



# EMPLOYEE ADVISORY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

*Welcome to the NJ Civil Service Commission's Employee Advisory Service (EAS) Newsletter! EAS is committed to improving the quality of life for all New Jersey Civil Service employees by encouraging a good work-life balance. **The EAS Employee Newsletter** contains useful articles and information for managing various well-being and work-life issues in order to create a healthier, happier, and more productive workplace.*

## How to Live a Mentally Healthy Life in the 21st Century

This important session will cover some of the core strategies that can help individuals to live lives that are mentally healthy, enjoyable, and productive. The practical strategies to be discussed include how to maintain a positive attitude, enhance emotional intelligence, and maximize personal resilience.

When:

Tuesday, February 25th  
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM ET

Register:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3609144023165773571>

Phone: 866-327-9133

Web: [www.state.nj.us/csc](http://www.state.nj.us/csc)

Email: [EAS\\_help@csc.nj.gov](mailto:EAS_help@csc.nj.gov)

# Got Resiliency?

Everyone has resiliency! Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from difficulties; it is rebounding, springing back, and recovering quickly. Resiliency is common, ordinary, and normal.

## Resiliency Tips

Bouncing back is good adjustment and a great way to handle life. Good resiliency is like a rubber band. Everyone has the ability and capacity to adapt and bounce back. Because resilient people can cope and move on successfully, resiliency usually leads to positive outcomes.

*It is not whether you get knocked down. It's whether you get up again.—Coach Vince Lombardi*

## Secrets of Resilient People

- Have friends and family for support.
- Take responsibility.
- Use positive and empowering attitudes!
- Bounce back, moving ahead and forward.

## Roads to Resiliency

There are lots of pathways to resiliency! People need many positive ways to cope with setbacks, disappointments, and difficulties. Using self-confidence helps to handle it.

### Positive Orientation

- Cope with hard times through laughter, humor, and fun!
- Focus upon positives such as gratitude, blessings, delights, interests, and love.
- Make time to play, and have fun!
- Increase contacts and support from important people in your life.

### Take responsibility

- Accept and understand the part that you play in the situation.
- Create new alternatives.
- Take steps to recover and spring back.
- Lower your expectations.

### Positive Perspective

- View situations in ways that promote potential, hope, and optimism.
- Do not focus upon negative thoughts, confusion, and uncertainty.
- See and re-frame negative events as positive experiences.
- View any setbacks and disappointments as temporary and short term.
- See change as positive and part of the process.

### Self-Enhancement

Have a very positive view of yourself! This approach can be helpful and adaptive, and it promotes wellbeing.

## Move ahead

- The challenge is to focus on the future rather than dwelling on the past; Otherwise you may become preoccupied and stuck with the past and unable to move on.
- Learn from what you've gone through.
- Look ahead, and plan for the next steps.

## Dead End

- Avoid unpleasant memories, thoughts, and feelings.
- Repress negative feelings. Negatives tend to keep you stuck and make it difficult to rebound.

## Building Resiliency Muscles

- Regularly work out and stretch “bouncing back and rebounding” muscles.
- Start, stop, and shift gears.
- Practice letting go and coping with surprises and the unexpected.
- Practice rebounding until it becomes easy, natural, and habitual.

## More Resiliency Strategies

Take good care of yourself:

- Manage your levels of stress.
- Eat well, and get enough rest and exercise.
- Take breaks, and use relaxing muscles.

## Resiliency is for everyone!

Everyone can get up, spring back, and rebound. Resiliency is a skill that everyone can build and improve. There are lots of ways to cope with and bounce back from difficulties and setbacks.

If you or someone you know needs help building resiliency and overcoming hardships, call EAS for confidential support.

*Source: U.S. Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center. (n.d.). Got resiliency? [PPT]. Retrieved July 18, 2019, from <https://www.med.navy.mil>*

# American Heart Month

February 2020

## Healthy Body, Happy Heart

### Improve your heart health

Every moment of the day, your heart is pumping blood throughout your body. In silent moments, you can hear the thump-thump of its demanding work. Do you take your heart for granted? Most people will have heart trouble at some point in their lives. Heart disease is the number one killer of women and men in the United States—but you can take steps now to lower your risk.

