



**Employee Assistance Program**

**1-800-822-0244**

[www.oer.ny.gov/eap](http://www.oer.ny.gov/eap)

July 2023

# FrontLine Employee

*Wellness, Productivity, and You!*

## Family Separation Stress and Military Personnel

The demands of military service often requires extended periods away from loved ones. This can strain relationships and mental well-being. Stress is made worse by missing family milestones and not being physically present during tough times. Take steps to prioritize communication with loved ones through regular phone calls, video chats, and letters, but more importantly, make this a habit or ritual so you proactively manage stress in your career rather than react to it. Make goals for your time with your loved ones to create cherished memories, as they'll become positive memory anchors when you are away. Not following these guidelines can strain relationships further and make you feel more isolated and even resentful. For more tips, support, and referral help, your EAP and other resources are available.



## Don't Just "Fix and Forget"

Go further when resolving customer and employee complaints by discovering root causes. Start by understanding the customer's experience. Ask, "Can you tell me more about what led to this issue?" or "What were your expectations before this problem occurred?" Think about why—and keep asking to discover the root causes. Once confirmed, brainstorm and develop potential solutions. Implement, monitor, and evaluate a solution. Taking these steps will lead to fewer complaints, happier customers and employees, and more love for your job. This is called root cause analysis.



## Planning a Staycation in Grand Style

If vacation money is tight, try a staycation—a vacation spent at home and within one's local area. Here's how to make it exciting and refreshing: 1) Set a budget so you know what's possible. 2) Brainstorm ideas—museums, new hikes, new restaurants, movie nights, exhibits, or special events. 3) Create the itinerary and schedule with detail. 4) Disconnect from social media and smartphones, and don't check email if possible. Limit television viewing. 5) Relax and have fun. With real planning, you will have a great staycation.



## Drowsy Driving Intervention Tips

Every year, hundreds of drivers are killed by drowsy driving. One in 25 people reported driving while drowsy in the past 30 days—heavy eyelids, falling asleep at a red light, swerving, slamming on the brakes in a frightful "nod-off." Drowsy driving is more likely between 5 a.m. and 7 a.m., but the recommendation is to pull off the road—safely—to get refreshed. A nap is ideal, if possible. Recognize approaching drowsiness: yawning, blinking more than usual, and straining to keep your eyes open. Caffeine (drinking water can work too), fresh air, sitting up straight, and walking for a few minutes can also restore alertness.



Find more solutions at [www.cdc.gov/sleep/features/drowsy-driving.html](http://www.cdc.gov/sleep/features/drowsy-driving.html)

# Helping a Friend with an Eating Disorder

**Like those with** other health conditions, eating disorder sufferers often seek treatment with the encouragement of loved ones. Are you concerned about someone's relationship with food, their body image, or behaviors that indicate the likelihood of an eating disorder?



There are tips recommended by the National Eating Disorders Association for helping a person you care about. The first and most important recommendation is to learn as much as possible about eating disorders. Skipping this step is why many interventions and discussions focused on convincing someone to get help—for any behavioral/health problem—end in disappointment. Why? When you have accurate information, your responses to any naturally defensive statements are more effective, educational, and helpful. This facilitates your loved one's ability to self-diagnose. Shame and stigma reduce quickly. Less defensiveness is observed, emotions may be calmer, your loved one is likely to listen more readily, and the acceptance of help is more likely. Beyond this key step, rehearse what you want to say. Set a private time and place to talk. Be honest, direct, and use "I" statements, not accusations (i.e., "I have noticed..." vs. "You must/need to..."). Learn more about the steps to helping a loved one or a friend at [nationaleatingdisorders.org](http://nationaleatingdisorders.org).

## Parent Alert: Use of Non-LSD Hallucinogens Surging Among Young Adults

**Consumption of** non-LSD hallucinogens is rising among young American adults—mescaline, peyote, psilocybin ("magic mushrooms"), and PCP. In 2018, 3.4% of 18-to-30-year-olds had used one of these drugs within the past 30 days, but by 2021, the number nearly doubled to 6.6%.



These drugs can have dangerous psychological effects along with physical risks, impaired judgment, and risk of accidents. They may also trigger long-term psychological effects like schizophrenia if a biogenic risk is present in the user. Legal consequences can ensue where these substances are illegal. Signs of possible non-LSD drug use may include changes in behavior and mood, withdrawal, secretiveness, and uncharacteristic mood swings; a high/low demeanor; neglect of schoolwork, chores, and activities; and the loss of interest in school. Sleep problems, nightmares, and appetite issues may also occur without apparent explanation.

Learn more: [GetSmartAboutDrugs.gov](https://getsmartaboutdrugs.gov) [search "non-LSD hallucinogens is rising."]

# Create a Transition Ritual for Your Stressful Job

**Emotional and** mental exhaustion is common among public safety professionals and first responders at the end of their shifts. If that's you, do you have a "transition routine" for when you go home so you are more emotionally available to others.



This might include structured relaxation exercises, listening to calming music, or engaging in a mindfulness exercise. When you do these routinely, you can develop a habit signal that helps you shift your focus more quickly. You'll then be more naturally responsive with less effort, both in conversation, active listening, empathy, and eye contact with others. Talk to your EAP, and don't rule out counseling to help make it happen. Be cautious about alcohol use. It can relax you but can lead to larger problems and strained relationships, or it can interfere with a truly beneficial transition routine.

## Have a Better Mood All Day

**Have a more** positive day at work by experimenting with these positivity strategies, and see if they don't become a habit for having a more productive day.



1) Be intentional about making your day positive by reminding yourself of the things you appreciate about your job. 2) Have achievable goals each day. Don't just "let things happen." 3) Prioritize tasks associated with these goals. 4) Practice time management during the day. 5) Initiate positive interactions with others and nurture these relationships to maintain a positive and enjoyable workplace. 6) Consciously practice gratitude for a minute or two during the day to reflect on what you like about your job. Doing so cultivates a positive mindset and builds resilience for when the going gets tough. Incorporating these strategies into your daily routine will empower you to navigate challenges that may arise, ensuring a fulfilling and resilient journey in your professional life.