



# EMPLOYEE ADVISORY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the NJ Civil Service Commission's Employee Advisory 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.

## Getting To Know Your Employee Advisory Service (EAS)

We invite you to learn more about the new services provided to you and your family through EAS by attending our bi-monthly webinar orientations. Register below for the next employee session.

When: Tuesday, January 15th  
2:00 - 3:00 PM ET

Register:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2164204316412803074>

## Your Attitude Determines Your Altitude

This dynamic presentation explores the importance of a good attitude and its impact on our health and career success. It includes insight into the components that makeup our attitudes (beliefs, thought patterns, emotions, etc.), as well as some practical tips for making improvements.

When: Thursday, January 31st  
2:00-3:00 PM ET

Register:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2631757342472980994>

## Take a Free Mental Health Screening

Stressed?

Take a free anonymous mental health screening at:

<http://screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/NJEAS>

**January is Healthy Weight Awareness Month. Let EAS help you reach your wellness goals by assisting you with personal issues such as depression, anxiety, and stress that may be contributing to an unhealthy lifestyle or impeding progress to meeting your desired goals.**

## Aim for a Healthy Weight

Choose a lifestyle that combines sensible eating with regular physical activity. To be at their best, adults need to avoid gaining weight, and many need to lose weight. Being overweight or obese increases your risk for high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, certain types of cancer, arthritis, and breathing problems. A healthy weight is key to a long, healthy life.

### **Evaluate your body weight.**

For adults and children, different methods are used to determine their optimal weight for their height. If you have concerns about your child's body size, talk with your health care provider.

If you are an adult, follow the directions below to evaluate your weight in relation to your height, or Body Mass Index (BMI). The further your BMI is above the healthy range, the higher your weight-related risk. If your BMI is above the healthy range, you may benefit from weight loss, especially if you have other health risk factors. A BMI above the healthy range is less than ideal for most people, but it may be fine if you have a high muscle to fat ratio.

If your BMI is below the healthy range, you may have increased risk of menstrual irregularity, infertility, and osteoporosis. If you lose weight suddenly or for unknown reasons, see a health care provider. Unexplained weight loss may be an early clue to a health problem.

### **How to Evaluate Your Weight (Adults)**

- Weigh yourself and have your height measured to find your BMI category. The higher your BMI category, the greater the risk for health problems.
- Measure around your waist and just above your hip bones while standing. Health risks increase as waist measurement increases, particularly if the waist is greater than 35 inches for women or 40 inches for men. Excess abdominal fat may place you at greater risk of health problems, even if your BMI is average.

### **Manage your weight.**

Your genes affect your tendency to gain weight. A tendency to gain weight is increased when food is plentiful and when you use equipment and vehicles to save time and energy. However, it is possible to manage your weight through balancing the calories you eat with your physical activity choices.

To make it easier to manage your weight, make long-term changes in your eating behavior and physical activity. To do this, build a healthy base and make sensible choices. Choose a nutritious assortment of foods that includes vegetables, fruits, grains (especially whole grains), skim milk, fish, lean meat, poultry, and beans. Choose foods that are low in fat and added sugars as much as you can. Whatever the food, eat a sensible portion size.

Try to be more active throughout the day. It is recommended that all adults get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity 3-4 times per week, but preferably every day. To maintain a healthy weight after weight loss, adults will likely need to do more than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity daily. Over time, even a small decrease in calories eaten and a small increase in physical activity can keep you from gaining weight or help you lose weight.

### **Control portion size.**

- If you're eating out, choose small portion sizes, share an entree with a friend, or take a portion of the food home.
- Check product labels for serving sizes, and how many calories, grams of fat, and so forth are in the food. Many items sold as single portions actually provide 2 servings or more. Examples include a 20-ounce container of soft drink, a 12-ounce steak, a 3-ounce bag of chips, and a large bagel.
- Be especially careful to limit portion size of foods high in calories, such as cookies, cakes, other sweets, French fries, fats, oils, and spreads.

The carbohydrates, fats, and proteins in food supply energy, which is measured in calories. High-fat foods contain more calories than the same amount of other foods, so they can make it difficult for you to avoid excess calories. However, low-fat doesn't always mean low-calorie. Sometimes extra sugars are added to low-fat muffins or desserts, making them just as high in calories.

