wilted.
5. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
6. Serve hot, garnished with a squeeze of fresh lemon juice for added brightness.

This hearty soup is a perfect meal to keep your heart healthy and your taste buds satisfied.

Sources:

1. Mayo Clinic - Heart-Healthy Recipes
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/recipes>

WALKING FOR HEART HEALTH

Walking is a simple yet effective way to improve your cardiovascular health. It's accessible, low-impact, and can be done almost anywhere.

BENEFITS OF WALKING FOR HEART HEALTH:

- **Improved Circulation:** Walking strengthens the heart and improves blood flow.
- **Lower Blood Pressure:** Regular walking helps reduce high blood pressure, a major risk factor for heart disease.
- **Weight Management:** Walking burns calories, helping to maintain a healthy weight.
- **Stress Reduction:** A brisk walk can help clear your mind and lower stress levels.

HOW TO GET STARTED:

- **Frequency:** Aim for 30 minutes of brisk walking, five days a week.
- **Intensity:** Walk at a pace where you can still talk but feel slightly out of breath.
- **Environment:** Choose scenic routes or walk with a friend to stay motivated.

Walking is a powerful step toward a healthier heart, so lace up your sneakers and get moving today!

Sources:

1. American Heart Association - Walking
<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/walking>

Your EAP Can Help

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February is Heart Health



Awareness Month