

# eap perspectives

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Solutions Employee Assistance Program

## What Is It About Aging That Takes The Fun Out of Winter!

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I can't take it anymore. I'm watching the umpteenth storm of the winter and I'm just sick and tired of the snow. I am developing the "Sun Bird Syndrome," the physiological need to fly south for the winter. It happened to my father and just as sure as I inherited his gray hair, it'll happen to me too.

I began to reminisce about the winter of '96. By the time Spring had arrived late in April, we had blown the record for snowfall out of the water. Till then, I had fancied myself a tough Connecticut Yankee. I figured I could withstand any messy, miserable weather that Mother Nature could throw at us.

It was all downhill after that winter. Any little snow flurry would instantly give me a backache. Mini-panic attacks blew in right after the first weather forecast. I began to leave work early and cancel appointments before the first snowflake had fallen.

The funny thing was, so many people that I talked to that year, had such wonderful memories of playing in the snow as a kid. They bragged about huge snowfalls, sledding and skating adventures. What is it about aging that can take the fun out of winter? There were lots of warm, pleasant in-



*I can't control the weather... but I can control my reactions to bad weather and life's storms.*

door memories too. I recall blazing fires, watching movies as a family, and making homemade pizza. I realized that we grew much closer that winter. Many people said they found creative ways to cope with the cold, ice and snow. People got to know their neighbors better as they helped each other dig out. A co-worker told me she loved to try out new recipes while snowed in. Instead of dwelling on how much longer the winter was, a friend reminded me that each day there was more daylight.

Of course, we all did our fair share of complaining. A little grumbling is *Continued from page 1*

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## WINTER tips

- Plan a trip
- Sign up for a class
- Take on a home improvement project
- Review New Year's resolutions
- Visit a museum, art gallery, or a nearby town that you have never been to before
- Label photos and put them into an album
- Do volunteer work.
- See some entertainment, a movie, theater, or comedy
- Entertain others at your home - have a Hawaiian party or just plan to play cards or a game.
- Take up a musical instrument.
- Learn a new language.
- Plot your family tree.
- Plant forced bulbs
- Develop your spiritual life
- Write a letter or call an old friend or family member

Challenge yourself to add to this list. Friends, magazines, religious groups, newspaper calendar sections, coworkers are all potential idea goldmines. Gather ideas, pick your favorites and then use them.

So be proactive, and remember that Spring is just around the corner, and "time will fly if you are having fun."

Call the EAP for *free & confidential* counseling and referral.

**1-800-526-3485**

[www.solutions-eap.com](http://www.solutions-eap.com)

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**Solutions**  
FOR PEOPLE IN THE WORKPLACE



# Internet Got a Hold of You?



**A** new problem is being faced by many people at home and at work – compulsive use of the Internet or “on-line addiction.” The biggest hurdle to getting help is denial. On-line addiction can lead to social, occupational, and financial problems. Employers are growing more concerned about the amount of time that employees are spending on-line. A recent survey reported that one-third of U.S. workers are monitored in their on-line activities by their employers. Seek help from the EAP if you answer “yes” to one or more of the following questions.

## Internet Addiction Questions

- 1) **Have you ever seriously** considered the question, “Am I losing control over how much time I spend on-line?”
- 2) **Do you find yourself** making promises that you fail to keep about how much time you spend on-line?
- 3) **Do you sometimes** feel guilty about how much time you spend on-line or how much money you have spent on-line?
- 4) **Do you use the** computer and any on-line activity to soothe or manage feelings of anger, sadness, depression, boredom, or other undesirable feelings?
- 5) **During breaks** at work or home, or between chores, work duties, or other activities, do you seek to get on-line to trade options or stocks, view pornography, gamble, or visit chat rooms?

normal and part of human nature. But like anything else, it can get out of control. Thinking back on that “awful” winter and how differently people reacted to it, I realized that it was my attitude that broke me, not the actual weather itself.

I was *letting* it get the best of me. I couldn’t control the weather any more than I could control getting gray hair. What I can control is my reaction to bad winters and life’s storms. I try to listen to my self-talk. Am I saying things like, “This is awful and I can’t take it anymore.” This gets me focussed on what I can control and allows me to break free so I can move on to more creative ways of responding. Wish I had learned that back in ‘96!

# Burnout!

**B**urnout is a state of near exhaustion from work or work conditions. Although not a medical diagnosis, common symptoms can be self-diagnosed and signal a need for help.



## SYMPTOMS

- 1) Chronically tired with a lack of energy.
- 2) Nothing turns you on. You “go through the motions” feeling as though you are on automatic pilot. You sleep more.
- 3) Your performance deteriorates with missed deadlines, forgotten details and commitments.
- 4) You have reached the point where you don’t care about “getting it right.” Your attitude has become detached, uncaring, or “so what?”
- 5) You see the “downside” of everything or are cynical. You are losing faith in coworkers and others around you.
- 6) You no longer tolerate other people’s small mistakes and feel impatient and irritable. You would just as soon work alone and eat lunch by yourself.

# Coworkers & Grief



**W**hen a coworker experiences a painful loss, you naturally want to say and do the right thing – but what? Employees who have experienced significant grief offer this advice for coworkers: 1) Be yourself. Don’t make “feel better” statements such as “just be strong” or “I know how you feel,” etc. 2) Don’t let your own feelings of fear and helplessness cause you to avoid the coworker in grief. 3) Acknowledge the loss, but don’t try to “fix it.” 4) Grief and loss increase our awareness for the importance of human relationships. Use this awareness to feel closer to coworkers and remove barriers that make work more difficult.