

The Forecaster

Newsletter of Your Employee Assistance Program
Volume 41 Issue 1, Fall 2019

Far West
Family Services

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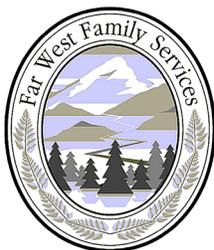
“There’s nothing 'ordinary' about decency, courage under fire, compassion, tenacity, lion-heartedness, and that is what is being called forth in a moment—a deeply mythic moment—like this.”

Dr. Martin Shaw

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You Are Not Alone

If you are not sure you can hold it together at work anymore . . . you're not alone.

If your heart aches every time a student misses school due to mental health issues . . . you're not alone.

If you grieve for the family whose father was deported . . . you're not alone.

If it is hard to focus on teaching because some kids are homeless and hungry . . . you're not alone.

If it is hard to lead because no one has the time to sit down and really talk . . . you're not alone.

If you struggle in the system because outside forces are shaping your curriculum . . . you're not alone.

If you are angry because you have to buy your own classroom supplies . . . you're not alone.

If you are exhausted because there are not enough hours in the day to get the work done . . . you're not alone.

If you wish you could protect kids from the world news . . . you are not alone.

If your heart is broken for the gay, minority, and disabled kids who get bullied . . . you're not alone.

If you entered the field because you wanted to make a difference . . . you're not alone.



If you are anxious about protecting the kids if there is a school shooting . . . you are not alone.

If you feel you need more help, support, and understanding . . . you're not alone.

If you wish you had magic powers so you could change things for the better . . . you're not alone.

If you're a teacher

A para-educator

A bus driver

A principal

A custodian

A maintenance worker

A nurse, OT, PT, or SLP

A counselor or psychologist

A librarian

A secretary or support staff

HR or business office staff

The superintendent

Or anyone else in the district . . .

Far West is here to help you.

Plan the Holidays You Would Like to Have

As soon as the calendar pages flip to October 1st, the countdown to Christmas and the holiday season gets under way. These days, Christmas decorations start showing up on shelves in stores even before Halloween, when a subtle pressure starts forming in my stomach. I already feel behind! I love Christmas, but it is full of stress, emotions, and disappointments. And sometimes, it's just plain hard work.

The holidays are also one of the big stressors on marriages. More couples seek counseling right after the holidays than at any other time of year. But with some advance planning and forethought, you can sidestep the stressors and build in more of the joy and pleasures of your holidays. The result? A healthier relationship.

1. Decide now how you want to feel after the holidays. What do you want to experience? If the holidays usually leave you feeling drained, angry, sad, or disappointed, what will it take for you to feel satisfied, successful, pleased, and more loved?

2. Look at the hotspots. What are the biggest areas of conflict for you and your spouse or family? Ask yourself the hard questions and look for ways to compromise. Suppose you want to stay home this year instead of going to visit the in-laws. What can you do to negotiate a compromise?

3. Well before the holidays, consider the needs and patterns of your marriage. Make it a priority to communicate and care for each

other. Sit down and talk about what you both want and how to avoid some of the challenges of past years. Think about the areas where things break down, and choose a different way. Find ways for the two of you to connect. Develop some strategies for avoiding conflict.

4. Delegate. Are there things you could delegate to others, to simplify your celebrations and make them less exhausting?

5. Make a spending plan. The best way to manage financial stress is to have a budget. Ideally, you started a special Christmas fund a year ago and set aside a monthly amount for gifts and celebrations. Now, you and your spouse can decide together how that money will be allotted. Then stick to it. If you didn't plan ahead, you can still make a budget and agree to stay within the budget or have a clear idea where the money will come from to pay off the credit cards. Don't lose your head! Stay within the parameters of what you can truly afford.

6. Add festivity and fun. Are there holiday shows or concerts you really want to see? Make sure to budget for them and buy your tickets early. Have a family meeting and brainstorm inexpensive ways you can add more festivity to your schedule.

7. Shop early and away from crowds, unless you love being in a packed mall with thousands of other crazed shoppers after Thanksgiving.

8. If you really hate shopping at

malls—shop online. You can comparison shop for good deals on the items you want, without the hassle of parking and long lines.

9. Prevent alcohol or drug abuse. Make plans now for managing any concerns about drugs and alcohol. Now is the time to start attending AA, or return to meetings if your attendance has lapsed. Avoid situations where overconsumption of alcohol can occur.

10. If you have kids coming home from college, plan ahead. You know they will want time with their friends, so get your bid for time in early. Make your expectations realistic.

