## CITY OF MADISON EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

MAY, 2018

## **Do You Focus on Fitness #4Mind4Body?**

Mental health is essential to everyone's overall health and well-being, and mental illnesses are common and treatable. So much of what we do physically impacts us mentally—it's important to pay attention to both your physical health and your mental health, which can help you achieve overall wellness and set you on a path to recovery.

This May is Mental Health Month; Mental Health America is raising awareness about the connection between physical health and mental health, through the



theme Fitness #4Mind4Body. The campaign is meant to educate and inform individuals about how eating healthy foods, gut health, managing stress, exercising, and getting enough sleep can go a long way in making you

A healthy lifestyle can help to prevent the onset or worsening of mental health conditions like depression and anxiety, as well as heart disease, diabetes, obesity and other chronic health problems. It can also play a big role in helping people recover from these conditions. Taking good care of your body is part of a before Stage Four approach to mental health.

Getting the appropriate amount of exercise can help control weight, improve mental health, and help you live longer and healthier. Recent research is also connecting your nutrition and gut health with your mental health. Sleep also plays a critical role in all aspects of our life and overall health. Getting a good night's sleep is important to having enough physical and mental energy to take on daily responsibilities. And we all know that stress can have a huge impact on all aspects of our health, so it's important to take time to focus on stressreducing activities like meditation or yoga.

MHA wants everyone to know that mental illnesses are real, and recovery is always the goal. Living a healthy lifestyle may not be easy, but by looking at your overall health every day-both physically and mentally-you can go a long way in ensuring that you focus on your Fitness #4Mind4Body.

For more information, visit www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may.



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Hello City Employees!

In this month's newsletter, we have decided to feature Mental Health America's (MHA) May is Mental Health Month fact sheets. This year, MHA has placed an emphasis on Fitness #4Mind4Body, which is a theme that highlights the importance of focusing on the whole health of each person.

This newsletter will include evidencebased information from MHA on the areas of Diet and Nutrition, Exercise, The Gut-Brain Connection, Sleep, and Stress as they impact physical and mental health. Included at the end of our newsletter are two webinars and a well-being activity from StayWell, which can be used toward your \$150 Well Wisconsin incentive.

If the content of this newsletter resonates with you, but you feel like you or a family member needs additional assistance or referral from the EAP, please reach out to our internal office at 266-6561 or FEI, our external EAP, at 1-800-236-7905 anytime!

Maily Kneger



The quality of the food you eat can impact your overall physical and mental health. Eating nutritious foods can go a long way toward achieving a healthy lifestyle, so make every bite count.

#### **TWO MAJOR ISSUES**



across the planet.<sup>2</sup>

**POOR DIET** 

Unhealthy diets lead to major health problems like diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and cancer. Because of this, poor diet is the main cause of early death in developed countries. Nearly 20% of all deaths worldwide can be linked to unhealthy eating habits.<sup>1</sup> NEW SCIENCE IS LINKING THESE TWO MAJOR ISSUES

#### At the same time, mental illnesses are the biggest cause of disability and illness in the world. Depression alone is one of

the top five leading causes of disability

### **BETTER DIET, BETTER MENTAL HEALTH**

A healthy diet includes a full range of vegetables, fruits, legumes (lentils, chickpeas, beans), fish, whole grains (rice, quinoa, oats, breads, etc.), nuts, avocados and olive oil to support a healthy brain. Sweet and fatty foods should be special treats, not the staples of your diet.





People who eat a diet high in whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, whole grains, legumes, fish and unsaturated fats (like olive oil) are up to 35% less likely to develop depression than people who eat less of these foods.<sup>3,4</sup>



Highly processed, fried and sugary foods have little nutritional value and should be avoided. Research shows that a diet that regularly includes these kinds of foods can increase the risk of developing depression by as much as 60%.<sup>5,6</sup>

### **CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

Good nutrition starts in the womb. The children of women who eat diets high in processed, fried and sugary foods during pregnancy have more emotional problems in childhood. Similarly, diets low in whole, nutrient-dense foods and diets higher in junk and processed foods during the first years of life are linked to more emotional problems in children.<sup>7,8</sup>





Studies have found that young people with the healthiest diets are about **HALF AS LIKELY** to have depression.



