



FY24 - FOURTH QUARTER *Employee Assistance Newsletter*

WELCOME!

Welcome to the Fourth Quarter DEA EAP Newsletter! In this edition, we featured awareness days in July, August, and September as well as a few articles that can prove useful all year round.

As we enter this quarter, don't forget to reach out to us. The Counseling Team International's DEA EAP hotline is (800) 275-7460. To reach the EAP office at HQ, call (571) 776-2990 or email eap@dea.gov.

We're here to support you at work, at home, and your family. Our story "It's Time to go Back to School" features methods you can use to start the school year strong.

Our feature on "How to Encourage Someone to Seek Help" offers helpful tips on how to approach difficult conversations and ensure you can help those around you. It's not always about what you say, but how you say it.

We hope this issue is a helpful resource. As always, reach out to us with any questions you may have. See you next quarter!

In this newsletter, you will find:

Suicide Awareness Month

Get Back to School Healthy and Strong

Hispanic Heritage Month

How to Encourage Someone to Seek Help

National Disability Day

Self-Care Highlight





MENTAL HEALTH IN THE BLACK INDIGENOUS PERSONS OF COLOR COMMUNITY

The pursuit of a mental health system that mirrors the rich tapestry of cultures, languages, and experiences in the community it serves is a commendable and essential goal. Emphasis on cultural and linguistic competence within mental health services is not only a reflection of inclusivity but also a necessary step towards providing effective care. Such a system would not only recognize but embrace the varied values, beliefs, and sexual orientations of individuals, ensuring that services are accessible and relevant to all, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or language.

However, the challenges faced in rural America highlight the complexities of implementing such a system. The scarcity of professional staff and culturally competent providers in these areas exacerbates the issue, leaving a gap in service delivery that is difficult to fill. Social stigma and concerns about confidentiality further deter individuals from seeking help, while financial constraints, such as lack of funding and insurance coverage, pose significant barriers. The integration of behavioral health with physical health remains fragmented, with prevention efforts being minimal. Transportation issues, due to long distances and limited options, along with a low number of available providers, continue to restrict access to necessary care.

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach. Recruitment and retention strategies for professional staff in rural areas must be bolstered, perhaps through incentives or specialized training programs that focus on cultural and linguistic competence. Education and awareness campaigns can help reduce social stigma and promote confidentiality, encouraging more individuals to seek help. Financial and insurance systems need restructuring to ensure adequate funding and coverage for mental health services. Integrating behavioral health with physical health should be prioritized to provide a holistic approach to care. Prevention efforts must be amplified to address issues before they escalate, and transportation services should be expanded to improve accessibility.

In essence, a culturally and linguistically competent mental health system is not just an ideal; it is a necessity for the well-being of diverse communities. It requires commitment, innovation, and collaboration across various sectors to overcome the geographical and cultural barriers that currently hinder service delivery. With concerted effort and dedication, it is possible to create a mental health system that is as diverse and dynamic as the population it serves.





HOW TO ENCOURAGE SOMEONE TO SEEK HELP

Seeking professional mental health counseling is a significant step towards well-being and it's important to approach the topic with sensitivity and support. If someone is going through a tough time, gently suggesting counseling can be framed as a positive and proactive way to handle life's challenges. It's beneficial to emphasize that seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness, and that mental health is just as important as physical health. Encouraging open conversations about mental health can reduce stigma and make it easier for individuals to reach out for the support they need. It's also helpful to provide information on how to find a counselor, such as through insurance providers, local clinics, or online resources. Remember, the decision to seek counseling is deeply personal, and always respect the individual's pace and readiness to take that step.

When approaching a delicate conversation, especially one concerning mental health, it's crucial to do so with compassion and understanding. Initiating the dialogue by expressing the need for an important discussion sets a serious tone. Choosing a conducive environment, free from distractions, allows for a focused and private conversation. Empathy is key; phrases like "I wouldn't be having this talk if I didn't care about you" can convey concern while reinforcing the relationship's value.

It's natural for the person to react emotionally. Remaining calm and avoiding defensiveness helps maintain a constructive dialogue. Utilizing "I" statements, such as "I'm concerned about you," personalizes the concern without placing blame. If the individual has shared their worries or frustrations, acknowledging and reflecting on these sentiments shows attentiveness and validation of their feelings.

Steering clear of stigmatizing language, such as "crazy" or "abnormal," avoids further distress. Instead, offering tangible support, like assisting in finding a therapist or counseling service, demonstrates a commitment to their well-being. Scheduling an appointment together can be a significant step towards recovery.

