

# FrontLine

Wellness, Productivity, & You!

# Employee



## Your New Coworker... Will You Get Along?

**T**he new hire has become your coworker. Will you get along? Here is what you can do (or not do) that will stack in favor of things going well: 1) Realize that first impressions count for you as much as for the new coworker, so act quickly to welcome this person into the fold. 2) Take the lead and dismiss the thought that others will judge your kindness as resulting from ulterior motives. 3) Don't "hover" over your new coworker, giving too much information and not enough space; allow him or her to get used to the new environment. 4) Value differences because there will be some. Consider how those differences will positively help the work unit. 5) Avoid asking personal questions early on, such as "why did you leave your last job?" or "where do you live?"



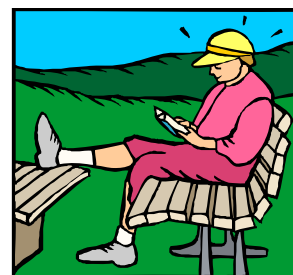
## Your Performance Exceeding Standard

**E**veryone enjoys that coveted prize on their performance review—the outstanding performance rating (also known as "exceeds standard"). Do you have a solid understanding with your supervisor about how to get it if this hasn't been sufficiently described? Or are your fingers crossed each year just before your review? Most employees don't ask, "Can we discuss criteria for 'outstanding performance'?" To get that top rating, discussion of it is required. Define it with specifics so you can work toward it all year.



## Give 10 Minute Breaks More Respect

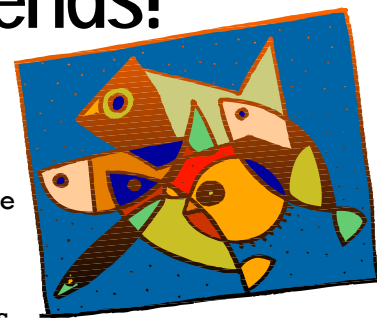
**T**en-minute breaks need more respect. They can be powerful recovery periods for managing stress. Don't head for the staff kitchen or a coworker's cubicle on break!



You'll shortchange the health benefits. Complete detachment is what you're shooting for. If possible, leave your cell phone, pager, and BlackBerry behind. Try a quick walk, go to the lounge on another floor, or head around the corner and sit on a bench. The complete shift in focus is what maximizes these mini-rejuvenators.

## Valuing Diversity Pays Dividends!

**A** work culture is not just policies, procedures, mission statements, and goals. It's you. It's the collective attitudes and behaviors of the employees who work there.



Your organization needs you as a team player in the valuing of diversity. Companies that value diversity and work cultures that support this value have fewer turnovers along with more satisfied and productive employees. The secret lies with understanding your biases. Biases are those strong beliefs that you hold about the way things should be, and they influence how we see people who are different than us. Your biases are part of your past, not your future. When you decide to value diversity, celebrating it is not far behind.

## Don't Burn Bridges if You Resign



**S**ure, it may have been pretty tough these past several years, but don't use that as a reason to burn bridges with your employer or to lose your professional cool when you resign. It may be a tempting idea to watch how it's done on television "in style," but in real life leaving in a huff doesn't work well. It will also leave you with a sour taste in your mouth when it's over. When you burn bridges, the one who ends up regretting it is you. You may know more people at work than anywhere else in your life. You risk losing these relationships when you burn bridges because these employees, whose paychecks are tied to the employer, are not likely to align themselves with your ire. You could lose a herd of help and great connections you may want down the road. Be sure to recognize that it is often stressful to leave a job, even on your own terms. This can include anger that might be coming out now and perhaps the pain of letting go of relationships you've had for a long time.

