Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

How personal development helps professional development



Technology, economies, legislation and market demands are constantly changing – often very quickly. To remain competitive, organizations in every sector must continually adapt, adjust, and evolve. So must their employees. Continuous learning is essential to remaining relevant and furthering careers and it involves more than professional development -- it includes personal development.

Professional vs. personal development

While it's vital to keep our technical knowledge up-to-date, learn new skills and expand our understanding of our area of expertise, why is personal development as important? And what does it encompass?

Personal development or growth means acquiring knowledge and skills that expand our self-awareness, help us meet our potential and enhance the quality of our lives. This means different things to different people and can involve the physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual (this doesn't necessarily mean religion or faith, it can mean believing in yourself and what makes you feel fulfilled, happy and at peace) parts of our lives. For many people, it's about self-actualization.

It's not just our private lives that benefit. Personal development can have tremendous professional benefits. It can improve our skills in:

- Communication/public speaking
- Interpersonal relationships
- Conflict resolution
- Negotiation
- Cross-cultural understanding
- Time management

Staying focused on learning

Learning and development take time and energy and is not always easy, especially when life gets busy or stressful. The secret is recognizing that learning is not just about classrooms. We also learn by reading novels, traveling, attending conferences, watching others, playing sports and through our mistakes. Here are some ideas to help you stay motivated and on track:

- Focus on one thing at a time
- Make learning fun and fulfilling
- Schedule regular time for yourself
- Constantly set new – and realistic goals
- Do things you've always wanted to do
- Reward yourself for achievements
- Have a support system and involve others
- Challenge yourself to try new things
- Find mentors and role models

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- Get involved at work and in the community
- Read everyday

And finally, give yourself a break. Don’t be afraid to fail. Continuous learning is not about being the best at everything you try, it’s about learning to be the best you. Contact us for support and resources.