Those with the diet highest in junk and processed foods are **80% MORE LIKELY** to have depression.<sup>9,10</sup>

#### FOOD CAN CHANGE YOUR BRAIN

Diet is linked to the hippocampus, a key area of the brain involved in learning, memory, and mental health. People with healthy diets have more hippocampal volume than those with unhealthy diets.<sup>11</sup>



Eating more fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, fish, olive oil, and other healthy foods while eating less unhealthy junk and processed foods can be an effective treatment strategy for depression.



One study found that **1/3 OF PARTICIPANTS WITH DEPRESSION EXPERIENCED FULL RELIEF OF THEIR SYMPTOMS** after improving their diet. The more people improved their diets, the more their depression improved.<sup>12,13</sup>

#### A HEALTHY DIET DOESN'T HAVE TO BE EXPENSIVE

A healthy diet can actually be cheaper than junk and processed food.<sup>14,15</sup> Save money by choosing canned or frozen vegetables and fish, and dried fruits and beans. These are nutritionally similar to fresh foods, stay good longer, and are usually less expensive!



#### OMEGA 3 FATTY ACIDS

Omega 3 fatty acids are essential to brain health and reduce inflammation and risk of heart disease.

Oily fish like salmon, trout, mackerel, anchovies and sardines are the most highly recommended sources of Omega 3 fatty acids, and the American Heart Association suggests eating these types of fish at least twice a week. Omega 3s can also be found in albacore tuna, walnuts, flax seeds, chia seeds, and dark green leafy vegetables like brussels sprouts, kale and spinach.

People who eat diets rich with Omega 3 fatty acids have up to 30% reduced risk of depression.<sup>16</sup>

Fish oil supplements that are high in the EPA type of Omega 3 fatty acids can help mental health. Studies show they can benefit some people with depression as much as anti-depressants.<sup>17</sup>

#### NUTRIENTS TO KEEP IN MIND

B GROUP VITAMINS

B-group vitamins help to regulate neurotransmitters, immune function, and amino acids – the building blocks of proteins in the body.

Folate and folic acid are part of the B family of vitamins and can be found in green leafy vegetables, legumes, and whole grains.

People who eat foods rich in folate have a lower risk of depression.<sup>18</sup>

Fish (salmon, trout, tuna), beef, lamb, clams, poultry (chicken and turkey), eggs, and milk are natural sources of vitamin B12. Breakfast cereals with vitamin B12 added are a good option for vegetarians.

People with a lack of vitamin B12 may be at increased risk for depression, especially if they are older.<sup>19</sup>

#### **VITAMIN D**

Vitamin D is important for optimal brain functioning, including mood and critical thinking.

Fatty fish like salmon and tuna have the most naturally occurring vitamin D. Some vitamin D can also be found in eggs, other dairy foods, and fortified beverages and breakfast cereals. Cod liver oil supplements are high in vitamins A and D and have some omega 3 fatty acids as well.

Sunlight is a major source of vitamin D. Five to thirty minutes of sun exposure twice a week generally produces enough vitamin D in the body. Lighter-skinned people require less time in the sun than those with darker skin.

Low levels of vitamin D are linked to depression,<sup>20</sup> in particular seasonal depression, which happens with reduced sunlight during winter.

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Staying active can benefit so many aspects of your health and can even prevent physical and mental health symptoms from worsening. It's important to incorporate exercise daily to ensure your body and your mind are healthy.

#### **EXERCISING BENEFITS NEARLY ALL ASPECTS OF A PERSON'S HEALTH**

In addition to helping control weight, it can improve the chances of living longer, the strength of bones and muscles, and your mental health.<sup>1</sup>



#### WHEN A PERSON DOESN'T GET ENOUGH EXERCISE, THEY ARE AT INCREASED RISK FOR HEALTH PROBLEMS

These include cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, and metabolic syndrome.<sup>2</sup>



### EXERCISE INCREASES A VARIETY OF SUBSTANCES THAT PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN BRAIN FUNCTION