Your pattern of eating may be important as well. Snacks and meals eaten away from home provide a large part of daily calories for many people. Choose them wisely. Try fruits, vegetables, whole grain foods, or a cup of low-fat milk or yogurt for a snack. When eating out, choose small portions of foods. If you choose fish, poultry, or lean meat, ask that it be grilled rather than fried.

Like younger adults, overweight and obese older adults may improve their health by losing weight. The guidance of a health care provider is recommended, especially for obese children and older adults. Since older people tend to lose muscle mass, regular physical activity is a valuable part of a weight-loss plan. Building or maintaining muscle helps keep older adults active and reduces their risk of falls and fractures. Staying active throughout your adult years helps maintain muscle mass and bone strength for your later years.

*Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). (n.d.). Be physically active each day. In Aim for fitness. Retrieved September 29, 2016, from <http://health.gov/>*

# Workplace Success: Enthusiasm and Attitude

## **Having a positive attitude in the workplace can help with workplace success.**

What is the difference between “You’re hired!” and “Thank you for your interest, but . . .”? In a word: enthusiasm. Enthusiasm can mean the difference in not just getting a job, but succeeding in a job and even advancing in your career. A positive and enthusiastic attitude is a critical component of workplace success.

## **Employers promote employees who not only produce, but also motivate others in the workplace.**

When employers look at prospective candidates, beyond skills, experience, and training, they look for those who demonstrate enthusiasm—those they believe will complete assigned tasks in an upbeat and cooperative manner. All other things being equal, a candidate who can demonstrate a positive attitude and eagerness to tackle the job will have an advantage over one who displays an attitude viewed by the employer as negative or disinterested. In fact, many employers would rather provide job-skills training to an enthusiastic but inexperienced worker than hire someone with perfect qualifications but a less-than-positive attitude. Managers sometimes worry that this type of person will not get along with supervisors and coworkers, treat customers disrespectfully, and not put much effort into his or her work. On the other hand, employees who are viewed as enthusiastic are known to provide good customer service, resolve interpersonal conflict effectively, and work productively with others.

There are many ways in which an individual might demonstrate enthusiasm in the workplace. For example, in a job interview, he or she might smile, sit up straight, make eye contact, and discuss training and work experiences in an upbeat manner. Once hired into a position, an enthusiastic employee will typically show up on time, show interest in his or her job, and demonstrate a willingness to listen, learn, and try new things. In customer service settings, an enthusiastic employee will approach customers proactively and offer assistance or seek out tasks and projects when there is down time. This positive attitude helps employees go above and beyond to get along with coworkers and managers—even difficult ones—and respond to constructive criticism with maturity and willingness to improve. Overall, an employee with enthusiasm comes across as someone who wants to be at work and who is willing to do what it takes to get the job done.

A positive attitude is an “I can” attitude. It’s important for you to learn how to develop a positive attitude and, almost as important, how to showcase that to others, including employers. Turn negative thinking into positive thinking, and display enthusiasm during an interview and on the job.

## **Never underestimate the power of PMA!**

PMA, or Positive Mental Attitude, is one’s ability to maintain the belief that he or she can transform or change a tough situation into something better. This activity will help participants take difficult situations and find ways to empower themselves to turn negative thinking into positive thinking.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What is a positive attitude? If I have a positive attitude, what actions might I display? What does a positive attitude “look” like to others?
- What is a negative attitude? If I have a negative attitude, what actions might I display? What does a negative attitude “look” like to others?

Then say: “Developing a positive attitude starts from learning to believe in one’s self. In order to believe in ourselves, we must first understand our personal strengths.”

## **PMA Activity**

Write the below statements on a piece of chart paper, and grab a set of dice. Sit with a friend or a trusted colleague, or a small group, and take turns rolling the dice two or three times. Complete the following statement upon each roll:

- Roll a 1: I am thankful for . . .
- Roll a 2: Other people compliment me on my ability to . . .
- Roll a 3: Something I would like other people to know about me is . . .
- Roll a 4: I feel really good about myself when . . .
- Roll a 5: I am proud of my ability to . . .
- Roll a 6: Something nice I recently did for someone else was . . .