## Addiction: Focus on Responsibility Not Blame

**I**f you are determined to play an influential role in motivating an alcoholic in your family or circle of friends to consider treatment this year, what major shift in your thinking must you make to increase the likelihood that you (and this person) will be successful? Those who have been successful at this task usually have one common denominator: They stopped blaming the alcoholic. They took the focus off the alcohol, cutting back, controlling consumption, guilt-tripping the drinking, and manipulation, and placed absolute responsibility on the patient for entering treatment. When friends and family make this decision, cover-up and enabling dramatically decrease, and the effect of consequences of drinking-related behavior on the alcoholic dramatically increases. This process increases the likelihood of a crisis that will produce a strong sense of urgency in the alcoholic to stop drinking and/or using drugs. Effective treatment is the only answer, of course. Would you like to learn more about the process of ending blame and putting the focus on responsibility? A specialist in intervention can help. Locate one by contacting an drug treatment program in your area. They often know a few.



## Workplace Coaching Tips for the Coached

**W**orkplace coaching is the art of improving the performance of others. It's a hot topic in management. And supervisors who do it well are in high demand. Less discussed is how to be a good recipient of coaching. That might be you—the coachee. It's an art, too. These coachee skills will get you where you're going faster: 1) Continually assess your skills and abilities to determine what they should be to match your future goals. 2) Know how to ask effective questions, the answers to which will pull you up the career ladder (versus waiting for your supervisor coach to push you up the rungs). 3) See yourself as a "business" with your supervisor as a partner. This will keep you focused on the "whole you" as a developing employee rather than an employee who is missing some skills and experiences.



## Protocols for Political Talk & Workplace Productivity



**A**ccording to a 2007 survey by Vault (a career information and research firm), 66% of respondents say that their coworkers discuss politics at work, while 46% have witnessed a political argument at the office. If you're talking high-spirited politics, here are a few rules to help keep your office productive and harmonious. Remember that a particular political viewpoint is a set of ideas and has no bearing on an individual's integrity or intelligence. Never allow political disagreements to become personal. Always take care to avoid inflammatory language, personal insults, and sweeping generalizations. Allow your sensibilities to be guided by basic courtesy. A good rule of thumb is to follow the same conversational etiquette that you would follow if you were a dinner guest in your coworker's home.

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## The Answer's in the Group



**I**f you are struggling with a personal crisis or mental health issue in which you feel misunderstood, unable to communicate, or totally alone, then group therapy may be an effective treatment option for you. Group therapy is a therapeutic technique that uses small group interaction as a means of changing negative mental and behavioral patterns. Group members are expected to be honest and open in their communication with one another, which is generally done through talking around a theme determined by a professional counselor. Things go slow at first, but once group members trust and bond with each other—look out—you can make big changes in your life, and fast. You can find therapists who offer group therapy through your employee assistance provider, mental health association, or health insurance plan.

## Developing a Safety Culture



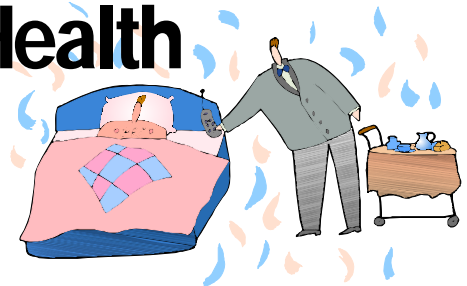
**P**reventing accidents is more than hanging up a warning poster or avoiding a shortcut that ignores an important safety rule. The safest organizations have a *culture of safety* where employees naturally resist violation of safety practices—a major cause of workplace accidents. You feel personal ownership in maintaining a safe environment and no one needs to remind you to “think safety” because you’re living it. When safe behaviors and thinking safety seem to be on autopilot, you’ve got it.

## Battling Against Sleep a No Win



**I**f waking up and getting out of bed is a daily “chore,” a tardy arrival at work usually follows. If there’s no medical problem, a likely cause is an improper attitude toward sleep. Like exercise, you may see sleep as a nagging inconvenience—something getting in your way. You have to sleep, but you wait for it to force itself upon you. Like exercise, you may not incorporate sleep into a routine that allows the necessary amount of time—somewhere between seven and nine hours. Give up the battle against sleep. Make it part of your routine to reap its benefits and avoid the side effects of deprivation.

