



# rEAP the Benefits

State Employee Assistance Program 1-800-308-4934

## Less stress for customer service

Good customer service is about putting your customers first, but it is also about reducing your stress. These two goals are mutually compatible. When things go well with customers, you experience less stress. You can influence positive customer behavior more frequently than you may realize, rather than be subject to its accidental occurrence. Try influencing customers by:

- Detaching from the emotional reaction of customers and never arguing with them.
- Understand that being successful with a customer is more important than being “right.”
- Use “active listening skills” which demonstrates that you truly heard the customer. Active listening involves using your voice, your personal energy, nonverbal communication, and empathy to have a customer walk away with a positive “Wow!” experience — even if they did not get what they wanted.

## Follow the two-minute rule

Can a task you have to do be done in two minutes or less? If so, do it immediately rather than postpone it because you don’t feel like doing it now. Live by this rule and you’ll accomplish more and procrastinate less — and your productivity will soar. All of us face many tasks, and life is a never-ending parade of them. Postponement is often the easy, but temporary, crisis-building fix for this stress. But can a task be done in less than two minutes? If so, act on it. Test this tactic for personal productivity, keep track of your outcomes, and discover how much you get done.

## Building workplace trust

How would you rate your ability to trust others at work? The ability to trust others is a powerful asset for relationship-building and productivity. If you struggle with trusting others, you might trust coworkers who — over time — have proved they won’t let you down. But can you trust others without this trial period? Harmful life experiences in our past can make it hard to risk trusting others, but a world of opportunity can open to you if you can surmount this obstacle. Your employee assistance provider or a professional counselor can help discover ways to overcome these trust-related challenges, including feeling unable to rely on others or feel close to your team, feeling unsafe with others without good cause, questioning others’ competence without reason, resisting taking safe risks, and finding it hard to believe what others say.

## Getting back on your bike

With the price of gas going up, you might be motivated to get back on your bicycle for a regular aerobic workout. Be sure to refresh your skills by investigating bicycling rules of the road. Also build confidence with some short-distance rides. Bikes keep changing, so take a trip to your local bike store for education on what’s new. There are lots of gadgets and bikes for different conditions, and you can learn about what will work best for you. Remember to have the right air pressure in your tires and investigate the safety status of your existing bicycle, especially if you’re heading off to the garage or basement to put your old bike back into service. You’ll have a more enjoyable experience as you spin away.

## Aging gracefully

No one likes the idea of getting older, but how you respond mentally, physically, and spiritually to aging has a tremendous impact on your quality of life. Many studies over the past decade consistently show that happiness actually increases with age. This shouldn't be surprising. With age comes wisdom, perspective, a lowering of expectations, and a tendency to be more easily content with what you have. Being proactive in living a healthful lifestyle gives you your best chance at preserving your vitality. Get more sleep, exercise, eat right, and get annual check-ups. Accept and adapt to your limitations. Growing older slows us down, but it doesn't mean giving up activities you love. Try moderating instead. Studies also show that optimists live longer, more satisfying lives. So be an optimist or learn how. Vow to make your first thought of the day a positive one, and read inspirational quotes and affirmations to start your day. It will work. Try new things. It will keep your mind sharp and prevent you from getting into a rut. Don't look back — stay in the creative mind. Regret is an awful and destructive emotion. If your life isn't how you imagined it would be, forgive yourself for your mistakes and move forward with what you've learned from them.

## After the team retreat

If you're heading off to a team-building retreat this summer, here are a couple tips to squeeze the most benefit from your experience.

- Don't skip out on the planning process. You'll be more willing to participate and will gain more from activities if you and your workers collaborate beforehand about the off-site agenda.
- Have a post-event meeting to discuss the "lessons learned" and "insights gained" from your off-site experience.
- Brainstorming sessions at retreats can produce powerful results. Follow up later so you don't lose momentum, and keep the excitement going from your team-building experience.
- After the retreat, consider having discussions 30, 60, and 90 days later to gauge progress on new initiatives.

## E-Cycling: Making your computer a green machine

Computers are getting cheaper. That means it can be tempting to purchase the latest technology and dump the old. Even if it is obsolete, think twice before tossing your computer or laptop in the trash. It contains toxic substances that are stacking up in landfills. Find out about electronics recycling in your town. Electronics recycling can divert more than 95 percent of these materials from our landfills, including lead and the many hazardous substances found in old PC equipment.

## What to do when you think someone is suicidal

It can be very upsetting and distressful to hear someone talk about suicide. Knowing how to help and where to get help can ease these fears. Not everyone who has thoughts of suicide or talks about suicide actually attempts it, but most people who take their own life have expressed their intention. That is why it is important to take all talk or hints about suicide seriously. This is even truer if that person is depressed.

It is not always possible to prevent a suicide but your involvement and knowing what to do could save a life. The best way to find out if someone is thinking about suicide is to ask. Asking will not give them the idea, in fact it could show them that someone really cares. Giving people the opportunity to talk about their feelings decreases the risk. If you believe someone is at imminent risk of suicide, call 911 or take them to the nearest emergency room. There are many types of help and ways you can support someone who may be at risk. One way is to give the person the National Lifeline number. This number will connect them to the nearest crisis center where support and other help are available. 1-800-273-TALK — it could save a life.

For more information about suicide and resources in Tennessee, go to the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network's (TSPN) web page [www.tspn.org](http://www.tspn.org)