BDNF	BDNF (brain derived neurotrophic factor) is a protein that creates and protects neurons (nerve cells) in the brain, helps these cells to transmit messages more efficiently, and regulates depression-like behaviors. <sup>3,4</sup>
ENDORPHINS	Endorphins are a type of chemical messenger (neurotransmitter) that is released when we experience stress or pain to reduce their negative effects and increase pleasure throughout the body. <sup>5</sup> Endorphins are also responsible for the euphoric feeling known as a "runner's high" that happens after long periods of intense exercise.
SEROTONIN	Serotonin is another neurotransmitter that increases during exercise. It plays a role in sending messages about appetite, sleep, and mood. <sup>6</sup> It is the target of a medications known as SSRIs or SNRIs, which are used to treat anxiety and depression.
DOPAMINE	Dopamine is involved in controlling movement and the body's reward response system. Due to its role in how the body perceives rewards, it is heavily involved with addictions. When amounts of this chemical mesenger are low, it is linked to mental health conditions including depression, schizophrenia, and psychosis. <sup>7</sup>
GLUTAMATE & GABA	Glutamate and GABA (Gamma-amino butyric acid) both act to regulate the activity of nerve cells in the parts of the brain that process visual information, determine heart rate, and affect emotions and the ability to think clearly. <sup>8</sup> Low levels of GABA have been linked to depression, anxiety, PTSD, and mood disorders. <sup>9</sup>

#### EXERCISE CAN HELP PREVENT MENTAL ILLNESSES AND IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF TREATMENT

Just 1 hour of exercise a week is related to lower levels of mood, anxiety and substance use disorders.<sup>10</sup>

One study found that for people with anxiety, exercise had similar effects to cognitive behavioral therapy in reducing symptoms.<sup>12</sup>



Among people in the U.S., those who make regular physical activity a part of their routines are less likely to have depression, panic disorder, and phobias (extreme fears).<sup>11</sup>

For people with schizophrenia, yoga is the

exercise for reducing positive

associated with the disorder.13

most effective form of

and negative symptoms

#### HOW MUCH EXERCISE SHOULD YOU BE GETTING?

Exercise doesn't have to be done for hours on end. Ten minutes of moderate or vigorous activity at a time, fifteen times a week will get you to the recommended amount.

Muscle strengthening activities should be incorporated into your exercise routine twice a week. This includes yoga, lifting weights, resistance band exercises, and things like push-ups and sit-ups. Your muscles should be tired by the time you are finished with your exercises, but make sure you aren't trying to lift too much too soon or you could injure yourself.



You don't have to have a gym membership to make exercise a part of your life! Picking physical activities that are easy to incorporate into things you already do and having a strong social support system are important in incorporating exercise into your routine.



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That gut-wrenching feeling in the pit of your stomach is all too real – your gut is sensitive to emotions like anger, anxiety, sadness, and joy - and your brain can react to signals from your stomach. All the more reason to eat a balanced and nutritious diet – so that your gut and your brain can be healthy.

### WHAT IS "THE GUT"?

The gut includes every organ involved in digesting food and processing it into waste. The lining of your gut is often called "the second brain."



### **HOW IS THE GUT CONNECTED TO THE BRAIN?**

The gut or "second brain" can operate on its own and communicates back and forth with your actual brain. They are connected in two main ways:

#### PHYSICALLY

The vagus nerve, which controls messages to the gut as well as the heart, lungs, and other vital organs is the gut's direct connection to the brain.



#### The chemical messages that pass between the gut and the brain can be affected by the bacteria, viruses, and fungi that live in the gut called the "gut microbiome."

The bacteria, viruses, and fungi that live in the gut may be beneficial, harmless, or harmful.



The gut also connects with the

brain through chemicals like

CHEMICALLY

that send messages.

### HOW IS THE GUT MICROBIOME RELATED TO MENTAL HEALTH?

There is a strong relationship between having mental health problems and having gastrointestinal symptoms like heartburn, indigestion, acid reflux, bloating, pain, constipation, and/or diarrhea.1





Having anxiety and depression can cause changes in the gut microbiome because of what happens in the body when it has a stress response.<sup>2</sup>

Research in animals has shown that changes in the gut microbiome and inflammation in the gut can affect the brain and cause symptoms that look like Parkinson's disease, autism, anxiety and depression.



