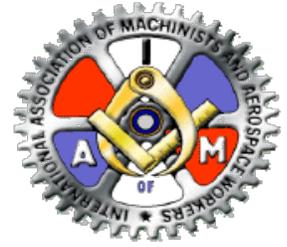




HELPING HANDS



Relationships in a time of COVID

(Excerpts from worklife.MSU.EDU Jaimie Hutchison, MA, LPC)

There are a lot of things families have to navigate: How to implement social distancing measures, how to find childcare for their children, or in-home care to monitor on-line schooling, how household responsibilities are divided,, how to manage a reduction in income, how to balance work and caring for children in the same space, how to stay in touch with elder family members, political tensions, racial injustice, and so much more. And all of that is on top of whatever pressures couples and families were facing before the pandemic.

Here are some ideas that may help strengthen your relationship:

Maintain self-care and have a routine. We know that by maintaining a schedule, and focusing on health basics like sleep, nutrition and exercise, we can reduce our stress levels and provide a comforting schedule for your brain to follow, which reduces uncertainty.

Be kind to yourself, your partner, and your children. Have compassion for yourself and those around you. Kindness and grace go a long way.

Keep the workday limited. Work to set boundaries to keep your work and personal time separate. It is easy to let work flow into personal life, particularly if you are working from home.

Beware of substance use and abuse. Increased stress can aggravate habits such as smoking and drinking. Keep an eye on your substance use. People in recovery may need to be vigilant because normal support groups may not be available. Look into virtual meetings and reach out to the people who are there for you.

Go outside together. Nature has healing properties. Get outside, get some vitamin D, walk and take in the sights and sounds of nature. There are many places you can go outside and still physically distance like local nature centers and parks.

Carve out time for being alone and together. This can be easier said than done, but ensure you have some time to yourself to do what you like to do and balance that with family time and couple time. When you are well, you have more to give to others.

Split up housekeeping duties in a way that makes sense. Everyone in the household can contribute to keeping things running. Be intentional and set up a schedule and division that works for everyone.

Broaden your support system. Find a way to connect with positive people in your life. You could hold a virtual coffee hour or go on a distanced walk.

Carve out time to talk. With so much to manage, many feel overwhelmed and exhausted. Now more than ever, it is important to talk to each other and check in on what each person in the relationship needs. Things have changed, and we need to be as flexible as we can to adjust to them.

Talk about your feelings. Overwhelmed, burnt out, isolated, stressed, exhausted, forgetful, anxious, depressed - however you are feeling is ok. You are not alone and by talking to someone you trust about your feelings, you will be able to process them better.

Plan something fun. What do you love to do? How can you build that into the current situation? It is critical that we keep laughter and joy in our lives. Having something to look forward to helps shape our mood.



If you would like resources or referrals or do not know where to start, reach out. This is complex and each person has their own struggles that are unique to their situation. Your Regional EAP Representative can help explore resources that can help. Your EAP representative is listed on Page 2.

What to Do If You're Feeling Out of Sync

(excerpts HuffPost from **Kerry Borresen**, December 18, 2020)

How can you reconnect when emotionally you feel miles apart?

Shake up your routine.

Find creative ways to add some novelty to the monotony of your day-to-day. Your options may be somewhat limited because of COVID, but you can still make small adjustments that will change things up.



Log off from work so you can make time for each other.

If you're able, try to maintain a schedule similar to the one you had when you worked in an office. When 6 p.m. rolls around, close your laptop and put your work materials somewhere you can't see them — that should help you psychologically shift from one mode to another

Strike up deeper conversations.

Asking your partner questions that lead to understanding their current mental and emotional state can be transformative for the both of you. It gives them an opportunity to share a part of themselves and connect with you on a deeper level.

Practice self-compassion.

This year has been tough on all of us. So be gentle with yourself instead of beating yourself up. You might find that cutting yourself some extra slack makes you a little easier on your partner, too.

IAM Peer Employee Assistance Program



The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peer coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experiencing.

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Relationship

Defined

- *n.*

The condition or fact of being related; connection or association.

- *n.*

Connection by blood or marriage; kinship.

- *n.*

A particular type of connection existing between people related to or having dealings with each other.