Note: If the people in your group know each other well, feel free to substitute questions that ask about the positive qualities of the participants.

## **Conclusion**

Why do you think the statement for Roll #6 was included in this activity? It's because helping or "doing" for others often helps people feel good about themselves. When you feel good about yourself, you often demonstrate a positive attitude that can be seen by others.

Discuss with participants how internal feelings have the ability to impact those around you. How might a positive attitude help you on a job?

## **Journaling Activity**

Do you think our attitude (whether positive or negative) is something people are born with or that they have power to control within themselves? Think about a time when your attitude (either positive or negative) impacted you and those around you. When is it most challenging for you to keep a positive mental attitude? What do you do to help keep yourself positive during difficult times?

## **Extension Activity**

Keep a log for one week. Write down 50 (or 40 or 30) great things that happen each day. Include even the small things like these:

- Someone held the door open for me.
- I found a quarter on the sidewalk.
- When I went shopping, the clerk at the store was really friendly and helpful.

The goal of this activity is to help you focus on the positive. Consider if you felt any different during the week as a result—either in your interactions with others or in your own feelings about yourself.

*Source: U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). (n.d.). Mastering soft skills for workplace success: Enthusiasm and attitude [Excerpt] (B. Schuette, Ed.). Retrieved October 18, 2018, from <https://www.dol.gov/>*

# New Year's Resolutions for Mental Health

President Abraham Lincoln said, "Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other." When thinking about a New Year's resolution, it is helpful to choose an objective that can be successfully reached. These goals may be short-term or long-term, simple or complex, individual or shared. Some of the most common New Year's resolutions for Americans include:

- Focusing on health by losing weight, exercising, and eating healthier foods
- Becoming more financially savvy by lowering debts and saving money
- Quitting a bad habit, like drinking too much alcohol or smoking
- Improving professionally by finding a better job or pursuing higher education
- Traveling more by planning a trip
- Being more environmentally responsible by reducing, reusing, and recycling
- Serving others by volunteering more

But what about those who want to make a mental health resolution? Many people choose to focus on stress management or reduction, anxiety control, or just to live happier. Since these resolutions are more difficult to accomplish, how do you make this year different to make sure you set yourself up for success? Change your perspective when approaching New Year's resolutions. Instead of making a vague list of what you want to change, ask yourself three simple questions: What, why, and how?

## What?

Start by specifically defining what it is you plan to accomplish this year. Be concise, and keep it simple. For example, if you start with a goal like, "I plan to be happier this year," you may want to redefine that as, "I plan to spend more time doing things I enjoy." If your resolution is to reduce your stress this year, you might guide yourself toward saying, "I will set boundaries about working on the weekends."

## Why?

Ask yourself, "Why would I like to accomplish this goal?" Often, changes to your life have an internal representation that you aren't even aware you're striving for. That's why some people vow to lose 15 pounds but once they do, they still feel defeated and depressed. If you really investigate why you want to accomplish your goal, you will find a bit more about what you really wish to accomplish. This is one of the most important things to identify. It helps keep you going when times get hard and you want to quit before reaching your goal.

## How?

Have a well-thought-out plan before you embark on your adventure this year. It's important to realize that if you knew all there was to know about this particular life change, you'd have already accomplished it.

- **Do your research.** Ensure that each decision you make is an informed one.
- **Tell everyone you know.** People who are accountable are more likely to succeed in achieving resolution goals. When you know that you're going to hear about it from people when you continue to engage in the old behaviors, you are less likely to bail out on your resolutions. Also, letting people know about your goals is a great way to have friends and family encourage you along the way.
- **Set up a reward system.** Periodically use rewards for reaching small goals. Accomplishing the goals you set produces dopamine, the pleasure chemical in your brain. Dopamine activates the parts of the brain that make you eager to pursue new challenges. By setting and achieving goals today, you're heightening your ability to be the person you want to be.

## References

1. Todd, W. E. (2014, December 31). Resolutions for the New Year. Retrieved January 2, 2015, from <http://www.commonhealth.virginia.gov/documents/wellnotes/NewYearsResolutions.pdf>
2. Bapties, S. (2014, December 31). Making New Year's resolution stick. Retrieved January 2, 2015, from <http://www.robins.af.mil/>