

Solutions

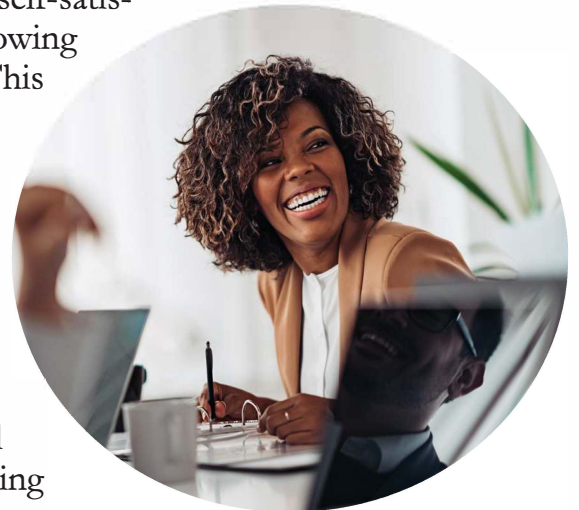
Volume 5, 2023

Emotional Labor and Customer Service Stress

“Emotional labor” refers to the practice of maintaining a positive attitude and friendly demeanor while working under stress, particularly with difficult and irate customers. Burnout risk is naturally high in such jobs, but a few healthy practices can dramatically improve your resilience. Practice each with awareness of its benefits. 1) Take care of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally with enough rest, healthy eating, and regular exercise. 2) Practice focusing on the positive aspects of your job, such as helping customers and solving their problems. 3) Practice empathy with customers. It improves their demeanor and leads to positive interactions with you. 4) Use more positive language during interactions. It reduces tension, and it de-escalates conflict. 5) Seek support. Colleagues, supervisors, and your company EAP offer opportunities to vent, process events, and blow off steam. This is normal and healthy. It won't feed cynicism; it's just the opposite—it will help you stay positive and motivated in your job.

Harvest Some Wellness with Indoor

The therapeutic and mental health benefits of gardening have been shown in numerous studies, but you don't need a garden plot, backyard, or even a patio to reap the benefits of this activity. You can get all the advantages of gardening by using just a pot or two on a windowsill. Benefits include improving your mood, reducing stress and anxiety, and gaining self-satisfaction, mindfulness, and a feeling of accomplishment from growing your own food and nurturing a plant and watching it flourish. This gardening-centered activity can boost self-esteem and help you feel more capable and in control. The easiest things to grow in a small pot include leafy greens and herbs, microgreens, and even beans. Varieties of leafy greens such as lettuce, spinach, arugula, and kale all can be grown in small pots. Herbs and peppers are other options. They require a moderate amount of sunlight and can be harvested continuously by picking the outer leaves as they grow. Vegetables grown indoors may not yield as much as those grown outdoors in a garden, but you will still get the fun and rewards that accompany gardening. Gardening requires a certain level of focus and attention, which can promote a sense of well-being. And focusing on the present moment and the task at hand may help alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression. Experiment to see what your green thumb can do. Source: Horticultural Therapy Association (www.ahta.org)



Overcome Springtime Stressors

Springtime can include a surprising amount of stress. A menu of stressors typically includes final exam preparation, graduation planning and festivities, dating and relationship issues, loss of focus on school as it comes to an end, recreational pursuits, sport schedules, social events, college planning, and tough financial decisions. The big overlay is parenting challenges. If you're unfortunate enough to check all the stress boxes above this month, don't suffer physical and psychological effects. Pick up some tips from your EAP or other professional counseling resources. Anxiety or depression can affect you at any time of year, and some say May is one of the most challenging times.

Mental Health Month: Practice Preventive Mental Health Care

There is such a thing as "preventive mental health," just like there is preventive physical health. Here's one approach: Practice self-compassion—be kind and understanding to yourself, especially during difficult times. Treat yourself with the same empathy and support that you would offer a close friend. And here's another: Establish healthy boundaries—set limits on your time, energy, and resources to avoid burnout and resentment. Learn to say no to requests that don't align with your values or goals. Preventive mental health lowers stress and builds resilience for when the going gets tough. Learn more in the workbook, "Better. Mental. Health. for Everyone" by Dr. Abraham Low.

Try the Pomodoro Technique

The "Pomodoro Technique" might be the ticket if you struggle with distractions and remaining focused on projects. Developed by Francesco Cirillo, a business consultant, the approach to managing time requires a kitchen timer and breaking work into short, focused intervals (typically 25 minutes) called "Pomodoros." Separate these with five-minute breaks. After four Pomodoros, take a longer break (15-30 minutes). The Pomodoro Technique helps you maintain focus and productivity, but it also helps you avoid burnout and mental fatigue from arduous tasks. There's a bonus; you eventually become more efficient at prioritizing tasks and avoiding distractions even when not using the technique.

Access Counselling Through Your EAP

Balancing work and life can be tough, and sometimes it can feel like you're juggling too much. It's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day and forget to prioritize your mental health and well-being. If you're feeling overwhelmed or struggling with personal issues, counselling through FSEAP can provide you with the support and guidance you need to get back on track. We offer effective short-term counselling for individuals, couples, and families. Our professional counsellors are skilled in addressing a range of concerns, including anxiety, depression, stress, relationship challenges, substance use and addictions, grief and loss, and more.

