

## Teaching Children to Be Better Problem Solvers



**If** you are a parent of a young child, here's a "formula" for teaching problem solving: 1) Encourage the child to explain the situation needing a fix, solution, or answer. 2) Ask questions that prompt critical thinking and solutions. 3) Help the child break the problem up into smaller parts. Tackle one piece at a time. 4) Let the child brainstorm for answers. 5) Guide the child to the solution. 6) Praise the effort. 7) Talk about mistakes as learning tools and being okay. 8) Have a post-event discussion and reflect on the steps to solving a problem. For more opportunities to learn the problem-solving process, create problems. Example: "I don't know what to make for dinner, but this is what we have in the refrigerator."

## Living Better in the "Sandwich Generation"



**T**he "sandwich generation" refers to adults raising children under the age of 18 while also caring for elderly parents. Are you a member of this select group? If so, key stressors may include finding time for yourself—sleeping and eating well and engaging in physical activity—setting boundaries with finite time and energy resources, financial stress, a need for emotional support, and wondering what resources are out there to assist you. See the following website for help and support: U.S. Area Agencies at [www.usaging.org/adrcs](http://www.usaging.org/adrcs). In Canada, go to [Canada.ca](http://Canada.ca) and search "caregiver help."

## Prove Your Productivity as a Hybrid Worker



**R**emote workers can be more challenging to evaluate, but here is how you can worry less. 1) Set clear, measurable, gradable goals with your employer. Know how you are being evaluated. 2) Communicate regularly to keep your employer informed with regular check-ins and status updates. 3) Track and document your time to show your full effectiveness. 4) Be able to explain not just the amount of work you do but also the results you achieved. (This is often how productivity is measured.) 5) Be proactive with opportunities to go above and beyond, but more important is knowing what "outstanding, invaluable work" means to your employer.

## Can You Identify Pre-Burnout?

**I**t's not burnout yet, but do you have "precursor symptoms?" Preventing burnout is not a willpower exercise. And "a vacation" won't do it. It takes focus and some self-nurturing changes. A few early warning signs include noticing a lack of energy and feeling tired most days; difficulty staying focused on tasks; a surprising inability to self-motivate, deliver, or complete tasks on time; mild forgetfulness; awareness of loss of enjoyment from work; noticing a lack of productivity compared to an earlier time; being slower at responding to the needs of others at work; and feeling edgy, tense, and more easily "triggered." Other signs exist, so consider an assessment with a counselor or your employee assistance program and gain self-care skills unique to your life or situation to prevent burnout.



# Repairing a Workplace Relationship



**Y**ou've had an argument with a coworker and feel the need to repair a rough patch in your relationship. How do you proceed? 1) Start with giving yourself a pat on your back. Someone needs to make the first move, so let it be you. When you're ruminating about the conflict, it can be challenging to focus on work, leading to a reduction in productivity and efficiency. Start with a statement such as "I want to talk with you about the other day." Next, take responsibility—for your part in the argument. Apologize for words, actions, tonality, or non-verbal behaviors that caused discomfort. Say you want to move forward, and listen completely to your coworker's perspective. This active listening may help you grasp their point of view, but more importantly, it may encourage your coworker to reciprocate. Focus the discussion on the things you both care about and are trying to achieve. Consider agreeing on how to handle conflict in the future—your relationship "protocols" for managing conflict. Here's a key thing about coworker conflict: It might feel difficult to make the first move toward repair, but conflict left unresolved can create a toxic work environment, where tensions are high and communication becomes even more strained. Hint: Don't let positive relationships at work "just happen." Instead, consciously build on them and nurture trust, and you will observe that they are more resilient under stress.

# Absenteeism: #1 Cause Is Depression



**A**re you missing work for any of the following reasons? Lack of energy and motivation, making it challenging to get out of bed; not being able to concentrate at work, and feeling more exhausted if you try to do so; feelings of worthlessness or guilt, making you feel you aren't good enough to be at work; fatigue, headaches, or stomach issues that seem to zap your energy; or feeling so anxious and nervous about interacting with others that you stay home. Any of these may be related to depression. Talk to your Employee Assistance Program, a doctor, or another professional. An assessment takes only minutes, and there are helpful ways to get you back on the job. Depression is the #1 issue contributing to absenteeism, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and the behaviors above are the most common symptoms.

# Stress Management Tips from the Field: Work Mistakes Happen



**B**ig mistakes can cause panic to well up inside you. Don't panic; instead, manage them with a cool head. 1) Own up to your mistake. It is the fastest way to move forward toward finding a solution. 2) Apologize to those affected by the mistake because a sincere apology rebuilds trust. You'll discover a nearly universal truth—that people want to forgive and move forward. 3) Understand why the mistake happened, and take time to reflect on what went wrong so you can avoid it in the future. 4) Develop a plan to fix the mistake and rectify the situation. 5) Be visible in the process of implementing the solution, and others will observe and remember how committed you are to fixing mistakes and moving forward. 6) Move on. You've learned from the experience. Don't dwell on mistakes. Forgive yourself because your organization needs you back.

# Should You Consume Less News?

**B**roadcast news can be distressful, but if it's causing too much unease, be more strategic about consumption. Set aside a specific time daily to catch up, but only to your limit of exposure. You'll avoid "doom scrolling"—the behavior of frequently checking news, especially online, to see what is being publicized. You'll feel more in control. Engage in mindfulness and meditation to reduce anxiety. Easily learned, these stress management techniques can quickly calm your mind and are powerful resilience tools for general stress management. Mindfulness involves the skill of focus, while meditation involves focusing on your breath or a mantra to help quiet your mind. Learn about meditation and mindfulness techniques. Find expert articles at [Wikihow.com](https://www.wikihow.com).

