



# FrontLine Employee

Wellness, Productivity, and You!

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www.oer.ny.gov/eap

## Finding Peace with Nursing Home Placement Decisions

Facilitating the placement of a loved one in a nursing home can provoke a mixture of guilt, grief, relief, fear, and uncertainty. A key principle in this process — helping patients and families decide how to interpret this transition for the sake of their health and mental well-being is “meaning making.”

The goal is to accept that the transition is not a failure, loss, or tragedy. Instead, it can be understood as an act of care—ensuring safety, access to skilled support, and comfort that may no longer be possible at home. This does not erase feelings of sadness, but it offers a clearer, more compassionate understanding of what you are doing and why. Success is achieved by seeing yourself in a new role as an advocate, companion, and emotional anchor. Many families discover renewed energy for connection through visits, conversation, reminiscence, and simple presence. If your family is facing this decision, a counselor specializing in these transitions can help guide you through the process and offer support in just a few sessions. Your EAP coordinator can assist with referrals.



## Stress Tips from the Field: Narrow the Focus to Beat Overwhelm

**Overwhelm isn't** about having too much work—it's about facing too many competing priorities. This “deer in the headlights” experience causes stress. To exit this state, ask a simple question: “If I complete one task in the next hour, what should it be?” (A similar adage: If you don't know what to do, pretend that you do know, and do that.) Even a little progress creates a sense of control, reducing anxiety. Overwhelm dissipates as your focus narrows and sequencing begins. Once movement is underway, momentum follows.



## Boost Your Team's Positivity!



Many workplace teams experience stress, but it is often exacerbated by failing to nurture a team culture that maintains high morale and resilience. Take these steps to reinforce the team positivity: 1) Decide not to just perform tasks. Instead, agree on a common vision and set up goals. Then post them. 2) Lose the cynicism and believe in the organization or discover how to rekindle this loyalty so you have a foundational purpose with your employer and a real reason to engage that naturally pulls you forward; 3) Don't avoid the manager; determine how to elicit praise for your successes. Praise from the boss is pure currency to boost morale. 4) Regularly set aside a few minutes to have honest discussions about issues—even if a moment of silence passes as members consider what's relevant. Don't allow only a concern or issue to prompt such meetings. You may miss the opportunity to resolve a problem early on.

## Clutter Can Be Draining

**Clutter doesn't just sit there**—it quietly drains you. Like a vampire, it feeds on your time, attention, and energy. There's even a business case for reducing clutter at work. Research has shown repeatedly that every visible item competes for mental space, creating low-level “background noise” your brain must manage. You may not notice it, but you feel it—fatigue, irritability, and difficulty focusing. Look around at the clutter; piles of paper, unopened mail, and unused items often represent unfinished decisions and stalled projects you plan to address someday. This dynamic keeps your mind in a subtle state of tension.



## Mental Health Awareness Month:

# How Is Your Mental Health —Really?



We schedule physicals, get bloodwork done and check our blood pressure. These tests help us understand our physical health, but mental health doesn't have the same level of routine testing. While screenings exist for conditions like depression or substance use disorders, emotional wellness and emotional fitness are harder to measure. How's your mental health and emotional fitness? Most of us assume we're okay—until we're not. A practical way to gauge where you stand is to look at four areas: 1) Emotional resilience—can you bounce back from everyday stress, or do you stay stuck in sadness or rumination? 2) Thinking patterns—are your thoughts realistic and flexible, or increasingly negative and repetitive? 3) Behavior—are you following through on responsibilities, or withdrawing from activities you once enjoyed, with changes in sleep or appetite? 4) Relationships—are you connecting well with others, or are you pulling away, experiencing conflict, or struggling to set boundaries that protect your time and energy? Pay attention to any ongoing disruption in these areas. Mental health can be strengthened, much like physical health, through small adjustments; limit news and social media overload, protect sleep, and stay connected to supportive people. Do small, intentional things each day that align with your values—what matters most to you—rather than living on autopilot. Mental health improves with steady attention, and your EAP can help.

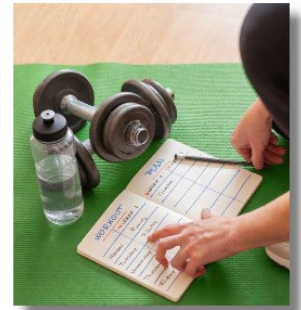
## Financial Preparedness and Peace of Mind

Few things are as stressful as financial anxiety associated with workplace uncertainty or sudden job loss. Although job security is rarely guaranteed, a little preparation can prevent fear and panic if the worst were to happen. Search "simple apps for managing a budget." Many apps exist that can be mastered in minutes to get you on track with better managing income and cash flow. Spending on housing, utilities, food, transportation, lattes...you'll see it all. When you do, you'll feel more control. Being more empowered equates to less anxiety. Separate your needs from your wants. Discover where it is easiest to cut back and trim your outgo. Start an emergency savings to set-aside and use any automatic deposit methods your banking institution may offer to make it happen. Like most people, you'll be amazed by how easily and painlessly your savings pot builds up. Do not allow the fact that it currently contains \$0 to stop you from beginning this step. Key idea: Financial preparedness is not about having all the money you need if something untoward happens. It's about increasing your sense of control and resilience when it does. Your EAP coordinator can connect you with additional resources, money-saving tips, and ways to reduce your financial exposure through services in your community, many of which are likely free.



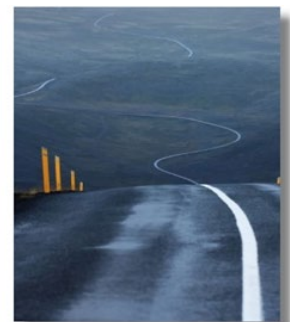
## Making Healthy Habits Stick

Most people want to maintain healthy habits, but sticking with them isn't easy. We don't fail because we lack willpower—that's a myth. The real issue is skipping the design steps that help habits stick. That's the difference. A habit forms when a behavior becomes automatic—but it also requires a trigger, a cue, a routine, and the brain's anticipation of a reward. Miss these elements, and your goal fades. Start impossibly small: a two-minute walk, one glass of water at breakfast. When done consistently, these simple actions build neural pathways and become routine. They also grow stronger with repetition. From there, scale up by layering habits. Add a new behavior to one you've already established. If you're walking 20 minutes a day, add two minutes of light stretching right after. The walk becomes the cue, stretching the routine, and physical relief is the reward. Track your progress and reward yourself often. This step is frequently overlooked, yet it helps lock habits in place for lasting change.



## The Drowsy Driving Intervention Tips

Every year, hundreds of drivers are killed by drowsy driving. Many people report driving while drowsy—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. For more information, go to [nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drowsy-driving](https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drowsy-driving).