Finally, reminding them of your care and support provides a sense of security and reassurance. As someone close to them, your influence and involvement can be a powerful force in their journey towards healing.

Remember, the way we communicate can profoundly affect the outcome of such critical conversations. It's not just about what is said, but how it's said, that can make all the difference in supporting someone through mental health challenges.



SELF-CARE DAY: STRENGTHEN YOUR SELF-CONNECTION

Observed annually on **July 24th**, International Self-Care Day is a celebration of the importance of self-care and the role it plays in leading a healthy and fulfilling life. It's a day to recognize that caring for oneself is a vital part of maintaining both physical and mental health. On this day, individuals are encouraged to reflect on their own self-care practices and consider new ways to enhance their well-being.

Whether it's through meditation, exercise, reading, or simply taking a moment to breathe and relax, self-care is about finding what works for each person. It's also a day to acknowledge that self-care is not just a luxury, but a necessary part of life that helps to improve resilience, reduce stress, and increase happiness. Celebrating oneself on this day can be a powerful affirmation of one's worth and a commitment to one's health. It's an opportunity to set aside time for personal growth and to appreciate the journey of self-improvement. By embracing self-care, individuals can create a more balanced life and inspire others to prioritize their own well-being.



NATIONAL DISABILITY INDEPENDENCE DAY



National Disability Independence Day is observed annually on **July 26th** to honor the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990. The ADA is a comprehensive civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places open to the general public. This landmark legislation has been instrumental in increasing access and opportunities for people with disabilities, promoting their independence and participation in community life.

The ADA covers five main titles: Employment, State and Local Government, Public Accommodations, Telecommunications, and Miscellaneous Provisions, which address rights and services for people with disabilities. The ADA Amendments Act of 2008 further broadened the definition of disability, ensuring greater protection for individuals with disabilities.

Celebrations of National Disability Independence Day often include awareness-raising events, discussions on the progress made, and advocacy for further improvements in disability rights and inclusion.





The process of altering one's habits, whether by addition or subtraction, can indeed be a formidable endeavor. The human mind is adept at erecting barriers or conjuring distractions, often subconsciously, to resist change. It may whisper convincing arguments that the effort required is excessive or the outcome unworthy. This resistance is a common human experience, frequently masked by the pretense of insufficient time to adopt new practices or routines.

In today's world, marked by rapidity and perpetual connectivity, there exists an incessant demand to remain active—incessantly responding to messages, maintaining social media presence, and engaging in endless tasks. Such unrelenting activity can precipitate burnout, elevate anxiety levels, and sever the connection with one's inner self. To mitigate these effects, it is essential to foster a sense of ease with stillness, devoid of the compulsion for continuous stimulation.

Embracing solitude as a means to get in shape is a strategy worth considering. Allocating specific intervals each day to disconnect from digital devices—perhaps during meals, preceding sleep, or within the morning regimen—can prove beneficial. As individuals navigate through various roles, activities, and tasks throughout their day, each transition presents an opportunity to halt momentarily, engage in self-reflection, and absorb the nuances of the immediate environment. Recognizing the influence of one's surroundings is pivotal. The habit of habitual device checking, often under the pretense of productivity, can undermine these precious moments of self-connection, interaction with others, and environmental awareness. Opting for screen-free activities can enhance one's relationship with oneself and the surrounding world.

Solitude need **not** equate to loneliness. Allocating time for personal enjoyment, whether through a leisurely stroll, indulging in a hobby, or embracing the tranquility of silence, can be enriching. The apprehension surrounding solitude is not unfounded, as it is during these times that challenging thoughts or dormant anxieties may emerge. The initial phase of breaking free from the comfort of distractions can unleash a deluge of disconcerting emotions and thoughts. This reaction is typically rooted in the discomfort of confronting oneself, a necessary step towards personal growth and self-discovery. By gradually embracing these moments of solitude, one can cultivate resilience, self-awareness, and a profound sense of personal fulfillment.

**HOW WILL YOU PRIORITIZE SELF CARE THIS MONTH?
SET A GOAL.
MAKE IT HAPPEN.**



TIPS FOR A HEALTHY AND STRONG START TO SCHOOL

As children return to school, it's essential to focus on their overall well-being to ensure they remain healthy and are able to perform their best academically. Prioritizing the basics like sleep, exercise, and nutrition is crucial. A balanced diet, adequate rest, and regular physical activity are foundational to cognitive function and emotional balance. Schools often provide resources for nutritious meals, and it's important to take advantage of these programs.



