Bulletin Board: Take steps to stop stress at work

by Amy_Winter

Stress can take a toll in the workplace. Tevis Gale, founder of Balance Integration, which helps companies balance stress and burnout, refers to stress as a global problem.

"We all want to do a great job," says Gale, "but the same drive can bring us to burnout."

Stress can trigger an unpleasant series of physical and emotional events that might include a dangerous increase in adrenaline. So how do you foster habits to avoid those uncomfortable situations? How do you manage yourself?

Balance Integration, which Gale started in 2002, tries to find a "center" for employees. Stressful situations can be put at ease with the process - ready, center and go.

Ready yourself for a meeting by putting aside judgments, and preparing to be present physically, intellectually and emotionally. Don't daydream about other obligations; focus on the task at hand. Center yourself by pinpointing how you want to arrive at the meeting (powerful, peaceful, courageous). Clear other thoughts and worries from your mind. Last, go into the meeting and remain true to the characteristics you want to portray.

Avoid the practice of multitasking. It is an unconscious habit that can be the first driver of stress, according to Gale. Try to tackle one project at a time in order to pay more attention to your tasks. Resist the urge to search the Internet while talking on the phone.

Create a cushion time between obligations. Stress is connected with feeling overwhelmed. A cushion time can act as a timeout.

"Even if it is five minutes," says Gale, "scheduling a 'breather' between meetings allows you to process whatever just transpired separately from whatever you are walking into next, as well as creating an energetic transition from one conversation to the other."

Remain engaged at work by helping to solve problems. Take on tasks and create new ideas. Contributions to projects can decrease stress, increasing engagement and work satisfaction.

Stand up and move around to avoid tight muscles and sore joints; walking or stretching every 45 minutes helps the circulatory aspect of stress. Grab a glass of water or take a walk around the office.

Balance Integration presents stress management resolutions and strategies on how to improve thinking, feeling and leading in the workplace. Depending on the type of issues affecting a business, Gale and her team provide programming such as on-site yoga, business coaching and skill workshops. Discussions include controlling energy by using centering tools, developing a work/life balance to sustain a successful life and career, and identifying preconceptions about work.

"We all have times when we walk knowingly into stressful situations," says Gale. "By using a centering practice, you'll create an anchor to keep you steady, no matter how turbulent the waves might become."

For more information, visit www.balanceintegration.com.

TALKING POLITICS AT WORK

Most workers aren't afraid to speak their mind about politics in the office. Sixty-seven percent surveyed by OfficeTeam, a staffing service that questioned 522 workers, say political discussions are appropriate for workplace conversation, as long as they stay under control. Another 14 percent of respondents promote these dialogues, while 18 percent feel they are inappropriate.

Thirty-nine percent workers consider discussing politics a common practice in the office, while 59 percent say debates on politics don't occur often.

"With the presidential election drawing near, it's only natural for politics to be a topic of interest," says Diane Domeyer, executive director. "However, employees should be careful not to allow discussions of the election to become a divisive issue."

Avoid trying to persuade others to follow your political ideas.

"Imposing one's political views on others is never OK," Domeyer says. "Employees also should not pressure co-workers to share which particular party or candidate they support."

For more information, visit www.officeteam.com.

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