

Fall  
2016

# FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE

## MIIA Employee Assistance Program

### Confidential Counseling

- Addiction
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Family Issues
- Grief/Loss

### Resources & Referrals

- Legal
- Financial
- Child Care
- Elder Care
- Work/Life

### Stress Management

- Personal Concerns
- Professional Issues

**800.451.1834**

To take a free,  
anonymous mental  
health screening,  
go to:

[www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening/miia Wellness](http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening/miia Wellness)



### This issue:

- Soft Skills to Know: Accepting Feedback
- Stress Management: Discover Your “Flow”
- Soft Skills to Know: Conflict Resolution
- Mental Health of College Students
- How Incivility Spreads in the Workplace

## Soft Skills to Know: Accepting Feedback

Ouch—constructive feedback! You’ll find plenty of tips on giving feedback so a well-meaning critique is received and understood, but less help on how to be a good *receiver* of feedback or having your reviewer feel welcomed back. Accepting feedback is a soft skill that will elevate your reputation. Employers love employees who receive feedback well, because it helps drive productivity. This makes “the ability to accept feedback” important in many annual reviews. Keys to becoming a feedback dynamo: 1) Remember that no one enjoys constructive feedback that challenges their predetermined notion of a job well done—it’s a shocker. Accept that life includes this reality. 2) Nearly all reviewers experience anxiety associated with giving constructive feedback. Empathy for this role will give you a shot at eliminating defensiveness, set your reviewer at ease, and seal your reputation as having an outstanding ability to accept constructive feedback. 3) Prepare yourself for constructive feedback by consciously deciding to appear excited to receive it, to discover what you don’t know, to be inquisitive, to thank the reviewer, and to not dwell on disappointing news.

## Stress Management: Discover Your “Flow”

One important stress management technique is detachment, which helps build resilience. An example is taking a vacation. A powerful and healthy way to detach that you may not have heard of is “flow activity.” A flow activity is any activity, such as gardening, painting, reading for pleasure, needlework, or dancing, that can absorb your complete attention in a meaningful, goal-directed, pleasurable, and completely distracting way. When you are busy and under stress, it’s easy to fall into an “eat-sleep-work-repeat” cycle. Interrupting this course of stress with two to three hours a week of flow activities that help you completely detach will significantly elevate your happiness. You will experience more balance and engagement with your job.

Learn more at <http://www.ted.com> [Search: “mihaly”]



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## Soft Skills to Know: Conflict Resolution

Productivity suffers when conflicts drag on. This is why using conflict resolution skills makes you a valuable employee. Use the following easy tips to improve your conflict resolution ability: (1) Communicate often, and check differences quickly with coworkers. You'll zap most conflicts this way. (2) When differences linger, carve out time for focused discussion. Share your concerns by describing your experience—what, where, and when: "Tom, you are not coming to Monday meetings prepared." Share the impact: "This makes meetings take longer." (3) Omit theories about motives (e.g., "I think you don't want to be part of this team.") (4) Ask, "Am I doing something or not doing something that contributes to this issue?" (5) Join the solution: "How can we solve this problem and create a better situation?" (6) Agree to follow up, and you will reinforce changes and continue to improve your relationships.

## Mental Health of College Students



The mental health concerns of college students get more media attention in the fall months, when grade pressures, depression, anxiety, and relationship

issues pile up. How to cope with stress can be learned, but not all students learn adequate coping skills from parents, caregivers, or siblings. If you are the parent of a college student, make sure to inquire about campus support resources if your student is having a hard time. Discourage isolation and counsel your student to strive for balance. Discourage substance abuse and never supply medications that have not been prescribed to your student as a way of helping him or her study or cope. Learn about signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety to increase your awareness of these problems. Do not hesitate to ask your student about suicidal thoughts if you see high levels of burdensomeness, the uttering of statements like "People would be better off without me," a sense of disconnection ("I don't belong here") or commenting about killing oneself, even in jest.

Source: <http://boston.cbslocal.com> [Search: "mental health college"]

## How Incivility Spreads in the Workplace

Uncivil behaviors in the workplace may include condescending statements, put-downs, sarcasm, and/or even silence if it is used purposely to withhold a compliment or kind remark. Incivility is contagious because employees develop reflexes to reciprocate it, and may passively become uncivil toward others who did not provoke it. Fatigue from ruminating about negative exchanges may be common, and employees normally disinclined to act uncivilly may begin doing so. Does any of this sound familiar? To repair and maintain your work group to keep it healthy and collaborative, regularly spend time giving feedback to each other in group meetings. Discuss communication issues and spend time inquiring about unresolved problems. Doing so will reduce tension among you and decrease the frequency of incivility that leads to dissatisfaction and job turnover.

Source: <http://msutoday.msu.edu> [search "incivility"]