



Recent Studies Give Practical Advice

It might seem as though most scientific behavioral studies are aimed at white rats in a Mainland lab. But here are some research projects, reported on in the past year, that can be truly helpful to anyone—even those of us who live on an Island in the Pacific.

How to Have More Willpower Do you have the willpower to get the job done, or have you found yourself giving in to temptations, distractions, and inaction when trying to reach your own goals? New research by Mark Muraven shows that our capacity for self-control is surprisingly like a muscle that can be strengthened by regular exercise.

Do you have a sweet tooth? Try giving up candy, even if weight-loss and cavity-prevention are not your goals. Hate exerting yourself physically? Go out and buy one of those handgrips you see the muscle men with at the gym - even if your goal is to pay your bills on time. In one study, after two weeks of sweets-abstinence and handgripping, Muraven found that participants had significantly improved on a difficult concentration task that required lots of self-control.

Just by working your willpower muscle regularly, engaging in simple actions that require small amounts of self-control - like sitting up straight or making your bed each day - you can develop the self-control strength you'll need to tackle all of your goals.



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How To Manage Your Time Better

Good time management starts with figuring out what tasks you need to accomplish, and how long each will take. The problem is, human beings are generally pretty lousy when it comes to estimating the time they will need to complete any task. Psychologists refer to this as the planning fallacy, and it has the very real potential to mess up our plans and keep us from reaching our goals.

New research by Mario Weick and Ana Guinote shows that some people are particularly poor planners. These are folks who focus on getting what they want, ignoring the potential obstacles that stand in their way. Their future plans often involve "best-case scenarios," which lead to far shorter time estimates than more realistic plans that take into account what might go wrong.

The good news is, you can learn to more accurately predict how long something will take and become a better planner if you stop and consider potential obstacles, along with two other factors: your own past experiences (i.e., how long did it take last time?), and all the steps or subcomponents that make up the task (i.e., factoring in the time you'll need for each part).

Want more info on these studies?

Email us at info@EAPacific.com



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From "Science of Success" by Heidi Halvorson PhD in Psychology Today.



..is a short term confidential counseling service, provided to you by your employer, that can assist in identifying and resolving issues that may be interfering with your job or personal life.

Our experienced counselors are available across the Islands and can be contacted by phoning or emailing our Honolulu office.

Stress Busters for Kids

Not all of the stress in our Hawaii families belongs to adults. Kids might experience anxiety, anger, frustration or just “get all wound up” in ways that cause sleeplessness, stomach and head aches, crankiness and many other symptoms. We aren’t always able to help a youngster relax by taking them to the beach for a few hours or on a kid friendly hike so here are some other suggestions:



Calm Crying Bouts with Bunny Breaths

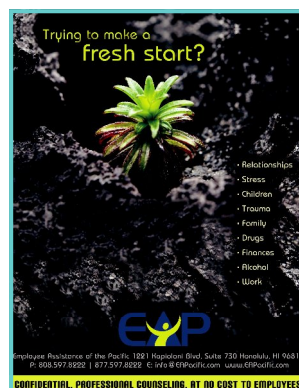
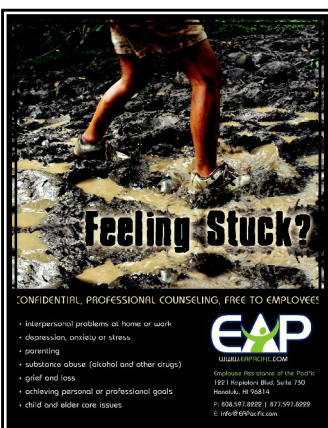
Teach your keiki relaxation techniques such as this one specifically designed for kids ages 5-11. Trying to get a crying child to catch his breath? Do a few Bunny Breaths. This technique mirrors the way a child cries, we call it the “Sniff, Sniff, Blow.” Have your child take two short inhales through the nose, then “blow” a long exhale out the mouth -- this will slow his breathing down and help his body relax. It may help to add a visual cue by counting the “sniffs” on two fingers and then “blow” across your open palm, like blowing a kiss. Practice when your child is calm so when he gets upset you can sniff, sniff, blow together. Eventually, he may instinctively use it to calm himself down.

Blow Off Some Steam Like a Volcano

This kid’s gonna blow! To expend that energy without casualties, pretend you both are mountains. Stand with your legs wide apart, firmly planted (mountains don’t run around). Take big breaths and tell your child to feel the lava rumbling deep inside his or her belly. Put your palms together in the prayer position, breathe in, and then stretch your arms up over your heads. Then “erupt” the volcano by breathing out and stretching your arms out and down with a swooshing sound. Go fast, slow, rewind and change sound effects. Ask your child what emotions the lava could stand for -- anger, jealousy, fear -- and how it feels to get it out.

Battle the Blues with Better Thoughts

To throw stinkin’ thinkin’ out the window, remind your child of the bigger picture through positive self-talk. This is as important for the parent as the child. First, remind yourself, “We can both calm down, I can show her how.” Then teach her the mantras “This is for now, not forever,” and “This is a wave, I am the ocean.” It will remind both of you that the tough moment will pass, and better times are sure to follow. Another way to counter runaway worries is to redirect negative thoughts by observing (out loud) the here and now: “Right now, you’re in your red PJs safe in your room, and I am patting your back.” Remind her of past successes working through feelings or problems. Sometimes, though, a kid just needs to let it all out. So, create a safe space for her to release her feelings.



Workplace Posters Highlight Value of EAP

Employees who have used their EAP benefit know that meeting with a professional counselor in a confidential session can be helpful for the more “manini” issues as well as for crisis situations. One of the best things about EAP is that there is no need for the counselor to make a mental health diagnosis or find something wrong. Many people use EAP as a place to check in with an impartial and professional life coach, to explore ideas and ways to make all kinds of changes in their lives.

If you would like to receive workplace posters such as the ones shown here to share the good news about EAP, contact Employee Assistance of the Pacific today.

Employee Assistance of the Pacific

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