



Maryland's Largest School District

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential*



Volume 25, Issue 1

# Balance

A newsletter to help employees maintain a healthy work-life balance



*Balance is a newsletter produced by your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that spotlights relevant issues related to personal and professional wellness. The EAP is a confidential and free resource, available to you to help manage life's various challenges. If any of the topics below resonant with you, consider contacting your EAP for more information, including referrals for local EAP counselors.*

## **ACHIEVE GOALS WITH THE EAP'S HELP**

Achieving goals naturally includes circumventing roadblocks and hurdles. It can be challenging to maintain motivation, overcome self-doubt, remain unshaken by failures, stay on track, plan, manage your time, and overpower distractions. Your EAP is the perfect starting point to help achieve your goals. Worthwhile achievements rarely come easily, but with assessment, counseling, short-term problem-solving, or a referral to the right resource, you can start down the road to positive change.

## **LIVING BETTER IN THE "SANDWICH GENERATION"**

The "sandwich generation" refers to adults raising children under the age of 18, while also caring for elderly parents. If you are a member of this select group, you may struggle finding time for yourself, sleeping and eating well, engaging in physical activity, setting boundaries with finite time and energy resources, encounter financial stress, have a need for emotional support, and wonder what resources are out there to assist you. For help and support, go to U.S. Area Agencies at [www.usaging.org/adrcs](http://www.usaging.org/adrcs).

## **PRIORITIZE WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

*Here are some ways to incorporate work-life balance into your daily life:*

- ◆ Tackle tiring or intense work tasks during the time of day you feel the most energetic.
- ◆ Passionately engage in a goal, hobby, pastime, or sport outside of work. Make it something you can't wait to get to, either before work or after.
- ◆ Write down realistic goals for your work each day and cross them off as you accomplish them. Without a daily plan, you won't easily find an end to your day.
- ◆ Examine what underlies imbalance. For example, do you believe overwork is noticed and will eventually be rewarded? Do you work harder hoping others won't notice the skills and abilities you fear you don't possess? With these few changes, you can avoid "work strain," burnout, and disillusionment with your job.



## FINDING MORE MEANING AND ENERGY IN YOUR JOB

Gallup research has found that 40% of employees believe their mental health is negatively affected by their job. Managing stress is important, but improving wellness is also accomplished by becoming more “engaged.” Could you enjoy your job more even though there are aspects of it that you do not like? If so, research says you will increase energy, find new meaning in work, feel more positive and in control, and feel more hopeful and productive. You’re also less likely to burn out. Helping employees become more engaged is a hot topic in the world of work. If you haven’t explored this idea yet, you may be on your way to discovering new energy and improved mental health on the job. See the resource below to get started.

Learn more:

[http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_to\\_be\\_more\\_engaged\\_at\\_work](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_be_more_engaged_at_work)

## SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

Feeling gloomy in the winter is a common complaint, but some people are affected far more than others. Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression with feelings of sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, and sluggishness that you can’t shake. When any type of depression interferes with social and occupational functioning, it’s important to seek assistance. Start with your employee assistance program to get the right source of help.

## BETTER PLANNING IN 2023

Are you a serial defaulter on your New Year’s resolutions? An estimated 80% of people give up by February. Better planning includes one well-touted approach of setting S.M.A.R.T. goals. S.M.A.R.T. stands for making your goal specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. If your resolution is to reduce your pre-diabetic fasting glucose A1C score of 6.1, make it specific. For example, shoot for 5.7. Talk with your doctor. Is it achievable? Is it realistic? Measurable? Now, choose the timeline for achievement. Three months? Now build your strategy and tactics. They might include exercise, diet, and better sleep. Measure your progress. You can take control of your goals.

## DID YOU HAVE A PANIC ATTACK?

About 25% of people will experience a panic attack during their lifetime. A panic attack can strike any time or place. You could suddenly awaken at night to sheer terror. It’s not a heart attack, but you might think you are having one, with total fear of losing control. A rapid irregular heartbeat, extreme anxiety, trembling, dizziness, and inability to catch your breath are classic symptoms. Symptoms often resolve in about ten minutes; the event by itself is not symptomatic of an anxiety disorder or mental health condition. Still, if you have a panic attack it is important to talk to your medical provider to rule out health issues and discuss a plan. Your EAP can also help determine a plan and next steps.

Learn more: [Mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org) [search “panic attack”]



## TEACHING CHILDREN TO BE BETTER PROBLEM SOLVERS

If you are a parent or guardian of a young child, here's a "formula" for teaching problem solving:

- Encourage the child to explain the situation needing a fix, solution, or answer.
- Ask questions that prompt critical thinking and solutions.
- Help the child break the problem up into smaller parts. Tackle one piece at a time.
- Let the child brainstorm for answers.
- Guide the child to the solution.
- Praise the effort.
- Talk about mistakes as learning tools.
- Have a post-event discussion and reflect on the steps to solving a problem.

For more opportunities to learn the problem-solving process, create problems. Example: "I don't know what to make for dinner, but this is what we have in the refrigerator."

## FENTANYL EDUCATION FOR PARENTS AND TEENS

Deaths of young people from fentanyl poisoning keep rising, at 41,587 deaths in 2021, a 20% increase over 2020. Most deaths are in young people 18-45 who unwittingly take lethal amounts—about the size of two grains of salt. A government report issued last month contains the results of a massive survey of young people that sought to gauge their knowledge of fentanyl. The survey shows a dramatic lack of knowledge of this killer drug. Only 36% of teens know fentanyl is sold as fake pills or mixed with other substances of abuse. Download the 75-question survey and use it as a conversation starter to help young people be more informed and less likely to be victims of poisoning. Download: [Justthinktwice.gov](https://www.justthinktwice.gov) [search "friends fentanyl"] "How Much Do Your Friends Know About Fentanyl!"

The Montgomery County Public Schools Employee Assistance Program assists with workplace issues or personal challenges that may impact the well-being of employees and family members.

Working in partnership, the In-House EAP and the external EAP, Kepro, provide employees a confidential and comprehensive approach to identifying issues impacting the employee and assist them in developing meaningful solutions.

The MCPS In-House EAP services are available 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday – Friday year-round at 240.314.1040. Kepro EAP services are available 24/7/365 through its toll-free 866.496.9599 access line. Both options offer counseling and guidance to employees and family members. MCPS supervisors should contact the In-House EAP for workplace Consultations.

**In-House EAP Phone:** 1.240.314.1040

**In- House**

**Website:** [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/eap/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/eap/)

**External EAP**

**Kepro Toll-Free:** 1.866.496.9599

**Website:** [www.EAPHelplink.com](http://www.EAPHelplink.com)

**Company Code:** MCPS



*Balance is a newsletter produced by your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that spotlights relevant issues related to personal and professional wellness. Kepro EAP services provide assistance and guidance to supervisors dealing with workplace performance issues. This newsletter is intended for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional. Individuals should follow the policies and procedures laid out by their human resource management department concerning use of the EAP. Some articles reprinted with permission from DFA Publishing and Consulting, LLC. Kepro, Harrisburg, PA. All rights reserved.*