## Being Sick Can Be Bad for Your Health



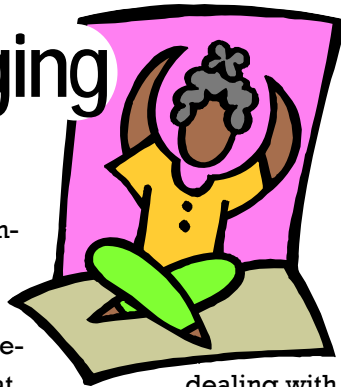
**T**oo much work stress can affect your health, but so can no stress. If you are on sick leave for a long period, monitor yourself for depression symptoms and slowly emerging negative thoughts about your self-esteem. Work has huge psychological rewards from social interaction, even with coworkers with whom you sometimes have conflict. You can get a list of depression symptoms from a counselor or health care provider. You may be recovering from a physical illness, but it’s the “whole you” that needs to come back healthy.

## Was It a Panic Attack?



If you use an “I can take it” approach to managing stress, you may be building *cumulative* stress, especially if you don’t exercise, get a break from work, or seek balance with some fun. A fast-paced, high stress society with conflicting work and family demands, combined with greater financial risk and insecurity about the future, may make your body respond with anxiety or panic-like symptoms. The term “panic attack” can conjure up an image of extreme agitation or franticness. Although many people with anxiety and panic symptoms experience this type of attack, many do not. Instead they suffer a host of disturbing and puzzling, but less acute, symptoms such as heart palpitations, sleep disturbances, rashes, breathing difficulties, or other problems. There are dozens of symptoms related to panic and anxiety. Discovering the cause may not happen until an acute attack forces you to seek medical attention. Prevention of anxiety and panic symptoms is not a test of your willpower. Instead, learn about panic and anxiety symptoms from your doctor, employee assistance professional (EAP), or health care provider. A quick search on the Internet will lead you to many sources, but be cautious of scam “cures” and misinformation on Web sites. The leading organization for information is the nonprofit Anxiety Disorders Association of America at [www.adaa.org](http://www.adaa.org).

## Attitude-Changing Secrets



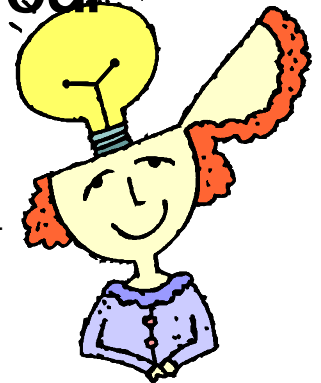
**S**cott Hamilton, the famous Olympic skater, once said: “The only disability in life is a bad attitude.” His extraordinary life of achievement and adversity convinced him that dealing with life’s challenges is something no one escapes. How well we master this task is reflected in how we behave and interact with others. Our attitude says something about how we are doing with our most important job—living. To fire up a new attitude, practice thinking and believing things that support the attitude you want. The more you practice this “refurbishment,” the faster change comes. Try this “cloud seeding” technique: Each night, fall asleep mentally ticking off all that you have done well that day. Focus on what went right. As a new attitude unfolds, you’ll notice new opportunities and feel and act more positive. Others will notice too, and they’ll say so.

## Families Fighting to Fit It All In



**L**ate night school practices, fast-food dinners, cramming for tomorrow’s schoolwork, music lessons, sports events, errands, housework—now repeat. If this routine rings familiar and you can’t give anything up (right now), how do you reduce family stress? Those who’ve done it say the trick is to implement “family management rules.” 1) *The Huddle*: Organize a family meeting to discuss how to make the week less stressful. 2) *Map It Out*: Agree on the weekly routine. Include completing homework and getting ready for school (the night before); doing chores—who, what, and when; what times activities happen; and when the lights go out for bedtime. This organizing effort will reduce stress; it won’t turn you into robots. Live by a master calendar. 3) *Recharge*: The weekends are busy too, but find several hours of family alone time and just have fun. If it can’t be all day, try only a few hours. 4) *Weekly Summit*: Meet to analyze and make adjustments for the following week. Pass out kudos (and cookies).

