

# Employee Assistance Program

*Southwest Florida Employee Assistance Program*

239-278-7435 or 800-226-7930

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## *The Power of Paying Attention*

It is a common scene. A couple sits at the table. The husband is engrossed in the newspaper, while the wife pours out her heart with the morning coffee. Frustrated, she complains, "You're not even listening." "I can repeat every word you've said" is his response. But her frustration comes not from his ability to replay the words, but his inability to put down the paper, look at her, and *pay attention* to her.

Attention is one of our greatest needs. A baby needs not only feeding and changing, but the attention of a human face. We recognize the value of it by the very expression "pay attention" - not

give attention. When we pay attention, we turn our faces toward the object of our attention, and exclude from our awareness all the competing sounds and movements. We do not offer a half-hearted, preoccupied effort, but undivided attention that makes the statement that nothing is more important right now.

In this world of technological accessibility turning off cell phones and beepers, muting the television or stereo system sends a powerful message to the person we are paying attention to.

Paying attention implies listening, not speaking, and watching, not doing.

In order to improve relationships in your life—at work, at home or socially, try this experiment. For one week, do not focus on the myriad of "things to do" but rather on each individual as they enter your awareness. You will be amazed at how little time it takes, and what a remarkable difference it makes in the quality of your relationships. As you pay attention to others, don't be surprised if they respond by paying closer attention to you as well.



## *Increase your Productivity*

Follow these ideas to get more accomplished during your workday:

- Don't allow immediate interruptions all day long, just schedule a time to respond to urgent requests.
- Don't constantly check and respond to your e-mail. Set specific times to do this.
- Don't do personal things when you are scheduled to work.
- Don't spend too much time socializing with co-workers.



Just call

1-800-226-7930

## What can the EAP do for you?

Confidential assistance to help you solve personal problems

Free to all employees and their families

Links to local agencies for other assistance

24/7 phone access to a professional counselor

Help you resolve issues such as:

Marital

Family

Stress

Financial

Legal

Anxiety

Depression

Etc...

## Debt Relief

*“Record numbers of consumers — more than 2.04 million in 2005 — are filing for bankruptcy.”*

Debt got you down? You're not alone. Consumer debt is at an all time high. What's more, record numbers of consumers — more than 2.4 million in 2005 — are filing for bankruptcy. Whether your debt dilemma is the result of an illness, unemployment, or simply overspending, it can seem overwhelming. In your effort to get solvent, be on the alert for advertisements that offer seemingly quick fixes. While the ads pitch the promise of debt relief, they rarely say relief may be spelled b-a-n-k-r-u-p-t-c-y. And although bankruptcy is one option to deal with financial problems, it's generally considered the option of last resort. The reason: its long-term negative impact on your creditworthi-

ness. Bankruptcy information (both the date of your filing and the later date of discharge) stays on your credit report for 10 years, and can hinder your ability to get credit, a job, insurance, or even a place to live.

If you're having trouble paying your bills, consider these possibilities **before** considering filing for bankruptcy:

**Talk with your creditors.**

They may be willing to work out a modified payment plan.

**Contact a credit counseling service.**

These organizations work with you and your creditors to develop debt repayment

plans. Such plans require you to deposit money each month with the counseling service. The service then pays your creditors. Your EAP can refer you to a reputable one.

If neither of these options is possible, bankruptcy may be the likely alternative. There are two primary types of personal bankruptcy: Chapter 13 and Chapter 7. Each must be filed in federal bankruptcy court. As of November 2005, the filing fees are \$189 for Chapter 13 and \$274 for Chapter 7. Attorney fees are additional and can vary.

You have not lived until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.

-John Bunyan



## Self Assessment Test

### Quotation Corner

Hard work spotlights the character of people; some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all.

-Sam Ewing

It is important to notice the signs and symptoms of abuse and addiction early, so that you can seek help and change your behavior. Complete the following test honestly, and if you answer "yes" to more than one of these questions, there may be a reason for concern. Contact your EAP and we can talk with you about your options.

*Has anyone ever questioned you about your alcohol or other drug use?*

*Have you ever used alcohol or other drugs alone?*

*Have you ever had trouble stopping once you started using alcohol or other drugs?*

*Have you ever had legal problems because of your alcohol or other drug use?*

*If you can't use alcohol or other drugs, do you get jumpy, shaky, cranky, nervous or have cravings?*

*Are you in debt because of your alcohol or other drug use?*

*Does it now take more alcohol or other drugs to get the same effect?*

*Have you ever used alcohol or other drugs the morning after?*

*Have you ever been to the hospital as a result of your drinking or drug use?*

*Have you ever used alcohol or other drugs at work?*

Recovery from alcohol or other drug problems is a process, not a one time event. You start by staying away from alcohol and other drugs one day at a time. Being sober means enjoying life without alcohol or other drugs. With the support of family and friends, you can do it.



## WWW = WEB PAGES WORTH WATCHING



### Understand more about your money

Site to read and/or order information on various personal financial issues

[www.mymoney.gov](http://www.mymoney.gov)

### Alcoholics Anonymous

Webpage describing AA and how to find a meeting

[www.alcoholics-anonymous.org](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org)

### National Do Not Call Registry

Site to request "Do Not Call" for all of your telephones

[www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov)

### Help after Hurricanes

Webpage to find links to financial and other assistance available

<http://www.fema.gov/>