



April 2023

# The Frontline Employee

## **Alcohol Awareness Month:**

### **Dispelling Myths about Addiction**

Myths and misconceptions still fuel stigma about alcoholism (now called “alcohol use disorder” or AUD). Are you surprised by any of these myths? 1) “Only ‘heavy drinkers’ develop alcohol use disorders.” Fact: Moderate drinkers can experience health problems related to alcohol, such as liver disease, high blood pressure, and certain cancers. 2) “AUD is a choice.” Fact: People do make the choice to drink, but they do not choose to become addicted, which is a disease process. 3) “AUD only affects adults.” Fact: Teenage-only alcoholism treatment programs have existed for over 50 years. 4) “You can cure an AUD by going cold turkey.” Fact: Delayed withdrawal symptoms can occur weeks, months, or years after the last drink, and they often explain relapse. (Note: Learn more: Alcoholism.org [search “myths”])

### **Prove Your Productivity as a Hybrid Worker**

Remote workers can be more challenging to evaluate, but here is how you can worry less. 1) Set clear, measurable, gradable goals with your employer. Know how you are being evaluated. 2) Communicate regularly to keep your employer informed with regular check-ins and status updates. 3) Track and document your time to show your full effectiveness. 4) Be able to explain not just the amount of work you do but also the results you achieved. (This is often how productivity is measured.) 5) Be proactive with opportunities to go above and beyond, but more important is knowing what “outstanding, invaluable work” means to your employer.

### **Workplace Posture and Musculoskeletal Disorders**

Don’t develop a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) because of the way you sit at work. Check yourself. The common sitting mistakes are slouching, crossing your legs, leaning forward, and sitting too long. Don’t settle into a posture that just feels relaxed; instead, check whether it is also ergonomically safe and preventive. Here’s some motivation: One study found that proper posture at work can help you think more confidently, and this may lead to greater productivity and benefits for you and your employer. That’s additional motivation to check yourself!

Source: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/10/091005111627.htm>

### **Help with Tax Questions**

April is tax season, so here are a few free resources you may not know exist. And they are staffed by IRS-certified volunteers. 1) Volunteer Income Tax Assistance: Available if you make \$57,000 or less, have a disability, or have limited English language speaking skills. 1-800-906-9887, or visit IRS.gov. 2) Tax Counseling for the Elderly. Free tax help for people aged 60 and older. Contact IRS.gov, or phone 1-800-906-9887. 3) AARP Foundation Tax-Aide: Help with taxes for low- and moderate-income taxpayers aged 50 and older. Visit [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org), or call 1-888-687-2277. 4) Check with other non-profits in your community, especially associations, churches, and libraries.

## **Repairing a Workplace Relationship**

You've had an argument with a coworker and feel the need to repair a rough patch in your relationship. How do you proceed? 1) Start with giving yourself a pat on your back. Someone needs to make the first move, so let it be you. When you're ruminating about the conflict, it can be challenging to focus on work, leading to a reduction in productivity and efficiency. Start with a statement such as "I want to talk with you about the other day." Next, take responsibility—for your part in the argument. Apologize for words, actions, tonality, or nonverbal behaviors that caused discomfort. Say you want to move forward, and listen completely to your coworker's perspective. This active listening may help you grasp their point of view, but more importantly, it may encourage your coworker to reciprocate. Focus the discussion on the things you both care about and are trying to achieve. Consider agreeing on how to handle conflict in the future—your relationship "protocols" for managing conflict. Here's a key thing about coworker conflict: It might feel difficult to make the first move toward repair, but conflict left unresolved can create a toxic work environment, where tensions are high and communication becomes even more strained. Hint: Don't let positive relationships at work "just happen." Instead, consciously build on them and nurture trust, and you will observe that they are more resilient under stress.

## **Absenteeism: #1 Cause Is Depression**

Are you missing work for any of the following reasons? Lack of energy and motivation, making it challenging to get out of bed; not being able to concentrate at work, and feeling more exhausted if you try to do so; feelings of worthlessness or guilt, making you feel you aren't good enough to be at work; fatigue, headaches, or stomach issues that seem to zap your energy; or feeling so anxious and nervous about interacting with others that you stay home. Any of these may be related to depression. Talk to your Employee Assistance Program, a doctor, or another professional. An assessment takes only minutes, and there are helpful ways to get you back on the job. Depression is the #1 issue contributing to absenteeism, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and the behaviors above are the most common symptoms.

## **Stress Management Tips from the Field:**

### **Work Mistakes Happen**

Big mistakes can cause panic to well up inside you. Don't panic; instead, manage them with a cool head. 1) Own up to your mistake. It is the fastest way to move forward toward finding a solution. 2) Apologize to those affected by the mistake because a sincere apology rebuilds trust. You'll discover a nearly universal truth—that people want to forgive and move forward. 3) Understand why the mistake happened, and take time to reflect on what went wrong so you can avoid it in the future. 4) Develop a plan to fix the mistake and rectify the situation. 5) Be visible in the process of implementing the solution, and others will observe and remember how committed you are to fixing mistakes and moving forward. 6) Move on. You've learned from the experience. Don't dwell on mistakes. Forgive yourself because your organization needs you back.

### **Should You Consume Less News?**

Broadcast news can be distressful, but if it's causing too much unease, be more strategic about consumption. Set aside a specific time daily to catch up, but only to your limit of exposure. You'll avoid "doom scrolling"—the behavior of frequently checking news, especially online, to see what is being publicized. You'll feel more in control. Engage in mindfulness and meditation to reduce anxiety. Easily learned, these stress management techniques can quickly calm your mind and are powerful resilience tools for general stress management. Mindfulness involves the skill of focus, while meditation involves focusing on your breath or a mantra to help quiet your mind. Learn about meditation and mindfulness techniques. Find expert articles at [WIKIHOW.COM](https://www.wikihow.com).

**Questions? Call during business hours 815.748.8334, or after hours at 800.373.3327**

