

FrontLine Employee

WELLNESS, PRODUCTIVITY AND YOU!

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How to deal with empty nest syndrome

Even people who look forward to their last child going out on their own can have a tough time dealing with the nest that is suddenly empty. With college on the horizon for students this month, many parents are going to feel the pangs of empty nest syndrome — feelings of depression, sadness and grief when children leave their childhood homes.

For a lot of parents, raising children has become life's main focus. Feelings of sadness are normal at this time. It is also normal to spend time in the absent child's bedroom to feel closer to them. If you are experiencing empty nest syndrome, or are interested in proactively seeking tools to help with the transition, consider scheduling an appointment with a Continuum EAP counselor for assistance.



PROTECTING YOUR REPUTATION AT WORK

Your workplace reputation is a valuable asset, but it is not a “renewable resource.” Once tarnished, it can take years to recoup. How you handle yourself emotionally at work is a key facet of your reputation that can overshadow your skills, abilities and accomplishments.

How do you handle anger, disappointments, conflicts or even frustrations with management? Do you remain cool in the face of challenges? Most of us can't display the same emotions to co-workers and managers that we display at home with family members. If you blow up at co-workers, it's unlikely that they'll simply think, “Oh, that's just Mike being Mike.”

To stay cool, consider whether you are sitting on anger or stuffing conflict. Plan a sit-down meeting with whomever you need to clear the air with. An

employee assistance professional or good friend can help you plan for it.

Not sure how you may be perceived? Ask yourself:

- 1 Are my relationships at work uplifting or am I surrounded by others who are negative?
- 2 Am I getting too negative in my communications?
- 3 Am I getting careless about what I say or whom I say it to?
- 4 Are my emails lacking common courtesies or am I sounding snappy?

Your reputation is a resource for both you and your employer. Protect its value and it will serve you well.

When your spouse **SHUTS YOU OUT**

“She won’t talk to me.” “He won’t open up about his feelings.” Sound familiar? A spouse or partner feeling emotionally “shut out” is a common concern heard by counseling professionals. It can feel like your partner has simply given up on your relationship.

Emotional unavailability is often a sign of lingering anger over some past incident, or it can be fueled by frustration or fear of addressing ongoing

problems. Your partner may feel overwhelmed by unresolved issues, feel too hurt to discuss them, or think there’s no way to solve the problem.

Ready to break the deadlock? Ask your partner to agree to a time when you can talk things out.

CAUTION: Avoid pointing a finger or levying accusations. Instead, prepare to listen — mostly listen.

COMPASSION FATIGUE: don’t wait to feel it

Compassion fatigue is a syndrome similar to burnout that includes physical, emotional and spiritual depletion. In work settings, it is usually associated with direct care of those suffering with medical, emotional and emergency health situations.

Few professionals believe from the outset that they will ever fall victim to compassion fatigue, because it’s counterintuitive — a profession helping others is supposed to bring joy, not pain. As with most health and wellness issues, we tend to wait for symptoms to appear before taking action.

Reduce your vulnerability to compassion fatigue by taking proactive measures. Realize that prevention is not a mind-over-matter exercise. Your enthusiasm and commitment to your profession can help, but that will not sustain and insulate you from the effects of repeated exposure to acute-care trauma and suffering. Find compassion fatigue assessments, exercises, and loads of insight by searching “compassion fatigue” online. Or, better yet, contact Continuum EAP for help creating coping strategies specific to you.

Making positive feedback **REALLY COUNT**

When you give positive feedback to a co-worker, be sure to include the **“ABC’s”** of doing it effectively.

- **“A” stands for “Affirmation”**
- **“B” stands for “Be specific.”**
- **“C” stands for “Contribution”**

Start with a positive statement that **“A”** affirms your co-worker’s accomplishment — **“Great job!”**

Then, **“B”** be specific to let your co-worker know you are sincere and not simply “being nice.” **“Wow, Laura! I really liked your presentation. The three examples you gave of how we can better serve our customers were new and refreshing.”**

This type of positive feedback is even more affirming. But you can go still further. Acknowledge Laura’s **“C”** contribution so she knows she is valued. For example, add, **“I could see everyone perk up when they heard the new insights. I am glad you were the one we picked as our trainer.”**

By putting yourself in Laura’s shoes, you can see how she will feel positive about her presentation, you, her job and the organization. This example of positive feedback shows how it can be a force for good. It also underscores how adverse a lack of positive feedback can be if it is ignored or, worse, withheld, when it is obviously deserved.