“About 1 out of 3 people in America will die of heart disease,” says U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) heart disease expert Dr. David C. Goff Jr. “And about 6 out of every 10 of us will have a major heart disease event before we die.”

Heart disease develops when the blood vessels supplying the heart become clogged with fatty deposits, or plaque. After the blood vessels narrow, blood flow to the heart is reduced. That means oxygen and nutrients can't get to the heart as easily.

Eventually, an area of plaque can break open. This may cause a blood clot to form on the plaque's surface. A blood clot can block blood flowing to the heart. That can cause a heart attack. A heart attack happens when a vessel supplying the heart is blocked and the heart can't get enough oxygen, which leads to death of heart muscle.

The three major risk factors for heart disease have been known since the 1960s: smoking, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol levels. These were identified in NIH's Framingham Heart Study, a long-term study of people in Framingham, Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup> “If we could eliminate cigarette smoking, elevated blood pressure, and elevated cholesterol levels, we could eradicate about 9 out of 10 heart attacks in our country,” says Dr. Daniel Levy, a heart specialist at NIH who oversees the Framingham Heart Study currently.

The study has also uncovered other risk factors, including diabetes, obesity, and physical inactivity. Levy's research team is now hunting for genes that may be risk factors for heart disease. By understanding the factors that play a role in heart disease, scientists hope to find new ways to prevent and treat it.

### Get tested

Early heart disease may not cause any symptoms. That's why regular checkups with your doctor are so important. “The sad truth is that the vast majority of us has heart disease and we don't know it,” Goff says.

Blood pressure and cholesterol levels can provide early signs. “People should see their doctor, find out their cholesterol and blood pressure numbers, and if needed, take medication,” advises Goff.

There are many other tests to detect heart disease. An electrocardiogram, also called an EKG or ECG, measures electrical activity in your heart. It can show how well your heart is working and pick up signs of a previous heart attack.

Another test, called an echocardiogram, uses sound waves to detect problems. It shows the size, shape, and structures of your heart. It can also measure blood flow through your heart.

Although early heart disease might not cause symptoms, advanced heart disease may cause chest pressure, shortness of breath, or fatigue. Some people may feel lightheaded, dizzy, or confused. Tell your doctor if you're experiencing any symptoms.

## Make healthy choices

Talk with your doctor about your risk of heart disease and what you can do to keep your heart healthy. “The most important things for everyone to do to keep their heart healthy—to keep their entire body healthy—is to eat a healthy diet, get plenty of physical activity, maintain a lean body weight, and avoid smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke,” Goff says.

Following a heart-healthy eating plan is important for everyone. “When someone puts food on their plate, about half the plate should be fruits and vegetables. About a quarter of the plate should be whole grain. About a quarter should be lean protein, like lean meat or seafood,” says Goff.

If you have high blood pressure, you may want to follow the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet. This diet emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain foods, and low-fat dairy products. To learn more about the diet, see <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/dash-eating-plan>.

Goff also advises, “Avoid foods that have a lot of salt in them. Salt is a major contributor to high blood pressure and risk of heart disease.”

## Prevent diabetes

Diabetes increases your chances of high blood pressure and high cholesterol. You’re also more likely to develop heart disease and have a heart attack.

“Having diabetes is almost like already having heart disease,” says Dr. Larissa Avilés-Santa, a diabetes and heart health expert at NIH. She oversees a large NIH study of heart disease risk factors among more than 16,000 Hispanic/Latino adults.<sup>2,3</sup>

Avilés-Santa says that sometimes people think that they will develop diabetes and heart disease no matter what they do, but that’s not true. Even if you have a family history of these diseases, you can be the messenger of good health for your family, she says. You can help your family by inspiring healthy habits.

The best way to prevent diabetes is through diet and physical activity. “The evidence is outstanding that very modest changes in lifestyle could reduce the risk of developing diabetes much greater than medication,” Avilés-Santa says.