11. Start marriage counseling now if you think you need help getting through the holidays.

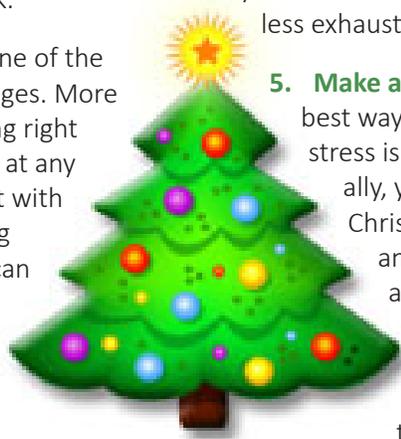
Even if everything goes wrong, you can find joy and peace in your holidays. Writer and teacher Pema Chodron advises people to not get hooked into their habitual negative patterns. See those patterns for what they are, and choose a different alternative.

If you find you feel that others let you down during the holidays, don't let that be a hook for you. Or if you tend to be a martyr, recognize when it happens, and choose a different response. It is up to each of us to create the holidays we want, so it's important to make our plans now.

Single and on your own for the holidays?

The holidays can be a lonely time

... continued on page 5



Environmental Doom

Do you have nightmares about birds choking on plastic six-pack rings or whales with bellies full of plastic bags? Do you feel guilty if you put your bulk carrots in a plastic bag? Do you choose to miss a meal because you won't accept take-out food in a Styrofoam container? If you're haunted by visions of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, the burning Amazon, starving orcas, and rising sea water, you are not alone!

The enormity of the climate crisis—and fear of what it may mean—weighs heavily upon more and more people around the globe. Some people use that fear to spur them into action, but others live with a constant level of heightened worry that is unhealthy.

The inevitable threats to our planet and our increasing frustration with our national and global leaders who seem to be avoiding action only raise our anxiety. Time seems to be running out, and all of our personal efforts to stop using single-use plastics or drive less and walk more seem to be a drop in the bucket. Individually, we can't seem to do enough, and we feel helpless.

Children and teens are especially vulnerable to increasing anxiety about climate change. While it is important that students learn about climate change and what needs to be done, some children will become overly frightened about end-of-the-world scenarios. The American Psychological Association defines this as **"a chronic fear of environmental doom."**

Teens and young adults

Young people know they are facing

a future that looks grim and possibly devastating. For some teens and young adults, climate anxiety on top of their existing fears about societal problems such as gun violence, economic pressure, and political strife can push them over the top.

As parents and teachers, we can help. Conversations about "doomsday" or apocalyptic fears are unhealthy and only serve to exacerbate the anxiety. It might be more helpful to focus a young person towards a field of study that leads to a career in climate science or involvement in an organization that welcomes young volunteers.

Young people like Greta Thunberg of Sweden have taken up the banner of climate activism as a way to deal with their anger and frustration. Respected leaders here at home and around the world are holding up these young voices as a call to action. We can encourage our own teens to channel their fears into action and get involved. And when our children and students do get involved, we can help them balance their time and energy against overwork and burn-out.

Children

As much as possible, elementary-age children should be shielded from the news of climate related disasters. Avoid dinner table discussions about the planet's impending doom. No matter how concerned and worried you are about global warming and climate change, do not share these intense feelings with your children. Children are quick to tune into to their parents' emotional states and body language and can become distressed in response.

But when children are exposed to

information about climate disasters—and they will be—parents and teachers must help calm their fears. At home and at school, children can be taught about recycling and how cleaning up trash is good for the environment. It is easy to involve your children in your family's recycling, up-cycling, and "buy nothing" efforts.

Adults

Although taking action for the common good is a powerful thing, it can quickly become overwhelming. Limit the time you spend reviewing climate-related posts on social media. Cut down the number of emails you receive from environmental groups.

Choose one or two environmental groups you want to support. If you can afford to become a member, your financial support will be very meaningful. Your volunteer participation in local hands-on efforts really does make a difference. Pay attention to legislation that supports the planet. It doesn't take much time to do your research, and your voice matters. Write to your political leaders. And vote!

In summary, do what you can and then encourage others do their part. This includes your own children and teens, your extended family, and your friends. We're all in this together. ♦

Ten simple choices for a healthier planet.

<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/ocean/earthday.html>



Baby Boomers are either getting ready to retire or have already done so, and Generation X has moved into upper management and administrative positions. Now Millennials, ages 23-38—born between 1981 and 1996—are the new worker bees filling entry-level positions and starting their climb up the ladder.

The youngest members of the Millennial generation are graduating from college and moving into the work force and their impact can be felt in a variety of ways. These younger Millennials make up the largest number of new hire teachers, school counselors, and para-educators.

Generational divide

"The newest members of your workforce are (of course) the youngest members. Every new generation comes with the old fogies saying, 'When I was their age...' The reality is that there are differences between a generation that was raised with an iPhone in their hand and a generation that rode in station wagons without seat belts." (Suzanne Lucas)

If you're a Boomer or a Gen Xer, you may have some strong opinions about Millennials. It's certainly possible that the new young teacher was once a student at your school and his/her teacher is still working there. That can result in an uncomfortable dynamic in work groups.

