

## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

# FINDING BALANCE DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

*Healthy coping strategies can help restore emotional balance during challenging times.*

Many of us struggle to balance the demands of our work and family responsibilities. And when things seem to go wrong all at once, we may feel overwhelmed to the point of emotional and physical distress. Restoring our emotional balance during challenging times is possible. Here are tips on healthy ways to cope with stress:

- **Take a time out.** Breathe deeply. Take a walk to clear your mind, meditate, listen to music, or call a friend. Doing something that distracts you and makes you feel good can ease worry and anxiety.
- **Exercise on a regular basis, eat nutritious foods, and get enough sleep.** This is a preventative measure as well as a coping strategy.
- **Get professional help if emotional distress impacts your quality of life.** We all feel anxious at times, but if stress and anxiety affect your life in persistent negative ways, talk to someone who can help or call EAP.
- **Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and other drugs.** Caffeine can make you feel jittery and anxious. Alcohol and other drugs may provide temporary relief in the short run, but contribute to depression and anxiety, and aggravate stress in the long run.

Depression and anxiety, among several other psychological and environmental factors, can increase the risk of substance use and also the risk of suicide. People with a family history of drug or alcohol abuse may be more vulnerable to addiction, especially if they turn to drugs or alcohol during times of stress.

If you or someone you know is in a crisis, there are a number of safety and treatment supports available. A person may need emergency medical or psychiatric treatment and therapy with a trained professional to help him or her recover and develop coping skills. Addiction treatment services may be necessary if the person is also struggling with a substance use disorder.