## Get help

For some people, having a heart attack is the first sign of heart disease. Pain or discomfort in your chest or upper body, a cold sweat, or shortness of breath are all signs of a heart attack. If you feel any of these signs, get medical help right away. Acting fast can save your life and prevent permanent damage.

Heart disease and heart attacks are major risk factors for cardiac arrest, which is when the heart suddenly stops beating. Blood stops flowing to the brain and other parts of the body. If not treated within minutes, cardiac arrest can lead to death.

Heart disease and heart attacks can also make it harder for your heart’s electrical system to work. As a result, an irregular heartbeat, or arrhythmia, can occur. Your heart may beat too fast, too slow, or with an uneven rhythm. A dangerous arrhythmia can lead to cardiac arrest.

Regular checkups help ensure that a doctor will check your heart for problems. Heart disease and arrhythmias can be treated to lower the risk of cardiac arrest.

Be good to your heart. Don’t take it for granted. Get tested for heart disease, and follow your doctor’s suggestions. See below for questions you may want to ask your doctor.

Ask your doctor:

Am I at risk for heart disease?

What tests do I need?

Is my blood pressure okay? If not, what should I do?

Is my cholesterol level okay? If not, what should I do?

Is my weight okay?

How much exercise do I need?

Am I at risk for diabetes?

How can you help me quit smoking?

## References

1. Mahmood, S.S., Levy, D., Vasan, R.S., & Wang, T.J. (2014, March 15). The Framingham Heart Study and the epidemiology of cardiovascular disease: A historical perspective. *Lancet*, 383(9921), 999–1008. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(13)61752-3

2. Daviglius, M.L., Pirzada, A., Durazo-Arvizu, R., Chen, J., Allison, M., Avilés-Santa, L., et al. (2016, August 20). Prevalence of low cardiovascular risk profile among diverse Hispanic/Latino adults in the United States by age, sex, and level of acculturation: The Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos. *Journal of the American Heart Association*, 5(8), pii: e003929. doi: 10.1161/JAHA.116.003929

3. Rodriguez, C.J., Cai, J., Swett, K., González, H.M., Talavera, G.A., Wruck, L.M., et al. (2015, June 24). High cholesterol awareness, treatment, and control among Hispanic/Latinos: Results from the Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos. *Journal of the American Heart Association*, 4(7), pii: e001867. doi: 10.1161/JAHA.115.001867

Save the bumblebees

*Source: Wein, H., & Hicklin, T. (Eds.). (2017, November). Healthy body, happy heart: Improve your heart health. NIH News in Health. Bethesda, MD: U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH). Retrieved September 4, 2019, from <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov>*

# How to Practice Mindfulness in a Multitasking Workplace

With mindfulness—being focused and fully present in the here and now—you can replace multitasking habits with more directed practices to reduce stress and increase productivity,” said Dr. Romie Mushtaq, a neurologist with expertise in mind-body medicine. The result? You’ll be sharper, more efficient, and more creative.

To clear away distractions and live in the moment, Dr. Mushtaq offers these tips for practicing mindfulness in a multitasking business:

- Focus on a single task for an allotted amount of time. You might say, “For 15 minutes, I’m going to read through my emails, and then for one hour, I’m going to make my phone calls.” If your job comes with constant interruptions that demand your attention, take several deep breaths and then prioritize them. Resist the urge to answer the phone every time it rings—unless it’s your boss. If someone asks you to drop what you’re doing to help with a problem, it’s okay to say, “I’ll be finished with what I’m doing in 10 minutes, then I’m all yours.”
- When you get “stuck” in a task, change your physical environment to stimulate your senses. Sometimes we bounce from one task to another because we just don’t have the words to begin writing that strategic plan, or we’re staring at a problem and have no ideas for solutions. That’s the time to get up, take a walk outside and look at the flowers and the birds or turn on relaxing music. Offering your senses pleasant and different stimulation rewires your brain for relaxation and reduces the effects of stress hormones, which helps to unfreeze your creativity center.
- Delegate! We often have little control over the external stresses in our life, particularly on the job. Have compassion for yourself, and reach out for help. If you can assign a task to somebody else who’s capable of handling it, do so. If you need to ask a colleague to help you out, ask.