

The Continuum Edge

RESOURCES FOR EVERYONE

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RENEWING INTIMACY FOR LONG-TERM COUPLES

The spark of intimacy may need a gentle rekindling if you have weathered years in a relationship. Consider dedicating quality “intentional” time — purposeful and deliberate actions taken with the specific goal of bringing you closer together. The idea is to not wait until you “feel” like sharing time together, but engage in activity to rekindle the type of relationship you want. It follows the adage “bring the body and the mind will follow.”

Note: Intentional activities involve conscious choices, communication, engagement and a focus on building closeness.



USE ANTICIPATORY JOY TO MANAGE WORK STRESS



Looking forward to something enjoyable coming up can create a positive emotional state to help you manage stress better. Biology is key in this stress management technique known as “anticipatory joy” or “positive anticipation.” The anticipation of an enjoyable experience releases dopamine, a neurotransmitter that produces a sense of pleasure and reward.



This uplifts your mood and counteracts stress hormones. Try it. Focus on a soon-to-be-experienced activity — or plan one now — that will bring joy and excitement. See if this strategy shifts your attention away from stressors and creates positive thinking. The payoffs are reduced anxiety, improved mood, increased motivation and a sense of purpose.



Get help and support, and learn how to manage job strain if you identify with some of the following:

- Consistently feeling overwhelmed by the amount of work.
- Frequently working long hours or taking work home to meet deadlines.
- Frequently dealing with emotionally challenging clients, patients or customers.
- Needing to suppress emotions to remain calm in stressful situations.
- Feeling emotionally drained or exhausted after work.
- Having little or no control over work duties, including the methods and pace.
- Finding decisions about the job are being made by someone else or being micromanaged with no autonomy.
- Receiving no support from others when facing work challenges.
- Frequent isolation on the job.
- Receiving little or no training for the position.
- Performing repetitive or physically demanding tasks.

JOB STRESS VS. JOB STRAIN

Job strain refers to heightened levels of stress in the workplace that surpass typical levels, potentially leading to severe health consequences if not adequately addressed. You will find job strain occurs when high demands of a job are coupled with low control over the duties. Strain increases with the inability to know how long engaging with demands will last and a feeling of powerlessness to control decisions that might reduce strain.

Examples of positions with job strain include those found in fast-paced healthcare settings like emergency rooms, teaching jobs in under-resourced schools, dangerous military occupations, and even some highly demanding home health aide jobs.

BEST WAY TO UTILIZE A TO-DO LIST



To improve the effectiveness of to-do lists, consider these tips:

Write down all tasks in “mind dump fashion” and prioritize later.

Break up any big tasks into small doable steps.

Do not make your to-do list too long because if one glance at the list causes you to feel overwhelmed, you may become demotivated, put it aside, and not complete it. Identify urgent versus important tasks — not hardest first and easiest later.

Add deadlines to each item because your to-do list is an action plan, not just a memory jogger.