Regular checkups and staying current with immunizations are also vital. These preventative measures safeguard against illness and ensure that children are ready for the school year. In light of recent health concerns and declining vaccination rates, it's more important than ever to stay vigilant about health requirements and recommendations from healthcare professionals.

Open Communication: Establish a safe space for children to express their feelings without fear of judgment or punishment. Affirm their right to speak openly about any subject.

Behavioral Signs: Monitor for any changes in behavior that may indicate anxiety, depression, or distress. Be proactive in addressing any concerning signs.

Firearm Safety: If firearms are present in the home, ensure they are securely locked away and ammunition is stored separately to mitigate risks.

Quality Time: Engage in activities like family meals and walks, which can provide natural opportunities for conversation and strengthen family bonds.

Professional Guidance: Consult with a pediatrician for advice on recognizing the need for professional help and initiating mental health discussions.

Education on Social Issues: Discuss important topics such as racism, bullying, and kindness. Encourage seeking help when facing discrimination and the importance of respectful treatment towards others.

Media Consumption: Review and adjust family media plans to balance screen time with other activities & educate children on identifying credible sources to avoid misinformation.



Kindness and Health: Highlight the benefits of kindness, including its ability to reduce stress and contribute to overall health, backed by research findings.

The mental health of students cannot be overlooked. The challenges of the past few years have highlighted the need for open communication and support for children's emotional well-being. Encouraging discussions about feelings and providing a supportive environment can make a significant difference in a child's mental health. Together, these steps form a comprehensive approach to preparing children for a successful and healthy school year.



SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

September is Suicide Prevention month. Join the fight against suicide. Learn more about the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention by clicking here [National Strategy for Suicide Prevention Fact Sheet \(samhsa.gov\)](#).

If you or someone you know is in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, call or text 988 right away. The 988 hotline provides 24/7 free confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources. www.988lifeline.org.

“

From the Fact Sheet

“Suicide is an urgent and growing public health crisis. More than 49,000 people in the United States died by suicide in 2022. That’s one death every 11 minutes. The urgency to address suicide has grown after the COVID-19 pandemic and has been exacerbated by the ongoing mental health and overdose crises.”

”

DIAL 911 OR CALL SUICIDE HOTLINE AT 988



HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Hispanic Heritage Month is a significant period that honors the rich and diverse cultures, histories, and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. This month-long observance begins on September 15th, a date that is particularly meaningful because it marks the anniversary of independence for Latin American countries Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Additionally, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16th and September 18th, respectively.

During Hispanic Heritage Month, communities across the United States hold festivals, art shows, conferences, community gatherings, and educational activities to recognize the achievements and contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans. It's a time when stories of immigration, perseverance, and success are shared to educate others about the dynamic influence these communities have had on American society. The month also serves as a reminder of the ongoing contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans in all sectors of society, including the arts, sciences, politics, business, education, and sports.

The celebration provides an opportunity to delve into the historical context of Hispanic and Latino Americans, exploring the impact of Spanish language and culture across the nation. It's an opportunity for all Americans to learn about the traditions and customs of Hispanic and Latino communities, fostering a greater understanding and appreciation for the diversity within the U.S.

Hispanic Heritage Month is not only a reflection of the past but also a celebration of the present and an optimistic look towards the future. It's a time to acknowledge the growing influence of Hispanic and Latino Americans as they continue to enrich the mosaic of American culture. This annual event is a testament to the United States' commitment to recognizing the multicultural and multiracial democracy that defines the nation, celebrating the many ways in which Hispanic and Latino Americans have woven their rich cultural fabric into the American story.





WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR EAP SERVICES?



DEA
Employees



Spouses of DEA
Employees



Children of DEA Employees 26
or younger



Employee's Children
Any age **with** special needs



DEA Employee's Parents, In-Laws, and/or Others
Living **IN** the employee's home as a family member

We are here to help with our culturally competent clinical team that uses trauma-informed strategies to address the unique needs of DEA employees and their families. Asking for help is the first and most important step you can take to begin the process of healing and recovery.

CONTACT US

For a counseling referral in your area, contact The Counseling Team International's **DEA EAP Hotline at (800) 275-7460.**

EAP Office at HQ (571) 776-2990 / eap@dea.gov

EAP Administrator, Adrienne Wright-Williams, LMFT

EAP Specialist, Shane Arnett, LCSW

EAP Specialist, Andrea Robinson, LPC, CEAP

EAP Staff Coordinator, SA Marlene Mattocks

EAP Program Analyst, Kirsten Diller, LPCC

EAP Program Support Specialist, Darlene Flowers

Lifecare

866-426-0416