## Nurturing Your Creative Juices



**Y**ou have probably discovered that your best ideas—your real rocket launchers—come while you are not at work.

They pop into your head while driving, walking, taking a shower, or participating in nonwork activities. How can you use this awareness to effectively inspire creativity? Plan for opportunities where you can be stimulated by a completely different environment. Include new sounds, sights, places, conversations, people, and open space to free up your thoughts. Factor in undistracted “alone” time. When ideas come, have a way to capture or record the inspiration. Newton was alone under a tree when the apple hit him on the head.



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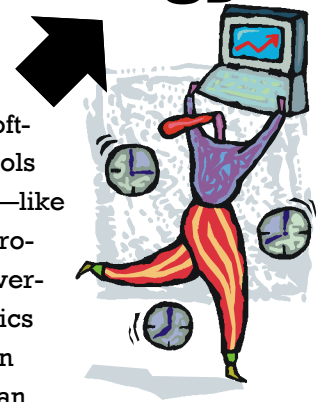
## Build Your Immunity to Criticism

**A**lthough eagerly welcoming constructive feedback, employees who accomplish a lot on the job know their successes will sometimes rub others the wrong way. Not everyone will be quick to praise your triumphs when you are cast into the limelight by others who recognize your achievements. Learning to detach from unhelpful criticism is a skill to help you stay motivated, adapt to change, and think more creatively about your job. Try these “inoculators” to beef up your immunity: 1) Remember that those who criticize don’t know the real you. 2) See negative criticism as possible validation that you are “on the right track.” 3) Accept criticism of your success as normal and part of life’s challenges. 4) Search for the truth in the criticism, if any. Something about it may be helpful despite the style of its delivery. 5) Let criticism inspire you to work with even more vigor toward accomplishing your dreams, rather than forcing you into retreat.



## Adapt to Technology and Thrive

**D**on’t be overwhelmed by software related productivity tools that seem complicated now—like web building software, software programs beyond MS Word, or discovering how to be effective with graphics programs. Learning these tools can only make you more desirable as an employee. Dependency on technology in the workplace is increasing, not decreasing, so remaining in denial rather than facing your diminishing ability to keep up will only increase workplace stress. As long as you get started, you will learn more each passing day.



## Pay Attention to Accolades

**P**ay attention to moments of super satisfaction in your work expressed by customers and superiors. Ask yourself: What skills, abilities, or personality traits did I exhibit to earn this praise for my work? These are what make you unique and outstanding as a worker. Tuck these gems away so that you don’t forget them. Use these descriptions of yourself in resumes and cover letters in the future. In job interviews, you’ll sell yourself with believability.



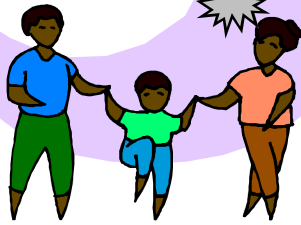
## Help Prevent Internet Harassment

**I**nternet harassment or cyber-stalking is rapidly gaining attention as a serious crime in many states. Cyber-stalking is the intentional harassment or threatening of another person through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication. Online harassment is similar to real-world stalking in its ability to be extremely disturbing to the victim. Perpetrators take advantage of the anonymity of the online environment and its false sense of security to act anonymously and harass another person. These activities may include disturbing text messages, the sending of unwanted, abusive, threatening, or obscene e-mails or messages, or the use of Internet postings, message boards, or chat rooms.



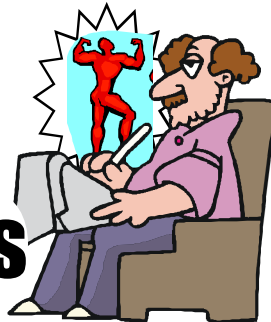
# Affected by a Mentally Ill Family Member

**E**ach year millions of people are diagnosed with mental illness. Family members commonly feel an overwhelming sense of helplessness and anxiety and may secretly blame themselves for the mental illness, believing that something they did caused it. Since family members are often the key to successful intervention, helping them cope is crucial to helping those with mental illness. To empower your ability to cope and intervene, do the following: 1) Learn about the mental illness, its signs and symptoms, including relapse symptoms so you can act sooner to intervene. 2) Avoid falling into traps of shame and guilt. Reach out for support from professionals or self-help support groups. 3) Don't ignore the needs of children. Let them know they are not to blame for the mental illness, and provide information suitable to their ability to understand. This can help prevent self-blame into the future. 4) Understand the patient's responsibility for recovery—a key principle in chronic disease treatment. Work with professionals to appropriately reinforce the management of the illness to prevent relapse. Know the laws pertaining to involuntary hospitalization in case you need legal help. 5) Take care of yourself! Being affected by a family member with mental illness will take a toll on your own mental health. Schedule activities that are fun and also make sure you have social support.



