

EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

LIFE ADVISOR

March 2020

LifeAdvisorEAP.com

Ulliance
Enhancing People. Improving Business.



“ Life can be hard. Talking can help.

Easing Into Mid-Life

Have you noticed how people tend to stop listening to new music and stick to their familiar old standbys by the time they're middle aged? Researchers have discovered we identify with favorite genres of music in our teen years and our interest in exploring other types of music peaks and typically fades by age 30. So there's a reason why we listen to old, favorite go-to songs. Plus, it triggers a pleasure response in the brain, so there's nothing to be ashamed of in listening to old music; it's free and in ample supply.

But sticking to the same playlists you had in your 20s and 30s is only fine for music; in most other areas of life, changes are required to adapt to middle age.

Ulliance promotes the “5 to Thrive” campaign to highlight the five different areas of a person's life that need attention to support a complete sense of well-being. The five topics are the physical, emotional, financial, career and community aspects of your life. Consider how each of the five areas needs change in response to the aging.

Physical:

Mid-life is when the aging process speeds up. People may be shocked to learn the exercise and diet that sustained them throughout adulthood no longer works for them. In fact, people with a history of poor diet and exercise will find the accumulative effects catching up with them in mid-life, necessitating change in order to treat the symptoms of diseases like diabetes, brittle bones and cardiovascular disease. Even people who have maintained good diet and exercise are not completely protected from the advances of aging; it's a one-way street and our bodies wear out. But the good news is we can slow down the process and even reverse some damages done. A recent Swedish study found that exercise is the number one contributor to longevity, adding extra years to your life—even if you don't start exercising until your senior years. There are examples everyday of people who have reached the best shape of their lives after 50!



Ulliance recommends: *Get active and boost vitality. Make health a priority!*

Emotional:

Midlife is a natural time to pause and reflect on your life and with the sense of perspective you can only have in mid-life, the experience can evoke strong feelings. People struggle with missed opportunities, regrets, worries and concerns about their lot in life when reality doesn't match where they thought they should be by this age. This is why people experience "mid-life crises" at this time.

People who are middle aged also have the potential of lots of competing stressors: still raising kids, helping to launch young adults, caring for aging parents, dealing with their own changing bodies, preparing for retirement. Not only are the stakes high during this time of life, but your ability to regulate your emotions can be compromised; men lose testosterone and can become more emotional, and women enter menopause that can create unpredictable mood changes.



As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands—one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.

Audrey Hepburn

There's some good news though: overall, you tend to be happier and better able to tolerate emotional stimuli during your mid-life. Older people report feeling more comfortable, "in their own skin" and less interested in keeping up with the Jones'. Research suggests, for example, the middle-aged mind is calmer, less neurotic and better able to sort through social situations. And we know now, that old dogs CAN learn new tricks; your brain has the ability to reorganize pathways, create new connections, and, in some cases, even create new neurons. But like muscles, you have to use it or lose it; neurons that are used frequently develop stronger connections, and those that are rarely or never used eventually die. So while there are built in challenges in managing emotions in mid-life, there's also hope you can take steps toward a healthy emotional life.

Ulliance recommends: Develop new goals for mid-life and seek out someone to talk to when the going gets rough.



Financial

Preparing for retirement is a daunting task for most, but necessary, and there are many resources to help. If you don't have a plan, now is the time to consult with a retirement specialist. The government allows individuals over the age of 50 legal ways to "catch up" with extra contributions to their retirement funds if they're falling short. If you already have a plan, now is a good time to revisit it and make necessary adjustments as you head into the home stretch. You can catch up, there are options.

Ulliance recommends: *visiting a qualified retirement expert to help re-think your budget, and stick to it!*

Career:

By time mid-life arrives, people come to realize, “life is short,” so staying in jobs that brings no joy becomes a challenge. While it is possible to switch careers late in life and for some, there is more opportunity to do that, it can be a scary prospect to give up a sure thing for an unknown. We also know that people over 50 have the hardest time finding new employment, so any change needs to be well thought out.

In terms of a career, it might be helpful to start thinking about how a post career might look; how to ease into retirement. People who go abruptly from 40+ hours of work a week to no work tend to struggle before settling down into post-career life. Make plans now that include transitioning into retirement, like strengthening support systems, making new friends, discovering new hobbies and interests.

Ulliance recommends: try to find a sense of meaning and joy from your career. Speak with a career counselor about plans to shift careers and make a plan.

Community:

We tend to think of developmental milestones as pertinent to babies and toddlers, but the fact is, (if you’re lucky) you’ll continue to have developmental milestones all throughout your life. In order to feel successful in mid-life, it helps to know you’re still contributing to society and the community.

It is a universal need to have a sense of belonging and unfortunately, older people are at risk for becoming increasingly isolated. Kids grow up and move out, friends and family move or pass away – anyone who has neglected ties to their community will be challenged after they retire. Start making connections in mid-life to secure a sense of belonging, to give back to the community and still contribute to society.



Ulliance recommends: *getting involved in local politics, take a class, volunteer and get active in your community.*

Ulliance not only provides face-to-face counseling services as part of your EAP benefit but counseling and coaching services are just a phone call away!

Speak to a counselor or coach on the phone when it's convenient for you —evening hours included! We can help keep you on track and accountable!



We're available 24/7: 800.448.8326