



# The Frontline Employee

December 2020

## **Tips for Post-Election Holiday Gatherings**

It might be a challenge to safely host a holiday gathering this season—but if you do, look to CDC recommendations and follow local official guidance. Are you determined to curtail political talk in order to reduce conflict, especially among family members? If you believe the tension of political bickering will undermine the enjoyment of your event that you have worked so hard to arrange, consider these tips: 1) Speak with each of your guests separately beforehand and request a commitment to avoid political discussions. 2) Ask these same guests if they can play a monitoring role to help change the subject if conversations steer into a political realm. This turns each guest into both an ally and a gatekeeper. 3) Consider inviting a guest having difficulty following your rules to help with a task at your event that will occupy them in a different way.

## **Yes, that is Emotional Abuse**

Emotionally abusive relationships are full of confusion and denial for victims. Delays in seeking help are influenced by cycles of abuse followed by remorse, stigma and fear about leaving, damaged self-esteem, blaming yourself, questioning your sanity, and telling yourself, “Deep down he/she really is a good person (or doesn’t mean it).” To get traction on change, examine an awareness checklist from an authority website like WomensHealth.gov. It will help you move along the decision path to reaching out for help, like the EAP. Source: WomensHealth.gov [search “emotional abuse”]

## **COVID-19 Prevention Tip: Mouthwash**

Washing your hands when you come home from work, school, or the store is strongly recommended to reduce risk of coronavirus infection. However, what about adding gargling with a mouthwash? Researchers demonstrated that an extra layer of protection might be afforded by this practice. They found a routine 30-second oral rinse using an over-the-counter antiseptic mouthwash to be 99.99% effective in killing the coronavirus. Source: onlinelibrary.wiley.com [search “lowering transmission mouthwash”]

## **Pandemic Pain and Young People**

Teens need peer interaction and emotional validation to grow mentally healthy. Therefore, isolation for teens during the pandemic is difficult. It is not just a drag; it is a risk issue because over one-third of teens periodically have suicidal thoughts. Not knowing when “normal” will return adds to their anxiety. As a parent, trust your gut. If your teenager demonstrates agitated behavior, moodiness, problems with self-motivation, disinterest in school, or is apathetic with unusual sleeping and eating patterns, talk to a professional counselor. A simple assessment may help identify a mental disorder and prevent self-harming behavior or even suicide. Source: Rutgers.edu [search “teens, pandemic”]

## **National Impaired Driving Awareness Month**

Will you soon find yourself on the road trying to get home safely this holiday season? You will of course want to avoid impaired drivers. Do you know the warning signs of a drunk driver? Spotting the signs—the same ones taught to law enforcement—could save your life. They include making turns too widely, veering to the side of the road, hugging the center line, almost hitting objects or other vehicles, driving on the wrong side of the road, driving too slowly, sudden stops without cause, braking erratically, not moving when the light turns green, illegal turns, and driving after dark with no headlights. So, what about your ability to resist drinking at a social event? Are you frequently prodded and elbowed by family or friends to cut back and avoid alcohol when you walk into a party? Social pressure can be a challenge for anyone. Nevertheless, is the inability to say no to a drink a symptom of an alcohol use disorder? Fifteen million Americans have this health condition, according to National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Alcohol use disorders are easily diagnosed, but overcoming denial and getting a five-minute assessment is not so easy. Still, do not wait for a crisis to motivate you to take this step. Talk to your EAP or a health provider. Within minutes, you will know what to do next, and you will be given a plan to end the confusion and bewildering tussle you experience with alcohol. Learn more: [foundationsrecoverynetwork.com](http://foundationsrecoverynetwork.com) [search: “peer pressure drinking”]

## **The EAP Can Do That**

Mental health might come to mind when you think about your employee assistance program, but this is only scratching the surface. There are numerous ways EAPs can help, so never dismiss the program as an avenue to resolve a problem you face. Ways EAPs help that are often overlooked: 1) Acting as a sounding board when you face a tough decision. 2) Help for deciding whether you need a professional counselor or a completely different type of resource. 3) Problem solving about how to help a friend who will not get help or admit they have a problem. 4) Guidance on handling a personality clash with a coworker or boss. 5) Help to rule out whether you are depressed, burnt out, or experiencing signs of any other condition.

## **Helping a Loved One Cope with Chronic Pain**

Over, 40% of households have a family member who experiences chronic pain. However, when pain experts focus on helping victims, family members are often overlooked. Family members have a powerful role in helping, but they need support. Do you feel helpless not being able to comfort a family member in chronic pain? You are not alone. Frustration, stress, anxiety, depression, anger—and guilt for being angry—are common family experiences. Your household may feel toxic, cycling between conflict, isolation, and the inability to be an effective and willing support for your loved one. Read the insightful handout “Ten Tips for Communicating with a Person Suffering from Chronic Pain” at [www.practicalpainmanagement.com/Handout.pdf](http://www.practicalpainmanagement.com/Handout.pdf). It hits every key point from how their pain affects you to communication, taking care of yourself, what you can do, reading nonverbal cues, and more. Talk with your EAP about your unique situation. Learn more: [www.practicalpainmanagement.com](http://www.practicalpainmanagement.com) [search “family role impact”]

## **Health Effects of Loneliness**

Loneliness is a national health crisis experienced by one-third of the population across all generations. You are “hard wired” for close emotional connections. Without them, you can suffer high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, a weakened immune system, anxiety, depression, and cognitive decline. Research shows the same negative effects can extend to couples who have grown apart emotionally due to unresolved marital or couple conflicts but who still live under the same roof. You do not have to live alone to be lonely. Exploring professional counseling to resolve couple of conflicts that have lingered for years can be difficult, but reversing the effects on your health is new motivation for doing so. Source: [www.news.uga.edu/marital-conflict-causes-loneliness-health-problems](http://www.news.uga.edu/marital-conflict-causes-loneliness-health-problems) and [Cigna.com](http://Cigna.com) [search “loneliness epidemic”]

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