# 2008: Eat Right, Exercise ... Plan for Setbacks

**I**f you're targeting improved personal health and wellness this year, plan ahead for intervention the moment a setback like a missed workout is experienced. You're highly motivated to stick with your resolution, but it may not last. It's normal, but you can act faster to intervene by not dismissing it and allowing it snowball into inactivity as in years past. Plan your intervention now so you can improve your chances of climbing back into the saddle and going on. Don't rely upon pure willpower to rekindle your motivation. Instead, motivate yourself with immediate action by seeking support group help, companions and friends who share your goal, audio/visual material that motivates and reinforces your commitments, and other pre-planned inspirational inputs. Planning ahead for the "what-ifs" won't sabotage your efforts. It will make you feel more capable and less doubtful about your ability to meet your goal.



# Shyness: Overcoming Over-Awareness

**S**hyness is a lack of confidence or a feeling of discomfort, embarrassment, or fear during social interactions. Shyness may inhibit a person so much that he or she has difficulty attaining professional or personal goals and may feel unhappy much of the time. Shyness may be mild or severe enough to create a social phobia. Research has shown about 50% of Americans report experiencing shyness. (*Psychology Today*; Nov/Dec 1995) Does shyness interfere with your goals, behaviors, and emotions? Are you more likely to agree with unfavorable statements about your performance, while dismissing the positive things people say about you? Make this your year to tackle shyness head-on. Start with a Web site called [www.shyness.com](http://www.shyness.com). It has an excellent list reputable self-help books. Numerous books, research discoveries, self-help guides, and specialized treatment programs have emerged to treat shyness in recent years. Within this storehouse of knowledge is an answer for you.



# Using Office Politics as a Positive Force

**N**egative experiences regarding office politics lead many employees to believe that politics is always a negative force in the workplace. Office politics can be disruptive to productivity, but it can also be a positive force. Politics is defined as shrewdness in managing, contriving, or dealing with people. Here's how to make that definition a positive force: Use free time at work to get to know a teammate better in order to foster a better working relationship. Examine why you dislike a coworker, and take steps to correct any problems you have with that person so you have an ally, not a foe. Form healthy alliances with others for succeeding with mutual goals. Lastly, nurture positive relationships, so you can work in harmony to create positive changes when they are needed.



# Wishing for a Great Employee Newsletter?

## It's Here. FrontLine Employee

- ✓ **Ready to use or edit.** PDF, MS Word, Imprinted, or MS Publisher. No linking. Put it on your Web site. E-mail it. Create your own PDF.
- ✓ **Short informative articles** encourage a fully read newsletter.
- ✓ **Low price.** -- Unlimited use. You control everything.
- ✓ **Less waste.** Two pages monthly. No long articles or lengthy pages that get tossed in the trash.
- ✓ **Licensed Mental Professionals** author all articles.
- ✓ **Effective articles. Empowered Employees.** Not the same old health and wellness articles.
- ✓ **Flexible.** Create your own name. Use articles in your existing newsletter and avoid mad searches for content.
- ✓ **Always on Time.** Never late! Arrives prior month.

"By the way, emailing these newsletters is GREAT. So easy to edit, turnaround, and send. Thanks for your help.  
*Sue Kerner,*  
*Southern New Hampshire Medical Center*  
*Nashua, New Hampshire*

"We enjoy your articles each month and I thank you. I can't say enough about the two FrontLine publications we subscribe to.  
*Marylee Nunley, V.P. of Operations*  
*Resource Management Services*  
*Peoria, Illinois*

"By the way, I am thrilled with the FrontLine newsletters. Excellent resource for both my supervisors and employees.  
*Elizabeth Robinson,*  
*University of Connecticut*  
*Farmington, CT*



"Your employees will love FrontLine Employee and they will tell you, "This is great!" or we will refund 100% of the price you paid for your subscription."

