

# MY employee newsletter

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## Mindful Communication: Should You Text or Call?

**F**ast communication is not always meaningful and effective. So, should you pick up the phone or meet in person to discuss that important issue with your coworker, colleague, boss, or customer? It could make a difference in your getting the job, smoothing over a conflict, explaining a mistake, or getting the sale. This is called "mindful communication"—choosing the right communication method. That might be text, but be *mindful* about it. Communication "tools" include voice, tone, appearance, and nonverbal behaviors. These resources—and those of your counterpart—may be what deliver your goal. The meaning of your communication is found in the response you get back. If it is not what you want, switch methods.

## Soft Skill: Disability Awareness

**"D**isability awareness" overcomes stereotypes about disabilities and prevents discrimination, disharmony, and lost productivity. Disability awareness will help you communicate and accommodate fellow workers with disabilities effectively. Organizations need employees who understand these inclusiveness values because these values are economic forces essential to success in an interconnected business world. Stereotypical thinking about differences is damaging, so disability awareness is a soft skill employers value. Learn the etiquette, myths, communication tips, and the best methods for engaging with America's disability community.

## Subtle Signs of Depression

**I**t's easy to dismiss dips in mood, sleep issues, or suppressed appetite. But these could be subtle symptoms of depression. People with mild depression are six times more likely to slip into major depression. So, if you notice these types of symptoms, or others like sadness and waning interest in activities lingering for a couple of weeks, see a mental health professional or your EAP. Major depression can have long-term effects on your body, even contributing to dementia and heart problems. A short assessment takes only a few minutes and it could help confirm or rule out the diagnosis.

## Blue Light—Not a Sleep Delight

**B**lue light from technology screens like smart phones is known to interfere with sleep. Suppression of melatonin, a naturally occurring hormone is the reason. It helps us fall asleep and makes sleep restorative. Researchers recently demonstrated that blue light also interferes with your body's ability to naturally reduce its temperature at night, which also enhances restorative sleep. During the night, this temperature drop hits its low at about 4 a.m. As body temperature returns to normal, you begin to awaken. Blue light inhibits this temperature drop. This in turn, causes your deep sleep period to suffer. Hence, you are tired the next day.

Source: <http://www.haifa.ac.il> (search "blue light")

# Self-Diagnosing Alcoholism

Alcoholism has been called a disease of denial for decades, which is why education about denial is essential in addiction treatment programs. It's the #1 roadblock to self-diagnosis for those whose drinking is contributing to life problems. A common description of denial is found in the statement, "I don't have a problem with alcohol, because I can take it or leave it. I can quit drinking at any time." Of course, anyone who drinks can do these things. It's "staying stopped"—which is what's required to arrest the illness—that's the challenge. The following are also associated with denial. Do you recognize them in yourself or someone you know? 1) Knowing certain symptoms of the illness one does not have, and relying upon these to convince oneself and others that a drinking problem does not exist. 2) Creating rules to manage risk associated with a history of overdrinking (e.g., never drinking before 5 p.m.). 3) Relying upon or maintaining a definition of alcoholism that excludes oneself, but changing this definition over time so it continues to fit one's drinking pattern. (e.g., I may drink in the morning, but it's never affected my job."). Discover more about the progression of alcoholism and discover a path to wellness that works for you or someone you know by visiting with a professional counselor, EAP, or other knowledgeable expert.

## How to Up Your Team Skills

**S**howing up, pitching in, being timely, and communicating well are all part of being on a team. But here are five essential roles you may not have considered. See if any create underperformance for your team. 1) **Leadership**. Even if you are not the team leader, you can still practice leadership behaviors—think proactively, take initiative, and "think upstream" to prevent future problems. 2) **Conflict Resolution**. Spot conflicts early and facilitate resolution. 3) **"Other" Awareness Skills**. Continually sense the needs of team members (e.g., sensing others are overworked, you pitch in to share more of the load). 4) **Checking In**. Disagreements happen, but personality clashes can be toxic. Check in—ask, find out whether things are "OK between us." 5) **Diversity Awareness**. Pay attention to—and grow appreciation for—the variety of skills and abilities of team members while seeking ways to best utilize them.

# Childhood Obesity Is Preventable

**O**ne in three children in the United States is overweight or obese, and childhood obesity has tripled in Canada in the past 30 years. Mexico *leads the world* in this health care epidemic. Childhood obesity puts kids at risk for health problems like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. Don't badger. Instead, start making healthy changes in your family to help your child. Habits come in fits and starts, so keep at it, and you are more likely to develop values for positive health habits. Walk around the neighborhood, go on bike rides, play basketball—it's up to you to find what works. Minimize time spent on computers, watching TV, and playing video games. Make healthy meals: Buy and serve more vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain foods.

Source: U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health

## Empower Yourself After a Layoff

**T**hat jolt you feel after a sudden layoff is from fear of income loss, change, anger, loss of relationships, and disbelief hitting you at the same time. It's hard not to panic, but manage this moment with a one-day-at-a-time approach so you can prepare for a new phase in your life that may surpass this one. Line up resources—ranging from internal supports offered by your employer to meeting with your counselor (e.g., your EAP). Process the upheaval to keep it from interfering with your action plan and so you stay focused on the big picture. Take lots of action. Action is the magnet that draws new opportunities to you and the next exciting phase of your life.