#### **TIPS FOR TAKING CARE OF YOUR GUT**

Eating a balanced and nutritious diet is the most important thing a person can do to keep their gut healthy.

#### **D**0

Eat a diet full of whole grains, lean meats, fish, fruits, and vegetables.





DON'T

Base your diet on sugary, fried, or processed foods and soft drinks.

Feed the good bacteria, viruses, and fungi that live in the gut what they like to help them grow. These foods are called prebiotics.

Prebiotic foods are high in fiber and work best when they are raw. Try asparagus, bananas (especially if they aren't quite ripe), garlic, onions, or jicama. If you can't stand the taste of these foods raw, you can try steaming them lightly to still get most of their prebiotic benefits. Tomatoes, apples, berries and mangos are also good prebiotic choices.



You can also eat bacteria. Probiotics are live bacteria that exist in foods.

Eating probiotics can be tricky. The types and amounts of bacteria in probiotics vary, and when foods are heated the bacteria often die. Examples of probiotic foods are yogurt (the label should say live or active cultures), unpasteurized sauerkraut and kimchi, miso soup, kefir (a yogurt-like beverage), kombucha (fermented black tea), tempeh (made of soy beans), and apple cider vinegar.



You can also get probiotic supplements to help grow good gut bacteria, but it is important to pick the right ones. Make sure the type of bacteria is listed on the bottle – Bifidobacterium and Lactobacillus are some of the most common – and that the label says that the bacteria are live and there are billions of colony forming units (CFUs). Store them in a cool, dry place like the refrigerator.



#### **OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER**

Avoid taking antibiotics unless your doctor says they are absolutely necessary. Antibiotics kill bad bacteria, but also kill the good bacteria that keeps your gut working properly.

If you have gut problems like an upset stomach or unusual bathroom habits that don't go away it is important to see a doctor. Start with your primary care doctor. They may recommend you see a specialist called a gastroenterologist.

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Your physical and emotional health depends so much on how rested you are. Sleep is fundamental to a healthy mind and body – getting a good night's sleep can make a huge difference in your overall health.

#### **SLEEP AFFECTS THE ENTIRE BODY**

It plays a role in our moods, ability to learn and make memories, the health of our organs, how well our immune system works, and other bodily functions like appetite, metabolism, and hormone release.



#### SLEEP IS IMPORTANT DOWN TO THE CELLULAR LEVEL

Sleep helps the body to re-energize its cells.

It also increases the amount of space between brain cells to allow fluid to flow and clear away toxins.<sup>1</sup>

### HOW MUCH SLEEP SHOULD YOU BE GETTING?

If you get approximately 8 hours each night, you'll spend about 1/3 of your life asleep. Based on the average U.S. life expectancy<sup>2</sup>, that is 230,680 hours or 26.3 years of sleep in a lifetime.

The amount of sleep you need each night depends on your age. The National Sleep Foundation recommends:<sup>3</sup>



#### **QUALITY OF SLEEP MATTERS**

Good quality sleep means:<sup>4</sup>

Being asleep for at least 85% of the time you are in bed



Falling asleep in 30 minutes or less



Waking up no more than once per night for no longer than 20 minutes

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When a person consistently struggles to get enough sleep or good quality sleep, they have a higher risk for health problems like high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, depression, and obesity.<sup>5</sup>



Poor quality of sleep can increase the risk of developing mental health symptoms like: manic episodes<sup>6</sup>, a first episode of psychosis<sup>7</sup>, paranoia<sup>8</sup>, anxiety<sup>9</sup>, and depression.<sup>10</sup>



Sleep problems affect 50% to 80% of people under the care of a psychiatrist, compared with 10% to 18% of adults in the general U.S. population.<sup>11</sup>



Among visitors to mhascreening.org who scored moderately to severely depressed, 95% reported trouble falling asleep or sleeping too much at least several days in the past month.<sup>12</sup>

Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day—including weekends. This helps to keep your body's natural rhythms running on schedule.	Avoid exercising 2-3 hours before your bedtime. Try to exercise in 30 minute sessions either in the morning or afternoon.	Get out in the sun - getting natural sunlight during the day helps to maintain your body's sleep-wake cycle. Aim for 30 minutes of sun exposure and be sure to wear sunscreen.		
Limit caffeine to the morning. The energy-boosting effects of caffeine can take as long as 8 hours to wear off.	Don't eat right before bed - it can cause indigestion and heartburn, which can mess up sleep.	Nap smart. If you need a nap, take it before 3 p.m. and limit it to an hour.		
If you can't fall asleep for more than 20 minutes after going to bed, get up and do something calming until you feel sleepy.	Say no to nicotine. The nicotine in tobacco products and vapes is a stimulant, which can keep you up at night.	See a doctor if you always feel tired even after getting enough sleep, or have trouble falling asleep every night.		
Some over-the-counter and prescription medications may affect your ability to go to sleep or cause you to sleep for longer than necessary. If you can't avoid medications, talk to your doctor.	Get rid of anything in your bedroom that might distract you from sleep, like noises or bright lights. The light from screens can confuse your body's internal clock.	Go easy on the drinks. Drinking too much before bed can make you wake up to go to the bathroom and alcohol gets in the way of reaching the deep and restful stages of sleep.		

TIPS FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SI FFP

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No one likes to be stressed out – especially when we know it can be linked to poor health. Learning how to manage your stress can be a small change with a big positive impact on your physical and mental health.

#### **EVERYONE HAS STRESS**

Stress is a normal part of life. You can feel stress in your body when you have too much to do or when you haven't slept well. You can also feel stress when you worry about things like your job, money, relationships, or a friend or family member who is struggling with illness or difficult circumstances.



In response to these strains, your body releases chemicals that cause increases in blood pressure, heart rate, breathing, availability of cell energy, and blood flow to your muscles. At the same time, it also releases chemicals to slow down less urgent bodily functions that deal with digestion, growth, sex, and aspects of the immune system.

These stress responses are intended to help your body react quickly and effectively to dangerous or high-pressure situations – known as the "fight or flight" reaction - and were especially important when our ancestors were living in the wilderness, facing exposure to predators and extreme weather conditions.

# WHEN STRESS DOESN'T LET UP

When stress comes and goes relatively quickly the body can return to functioning in a normal, healthy way. When you are constantly reacting to stressful situations (chronic stress), cells in your immune system can cause inflammation that doesn't go away.<sup>1</sup>

Chronic stress and inflammation have been linked to reduced ability to fight off viruses (from HIV to the common cold), and increased risk for heart disease, headaches, intestinal problems, sexual dysfunction, diabetes, and even cancer.<sup>2</sup>



