

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

Handling Emails

Learning how to manage email today is not an optional talent; it is a fundamental skill. Much significant communication takes place through email in today's generation, but it can get out of hand without careful management.

Getting Organized

- Create folders for different types of email, including an "action items" folder for emails that need your attention. Be sure to move messages to which you have responded to another folder.
- Create a system for how long you need to keep email in certain categories. For example, publicity messages or promotional materials could be deleted after, say, 60 days.
- Delete personal email as soon as it's read and replied to.
- Remember to check your "sent" email folder occasionally, and delete or archive messages as appropriate.

Time Management

- Set aside time each day to check new emails and action items. If you receive about 100 emails each day, consider giving yourself 10 hours per week to deal with email. Try allotting regular times to read and respond to email, such as one hour in the morning and one hour at the end of the day. Pick times when you know you won't be interrupted.
- Respond to the most important messages first.
- If you don't have time for a full response, briefly acknowledge receipt of important emails, then transfer to your "action items" folder for attention later.
- Keep responses simple and don't forget that sometimes you can just walk down the hall and address an issue in person.
- Use templates for frequently used responses, such as directions to your office, and take advantage of timesaving features such as automatic signatures.
- Use the address book in your email program rather than typing email addresses for every message sent.

Using Email Effectively

- By replying to spam or by unsubscribing, you are confirming that your email address is "live," which will only generate more spam. Just delete them or use email software to filter out spam.
- Use caution about signing up for free information or newsletters online.
- Be familiar with your organization's email policies and procedures.

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- Consider unsubscribing to group mailings or listserves, or create an alternate email address specifically to receive these.
- Never reply to emails emotionally. If a message makes you angry or upset, set it aside, calm down and respond in a professional manner.

Let the computer be an asset by using it efficiently. If you are unsure of yourself, many organizations offer training on use of email and other software. Ask for help or instruction.