*Daniel A. Feerst*

Daniel A. Feerst  
 Founding Publisher



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## What Subscribers are Saying About FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE!

*[Unsolicited] "By the way, emailing these newsletters is GREAT. So easy to edit, turnaround, and send. Thanks for your help. Happy Thanksgiving."*

**Sue Kerner,**  
**Southern New Hampshire Medical Center**  
**Nashua, New Hampshire**

*[Unsolicited] "We enjoy your articles each month and I thank you. I can't say enough about the two FrontLine publications we subscribe to. We are a small company who is a provider of EAP services to small and medium companies."*

**Marylee Nunley, V.P. of Operations**  
**Resource Management Services**  
**Peoria, Illinois**

*[Unsolicited] "The newsletter is a great hit with our EAP companies and their employees."*

**Sylvia Darlington**  
**Network Service Centre**  
**St. Michael, Barbados**

*[Unsolicited] "By the way, I am thrilled with the FrontLine newsletters. Excellent resource for both my supervisors and employees. Happy Thanksgiving."*

**Elizabeth Robinson**  
**University of Connecticut**  
**Farmington, CT**

*[Unsolicited] "I am very pleased with the results and the results we've gotten so far."*

**EAP Administrator of a large pacific northwest company**

*[We asked for this one!] "After downsizing, right-sizing, or whatever, I now provide direct services to over 10,000 employees with no other EAP staff. FrontLine Employee (and FrontLine Supervisor) enable me to have some type of newsletter. It is a most valuable tool."*

**Ken Seaton, Civilian Office**  
**Puget Sound Naval Shipyard**  
**Bremerton, Washington**

*"This month, October '01, your two newsletters were right on target. The FrontLine Supervisor addressed the specific issues I have been helping my customers and clients with the past month. A great reinforcement."*

**Keith Crochiere, Co-owner**  
**EAP Network**  
**Taunton, Massachusetts**

*"A great resource, especially when you need to work out a newsletter in a hurry!"*

**Bud Wassell**  
**Solutions EAP**  
**Meriden, Connecticut**

*"The FrontLine Employee has been a big success for the promotion of the EAP. I have received several phone calls from employees to the EAP asking questions about the information. Keep up the good work!"*

**Employee Wellness Associates**  
**Employee Assistance Program**  
**Green Bay, Wisconsin**

*"Our employees call me immediately if the FrontLine Employee is not in their office on the designated day of arrival."*

**Melvina MacDonald**  
**Tallahasee Memorial Hospital**  
**Tallahasee, Florida**



*"Our companies have thoroughly enjoyed receiving the FrontLine Employee. We have had several compliments and the requests for more copies."*

**Carolyn Rohrig,  
DIRECTIONS EAP  
Lincoln, Nebraska**

*"After years of struggling with the newsletter arena -- a fantastic solution! We can now promote our EAP services as state-of-the-art."*

**Marylee Nunley  
RMS, Inc.  
Peoria, Illinois**

*"A great way to keep in touch with employees and give them useful information. Money well spent!"*

**Tom McMahan  
U.S. Postal Service Employee Assistance Program  
Omaha, Nebraska**

*[Unsolicited]"Thanks for your speedy reply. Your newsletters are of great value to us and our clients."*

**Eileen Crochiere  
EAP Network  
Taunton, Massachusetts**

*[Unsolicited]"I currently subscribe to both Frontline Newsletters and find them most beneficial."*

**Ken Sipes, Director  
United Family Services EAP  
Charlotte, North Carolina**

*"The FrontLine Employee makes me look like a genius!! All of our client companies love the publication, please don't ever stop publishing it. I could never do it on my own."*

**Bill Hoey, LCSW, CEAP  
Family Services Woodfield  
Bridgeport, CT**