#### Stress can also cause a number of other physical symptoms, including:

Acne and other skin problems





Nausea, stomach pain, and heartburn



Diarrhea, constipation and other digestive issues



Irregular or painful periods



Changes in appetite and weight



BE REALISTIC	You may be taking on more responsibility than you can or should handle for yourself or your family. If you feel overwhelmed by how many things are on your schedule, it's ok to say "No" to new activities! You may also decide to stop doing an activity that is not 100% necessary. If friends or family criticize your decisions, give reasons why you're making the changes. If you are a parent and your kids' activities are part of your stress, be willing to listen to their concerns and stay open to compromise.	
NO ONE IS PERFECT	Shed the "superman/superwoman" urge. Don't expect perfection from yourself or others. Ask yourself, What really needs to be done? How much can I do? Is the deadline realistic? What adjustments can I make?" Don't hesitate to ask for help if you need it.	
MEDITATE	Just ten to twenty minutes of quiet reflection may bring relief from chronic stress as well as increase your tolerance to it. Use the time to listen to music, relax and try to think of pleasant things or nothing.	
VISUALIZE	Use your imagination and picture how you can manage a stressful situation more successfully. Whether it's a business presentation or moving to a new place, many people feel visual rehearsals boost self-confidence and help them to take a more positive approach to a difficult task.	
ONE THING AT A TIME	For people under tension or stress, their day-to-day workload can sometimes seem unbearable. You may feel like you have to multi-task, but that often leads to more stress. Take one task at a time. Make a list of things you need to get done and start with one task. Once you accomplish	
	that task, choose the next one. The feeling of checking items off a list is very satisfying and can motivate you to keep going.	
EXERCISE	Regular exercise is a popular way to relieve stress. It gives an outlet to energy your body makes when it is preparing for a "flight or fight" response to stress or danger. Twenty to thirty minutes of physical activity benefits both the body and the mind.	
GET A HOBBY	Take a break from your worries by doing something you enjoy. Whether it's gardening, painting, doing jigsaw puzzles or playing video games, schedule time to indulge your interests. The "zoned out" feeling people get while doing these types of activities is a great way to relax.	
VENT	Talking with a friend or family member lets you know that you are not the only one having a bad day, caring for a sick child or working in a busy office. Try to limit complaining and keep conversations constructive. Ask them how they have dealt with a similar situation that may be "stressing you out." Let them provide love, support and guidance. Don't try to cope alone.	
BE FLEXIBLE	If you find you're meeting constant opposition in either your personal or professional life, rethink your approach. Arguing only intensifies stressful feelings. Make allowances for others' opinions and be prepared to compromise. If you are willing to be accommodating, others may meet you halfway. Not only will you reduce your stress, you may find better solutions to your	
	problems.	
GO EASY ON CRITICISM	You may expect too much of yourself and others. Try not to hold on to frustration of disappointment when another person does not measure up. The "other person" may be a coworker, spouse, or child whose behavior you are trying to change or don't agree with. Avoid criticisms about character, such as "You're so stubborn," and try providing helpful suggestions for how someone might do something differently. Also remember to be kind to yourself	
	Negative self-talk doesn't fix problems and will make you feel worse.	

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For a complete list of sources, download the complete 2018 May is Mental Health Month toolkit for end notes or visit the corresponding page on our website, www.mentalhealthamerica.net.

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# **Feeling stressed?**

The **21-Day Meditation Experience** can help you:

- Find inner peace.
- Manage stress more effectively.
- Become more self-aware.



Visit **wellwisconsin.staywell.com** to get started.

### Earn your \$150 Well Wisconsin incentive

Complete a health screening, health assessment and a well-being activity by October 19, 2018 to earn **\$150\***. Completing the 21-Day Meditation Experience qualifies as a well-being activity.

TAYWELL



\*To participate in the Well Wisconsin Program, you must be an employee or spouse enrolled in the State of Wisconsin Group Health Insurance Program. All wellness incentives paid to participants by StayWell are considered taxable income to the group health plan subscriber and are reported to your employer for tax purposes. Health information, including responses to the health assessment, are protected by federal law and will never be shared with ETF, the Group Health Insurance Program or your employer.

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# MAYIS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Since 1949, May has been celebrated in the United States as Mental Health Awareness Month. While there's never a bad time to focus on mental health, this May will bring special attention to raising awareness of the realities of mental illness as well as ways to improve mental health and well-being.

Even though help is available, fewer than half of children and adults with diagnosable mental health challenges receive treatment. One of the best things we can do is educate ourselves on the factors that indicate – and potentially contribute to – mental illness, reaching out to those we know to do the same. If you'd like more information about mental health and what you can do to promote awareness, speak with your EAP.

# **VEBINAR** 05.16.2018 12:00pm EST

REGISTER

## The Future of Mental Health

Although the pace of change in science and technology can be stressful, the medical and mental health fields are making advances that were unimaginable just a few years ago. Join us for a look at some of the latest trends in mental health and learn more about what you can do personally to keep yourself mentally healthy in the 21st century.

## Michael McCafferty

Sr. Account Manager, FEI Behavioral Health

fel workforce resilience

City of Madison 1-800-236-7905 or 414-256-4800 www.feieap.com username: madison



Thanks for reading,

we hope you found the information useful!

You can reach any of us by calling the EAP Office at (608) 266-6561

External Available 24/7: FEI Workforce Resilience (800) 236-7905 Tresa Martinez, tmartinez@cityofmadison.com

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To learn more about your external EAP services, please contact FEI at 1-800-236-7905 or log on to **feieap.com** and type username: madison.