



# PATHWAYS

April 2018

Wellness, Productivity, and You!

The **Employee** Newsletter of the BOCES Employee Assistance Program

## Preventing Falls on the Job or at Home

**A**s you wash pollen off windows, fix leaks, repair roofs, and trim trees this spring, protect yourself against falls. Falls are the third-leading cause of accidental death and the most common cause on construction sites; about 350 employees die each year because of falls on construction sites in the U.S. Here are important tips to help prevent falls: (1) Plan the work—know the tools/assistive devices you need. Failure to do so will have you “taking chances” by performing the task improperly rather than going to get needed safety equipment. (2) Don’t allow coworkers or those you supervise to perform tasks without proper training on safety equipment.



Source: <https://www.osha.gov>

## One-Question... Quiz for Alcoholism

**I**n honor of Alcohol Awareness Month, try this one-question quiz: “Have you ever *seriously* wondered whether you could be an alcoholic or have an alcohol problem?” The emphasis is on the word “seriously.” Whether your answer is yes or no, make an appointment for a professional assessment. Why? Those without any symptoms of alcoholism never seriously consider this question. Millions of recovering alcoholics and drug addicts have gathered their wisdom over the years in books, resources, self-help groups, and even short quizzes to help those with alcoholism or other drug addictions diagnose themselves. This is one of those quizzes.



## Art of Asking for Feedback

**D**on’t wait for feedback from your supervisor. Instead, ask for an “assessment” regarding projects and assignments. Preface the request with your goal. For example, “I want my monthly presentations to department heads to be engaging and effective. Can you assess this morning’s presentation?” This approach is more likely to produce the feedback you want. A less specific request such as “Can you give me feedback?” risks a more general response like, “You’re doing fine. If there is a problem, I will let you know.”



## Got Intercultural Competence?

**I**ntercultural competence refers to one’s ability to interact effectively and appropriately with people from other cultures. Intercultural competence is crucial to businesses in an interconnected global business community. With a few clicks of a mouse, we are now face-to-face with someone halfway around the world. This new reality makes intercultural competence a soft skill that offers insight and expertise to improve an employer’s competitive advantage. To grow your intercultural competence, educate yourself about cultures with which you interact, practice observing the world from the perspective of other cultures, and nurture personal values of respect, openness, curiosity, and discovery. Most importantly, be aware of biases and how they impede or interfere with any of the above.



Source: [www.gcu.ac.uk](http://www.gcu.ac.uk) [Search “definition of cultural competence”]

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# Passive-Aggressive Behavior at Work

**W**as it a simple oversight that you weren't told about the free luncheon this morning, or was it a passive-aggressive act of your coworker who "forgot" to mention it? Not everyone expresses anger by sharing feelings and talking things out. Sometimes anger is displayed passively. Few people are passive-aggressive as a way of life, but on the job, where effective communication, workplace harmony, and productivity rule, passive-aggressive behavior can undermine a positive workplace. Withholding a compliment, showing up late to a meeting, disguising criticism in a partial compliment, and giving the silent treatment are examples of passive-aggressive behavior. An honest discussion is your path to an improved relationship. *The fix:* Meet in private with your coworker. Don't label or accuse him or her of being passive-aggressive or launch a verbal attack. Instead, say what you experienced (describe the person's behavior/act); share what that behavior/statement meant to you and how it made you feel; ask whether there is an issue or concern between you that needs to be discussed or resolved; and ask how the two of you can have a better relationship. End with an agreement to communicate more directly and honestly with each other in the future.



# PTSD and the Workplace

**P**ost-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental condition resulting from experiencing war, crime, sexual assault, accidents, or another threat to one's life or from witnessing a threat to or victimization of another person. Flashbacks, hypervigilance, and frightening thoughts are some of many possible symptoms. Seven to 8 percent of people will experience PTSD in their lives, so it's likely you know a coworker with PTSD. As with a person with any other disability, you can support workplace inclusion by being compassionate and patient. Employees with PTSD may experience difficulties with concentration, memory, interpersonal interactions, or anxiety during stressful moments. Tips: (1) Do not perpetuate the stigma of mental health issues with humor or labels. (2) Be a willing listener. (3) Be honest in your observations—for instance, "Jim, I see you are a little preoccupied today. How are you doing?" (4) Be nonjudgmental. Don't minimize or make light of fears or concerns expressed by your coworker—instead, be reassuring. (5) Encourage your coworker to get support from the EAP or a medical provider when sadness, depression, or stress appear severe.



Learn more about symptoms and offering support at [www.giftfromwithin.org](http://www.giftfromwithin.org).

# Slowing the Surge of Teen Suicide

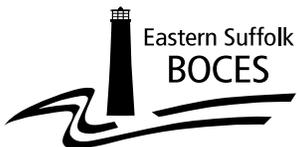
**T**he rate of teen suicide has increased over 70 percent in the past ten years. White males 14 to 21 years old are at highest risk for taking their own life, although African American teen suicide has also surged by the same amount. Knowing the warning signs can potentially help anyone play an intervening role in preventing a tragedy. Be aware, and never dismiss a teen who expresses hopelessness about the future, appears to be coping with overwhelming distress, withdraws from friends and social activities, suffers a great loss, faces personal humiliation, or is in severe legal trouble. These are known triggers for suicide. Anyone talking about or writing about suicide requires an immediate show of concern and support. Never hesitate to ask about suicidal thoughts if you are concerned.

Source: Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide <http://www.sptsusa.org/>



# Building Resilience: Finding Time Alone

**"A**lone time" is time engaged in a solitary, uninterrupted, and satisfying behavior or activity that provides you a psychological boost. The goal is feeling refreshed despite a schedule of tightly woven work and home responsibilities. Single parents, caregivers, or those with busy jobs and chain-linked to-dos can find it difficult to schedule regular alone time. It's easy to see alone time as only a "nice-to-have" activity or to avoid it altogether out of fear or guilt. However, alone time is a tool—a resiliency strategy—that can help you manage stress better, increase energy, and provide a positive point in the future to focus on while you are under stress in the present. Alone time improves mood, offers work-life balance, and renews your purpose. See your EAP or a counselor to help you map an alone time strategy so you can reap all the positives it promises for your life.



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