



CONNECTIONS

LOCAL EFAP NEWS

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ARE YOU A WORKAHOLIC?

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Are your family, social and leisure time becoming indistinguishable from your work time? Do you find inactivity intolerable? These are characteristics of a workaholic lifestyle. Recognizing these behaviour patterns and attitudes can be an important first step. Understanding why they occur can help free you from the narrow focus on work to a broader, deeper focus on a balanced, healthy life.

Workaholic defined

Workaholics are people who find themselves irresistibly attracted to work. They are addicted to the activity, not necessarily the products of work. Inactivity, even the idea of not working, is discomfoting - in some cases, agonizing - to them.

Workaholics work continuous excessive hours as a way of escaping from a problem or as a means of enhancing their sense of control over their lives. Many become reliant upon work as a source of personal identity and worth.

Workaholism is the addiction most rewarded in our culture. It is socially acceptable, yet can be as destructive to your health and family as any other addiction. Ultimately, workaholics equate working with living. Work not only becomes essential to life; it becomes life itself.

Types of workaholics

While workaholics share similar qualities and traits, the reasons for their addiction vary. Three of the more common types of workaholics are Hostile, Competitive and Defensive work addicts.

- *Hostile types characteristically find work a socially acceptable means of discharging aggressive energy.*
- *Competitive types perceive work to be a means of proving themselves, both to themselves and to others.*
- *Defensive types use work as an escape - a means of avoiding guilt, grief, frustration, or other disturbing thoughts or feelings.*

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Recognizing the problem

If you have been receiving friendly hints from your co-workers that maybe you should lighten up or slow down a bit, or if your family has been expressing concern about your apparent devotion to your job, then it may be time you paid some attention to the possibility that you are developing an addiction to work.

Consider the following:

- Do you feel guilty when not working?
- Are you uneasy when on vacation?
- Do you read only work-related literature?
- Do you constantly work under a great deal of tension?
- Do you equate success with hard work?
- Do you have difficulty getting involved in activities other than work?
- Do you take pleasure in telling others how hard and how long you work?
- Do you work when you could be relaxing?
- Do you prefer being at work to being anywhere else?

Answering “yes” to several of these questions does not make you a workaholic, but may indicate a tendency or movement in that direction.

Dealing with the problem

Once you’ve recognized that you work compulsively or have other attributes of a workaholic personality, you can begin to work on changing the “why” and “how” of your work..

Workaholics need to reorganize their priorities regarding family and work. Ask yourself “Is work truly more important than my family and loved ones?” By limiting your time at work and devoting that time and energy to your family, you’ll not only give them assurance of your love, but also give them a chance to love and help you.

Learning to rest is another area you’ll need to work on. How often have you taken note of the fact that you’re tired, and then actually taken the time to meet the need to rest? Workaholics require mandatory rest periods until they can learn to respond willingly to their need.

A balanced life is what you should strive to achieve, and laughter is an important element. Sharing laughter at home with your family and friends may be your most effective step towards overcoming workaholism.

EFAP Rep Annual Maintenance

will be held in Sturgeon Falls
on Friday, September 9, 2005

and in North Bay

on Friday, October 7, 2005

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