It's time to let go of judgments and see these younger workers through a different lens. More than any previous generation, Millennials have grown up in a world defined by change. Theirs is a culturally and socially diverse generation. And technological know-how is like breathing air for them! All of these qualities can benefit your workplace—sometimes in surprising ways.

Here is what Millennials bring to the workplace:

1. Energy and enthusiasm
2. Desire to make a difference and change the world
3. Confidence and experience with new technologies
4. Innovation—they know there is an app for that (and if not, they may invent one)
5. Adaptability to rapid change
6. Contacts and connections across the globe
7. Commitment to racial and gender inclusivity and equity
8. Desire for work-life balance coupled with less interest in being consumed by their work
9. Collaboration and a zeal for communication

How to support Millennials in the workplace

Training and mentoring: Millennials need and want more training and orientation on the job. A short orientation prior to being left alone to work things out on their own will not be successful. Veteran principal Kristin Barker writes, "My mistake was believing that the new teacher orientation my district provided was enough. It wasn't. In my initial meeting with the group, I didn't offer the nuts and bolts that they craved. Essentially, I pointed each of them to a mentor and left them to figure it out. I should have developed a staff manual of procedures, guidelines, and important numbers to help them avoid early stumbles. And I should have checked in with them both individually and collectively. Investing time with these new teachers in the beginning might have made a difference in the end."

Teamwork and connection: Millennials went through their K-12 years working on classroom projects in small groups, so they have a lot of experience working collaboratively in teams. Include them in projects and help them understand how to work with older members of the team. Millennials also tend to be more isolated and alone than Gen Xers, and are less likely to be married, or be involved in a church, political parties, and other networks. They may crave social and personal connection through work.

Continued on next page . . .

... Millennials cont'd

Work-life balance: Jill Eulberg, veteran educator, M.S. Special Education, writes, "Millennials have been accused of being 'entitled' and lacking the perseverance of older generations. Ashley, a 29-year-old high school social studies teacher in New York, has a different take on this stereotype: 'From what I've read, [we] millennials as a group are much less willing to make unreasonable sacrifices that older generations did,' Ashley said. 'But we also hear a lot more about the idea of work-life balance than previous generations did—and we are trying to practice that.'" (From "The Biggest Challenges Millennial Teachers Face")

Read more about the Millennial Generation:

["Lonely, burned out, and depressed: The state of millennials' mental health in 2019"](#) by Hillary Hoffower and Allana Akhtar

["'Deaths of despair' are taking more lives of millennial Americans than any other generation"](#) by Hillary Hoffower

["Managing Millennial Teachers: Major Challenge for Schools"](#) by Tim Hodges

["Road Tested: The Truth About Millennial Teachers"](#) by Kristin Barker

["The Biggest Challenges Millennial Teachers Face"](#) by Jill Eulberg, veteran educator, M.S. Special Education

Mental health: Millennials struggle with depression and anxiety at a higher rate than previous groups. Stresses upon them include financial strain from high college debt, higher housing and living expenses, and the high cost of medical care. To make ends meet, many of them have returned home to live with their parents. They are more likely to seek support for mental health and self-care and appreciate knowing about services that are available through their EAP. And they tend to be more open about their mental health challenges.

Compared to older workers, the Millennial generation has had the highest impact from "deaths of despair" related to drugs, alcohol, and suicide, reported Jamie Ducharme for TIME magazine. This group has also had more deaths and addictions from the opioid crisis than any other. These issues have cast a dark shadow over this generation.

Staying in the profession

Many new teachers leave the profession before their fifth year. This choice may be the result of a diverse array of issues. By staying attuned to the concerns and challenges faced by this generation, administrators and senior staff members can help create an environment that encourages Millennial teachers to remain and participate fully in this rewarding profession.

Millennials are the teachers and administrators of the future. They will be the ones who will change the nature of education. As the saying goes, "Each generation is endowed with the wisdom to solve the problems facing their generation." This generation has a lot to offer all of us. ◆

GENERATION AGE IN 2019

Generation Z
ages 7 - 22

Millennials
ages 23 - 38

Generation X
ages 39 - 54

Boomers
ages 55 - 73

"Silent"
ages 74 - 91

From the PEW Research Center

... Holidays cont'd

for singles. Your life may not be the way you want it to be, whether it's due to divorce, loss of a spouse, childlessness, or other reasons for being alone. Or maybe the single life suits you just fine, but the swirling family-centric holiday activities leave you feeling a bit blue. If you are someone who does not look forward to the holidays or finds them sad or lonely, you may benefit from a pro-active plan. Sit down with a friend or a counselor and look at what triggers negative emotions for you at this time of year. Then choose a new alternative. That may take some thoughtful work on your part, along with the support of family and friends. But with some planning and forethought, you can put yourself in charge of your holiday experiences and emotions instead of being dependent on the whims and plans of others. You can feel peaceful and joyous during the holidays, instead of feeling like a victim. ◆

To the person who uses metal straws

To the person who uses metal straws to save fish but consumes animals, I'd like to say thank you.

To the vegan who isn't aware of our homelessness problem, thank you.

To the climate change activists who aren't attentive to fast fashion, thank you.

To the girl who gives her old clothes to the disadvantaged but isn't educated on sex trafficking, thank you.

To the guy who picks up rubbish on his way home from a surf but isn't well-informed about male suicide rates, thank you.

To the people who stand up for horse racing concerns but are uninformed of the cruelty of the dairy industry, thank you.

To the positive Instagram influencer who hasn't cultivated a plastic-free lifestyle, thank you.

To the grandparents who knit for sick children but aren't up to date with current race and homophobic issues, thank you.

To the students that stand up for bullying but are unaware of the constant domestic violence epidemic, thank you.

To the peace activists, feminists, animal adopters, teachers, volunteers, foster carers, recyclers, givers, doers and believers, I say thank you.

We are all on a different path and we all see through different eyes.

Current world issues that you are passionate about, aren't always what other people are trying to change... and that's okay.

It's not everyone's job to save every part of the world but it is everyone's responsibility to thank every person who is doing THEIR part to save the world.

Don't critique, just appreciate.

Don't judge, just educate.

We're all trying our best.

Thank you.

Carla Borthwick,
Australian psychology
student
from the internet



How Can You Restore Someone's Trust in You?

from the American Counseling Association

Anyone who has experienced a breach of trust knows the pain and confusion that can go into trying to restore that trust. Any number of circumstances can cause us to lose trust. It can be a fairly minor incident, like a teen being late for a few too many curfews, or a major one, like an infidelity in a relationship. The person who lied feels they can never do enough to be trusted again. The deceived person probably feels it would be foolish to become too accepting too soon.

If you want someone to regain their trust in you, try these tips that can help:

Don't make excuses. Apologize and affirm that you won't behave in the same manner again. Blaming someone else or claiming something happened beyond your control won't help regain trust.

Deliver on your promises. Even in areas that might seem trivial, you can build trust by doing what you say you will do. If you say you'll call if you're going to be late, call. If you say you'll do the laundry, do it. No forgetting, no having to be reminded, no offering excuses.

Expect the healing process to take time. Expect it to take more

time than you thought it would, and probably more time than you think your original mistake deserves. The simple truth is that rebuilding trust is a slow process, one that requires repeated demonstrations of you being honest and following through, before trust begins to return.

these efforts, problems with trust and honesty persist in your family, or if anger prevents movement toward forgiveness, a consultation with a professional counselor might help fine-tune your relationships and get you moving toward healthier communication. ♦



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If you are the person who was deceived, you can help in the rebuilding of trust if you really value your relationship with the other person. You can start by paying attention to the things he or she is doing to try and reestablish your trust in them. Appreciate the effort that's being made, as opposed to the other person just expecting you to "get over it."

Though at first it may seem as if a broken trust can never be repaired, people have a marvelous ability to make amends. The tough part is holding on through the rebuilding phase while consistency replaces doubt, time reduces discomfort and forgiveness replaces anger. If, despite

"Don't make excuses. Apologize and affirm that you won't behave in the same manner again. Blaming someone else or claiming something happened beyond your control won't help regain trust."

Far West Family Services

The Forecaster is published quarterly by Far West Family Services, your Employee Assistance Program. Copies of this newsletter are also on our website.

We appreciate your feedback and comments about our newsletter.

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Far West Family Services, now in its fourth decade, is a professional behavioral health care service business providing Employee Assistance Programs in Washington state. If you would like more information about our customized programs, please call 206-682-8149 or 1-800-398-3440, or visit our website at www.farwestfamilyservices.com.

To learn more about your benefits through Far West, or to schedule an appointment with one of our therapists, call our office during business hours, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Session times vary, but usually available from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Far West . . . help when you need it.

206-682-8149 • 800-398-3440

**After-hours emergencies:
Press option 1 to speak to a crisis counselor
or for TTY call
206-461-3219 (TTY)**

www.farwestfamilyservices.com

Need additional resources?



HELPGUIDE.ORG

The best mental health resources on the web, in collaboration with Harvard Medical School Health Publications. Answers to your questions about depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, eating disorders, insomnia, parenting, etc. Excellent self-evaluation guides and step-by-step programs for dealing with life's challenges.

Community Resources

Links to organizations in Washington state for information on adoption, gay and lesbian issues, financial and legal resources, county resources, drug and alcohol treatment centers, youth violence, domestic violence, and more.