State of Wisconsin Wellness News

December 2026

Recognizing and Managing Everyday Stress

Stress is a normal part of life. While some stress can motivate us to act, ongoing or unmanaged stress can affect physical health, emotional well-being, relationships, and our ability to focus. Learning to recognize the signs of stress is an important first step in managing it.

Stress doesn't look the same for everyone. Sometimes it's obvious, but other times it builds up gradually and shows up in unexpected ways. Noticing changes in how we feel, think, and behave can help us recognize when stress is starting to take a toll.

Some common signs of stress could include:

- **Physical:** Headaches, muscle tension, fatigue, changes in sleep, or an upset stomach
- **Emotional:** Feeling overwhelmed, irritable, anxious, frustrated, or unusually sensitive
- **Mental:** Difficulty concentrating, racing thoughts, forgetfulness, or trouble making decisions
- **Behavioral:** Withdrawing, procrastination, changes in eating habits, or relying on unhealthy coping habits

Taking a moment to check in with yourself can help you identify what's contributing to stress before it becomes overwhelming. While we can't always control the situations and circumstances that cause stress, we can take steps to support our well-being and manage our response.

Ways to manage stress:

- **Focus on what you can control:** Identify what is within your influence and break overwhelming responsibilities into smaller, more manageable steps.
- **Find time to rest:** Prioritize sleep, movement, regular breaks, and activities that help you relax.
- **Set boundaries:** Recognize your limits, manage competing priorities, and give yourself permission to say no when needed
- **Stay connected:** Reach out to people you trust. Talking things through can help provide perspective and support.
- **Practice self-compassion:** Give yourself grace, adjust expectations, and remember you don't have to do everything perfectly.

Remember, managing stress isn't about removing it completely; it's about recognizing what you are experiencing, understanding what you need, and developing healthy ways to respond. If stress begins to interfere with your daily life or well-being, additional support is available through the Employee Assistance Program.

Well Wisconsin

Stay in the Know about Well Wisconsin in 2027

Want to be among the first to hear about the 2027 Well Wisconsin program? Subscribe to ETF's Health and Wellness News to receive the latest program updates, announcements, and wellness resources delivered right to your inbox.

How to Subscribe:

1. Visit the ETF Website.
2. Follow the instructions provided and be sure to check the box for Health and Wellness under Member updates.

EAP Corner

Navigating Holiday Grief

The holiday season can be a difficult time for those experiencing grief or loss. Traditions, gatherings, and memories can bring sadness and loneliness, no matter how much time has passed. If you are missing a loved one, adjusting to a new normal, or finding that the season brings unexpected emotions, give yourself grace and remember your path to healing doesn't need to follow a specific timeline. For guidance and support through grief, check out our Coping with Grief and Loss tip sheet. You can also reach out to the EAP for confidential support to help navigate your grief and connect with counseling or other helpful resources.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE EAP

Elevate Wisconsin®: The Course to Financial Security

Managing Financial Stress Online Course



Managing your finances can be an overwhelming experience for anyone, regardless of your financial situation. Whether you're paying down debt or saving for a future goal, stress can either motivate you to make positive choices and change, or it can have a lasting impact on your overall well-being.

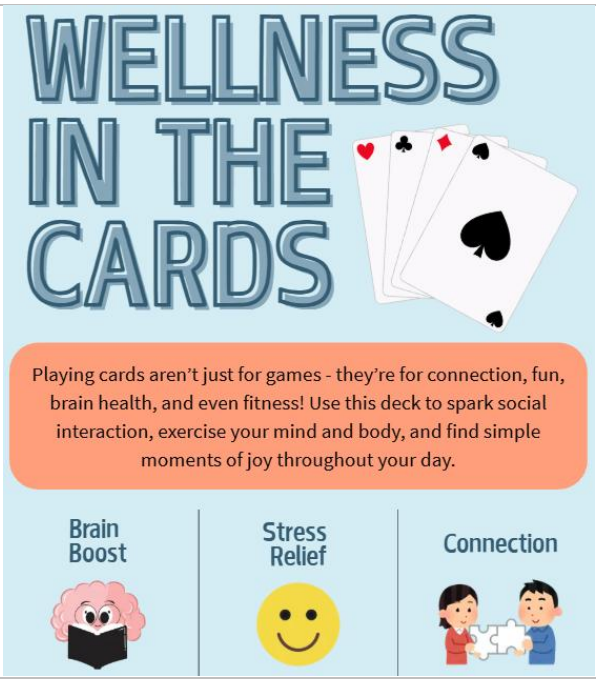
The Managing Financial Stress interactive course explores how financial stress affects your well-being and offers practical strategies for managing it, along with free resources to help you take positive steps towards greater financial well-being. This course, along with others available through the Elevate Wisconsin program, is available at no cost to State of Wisconsin employees and their families.

Supported by the Governor's Council on Financial Literacy and Capability and the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions(DFI), Elevate Wisconsin® provides trustworthy, unbiased content that does not try to sell products or services. All State of Wisconsin employees and their families can access this free benefit 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you have questions, please contact the DFI Office of Financial Literacy Director David Mancl at David.Mancl@dfi.wisconsin.gov.

Monthly Mental Health Boost

Wellness in the Cards

Playing cards aren't just for games! They're a simple way to encourage connection, have fun, support brain health, and even get moving. With a little creativity and a standard deck of cards, you can spark social interaction, exercise your mind and body, and find moments of joy throughout your day. Check out the Wellness in the Cards flyer for three creative ways to use a deck of cards to support your mental, physical, and social well-being. Pick one of the activities to try this month and see where a little card game and take you!



State of Wisconsin Employee Wellness Webinars

Please join us for an upcoming webinar with one of our trusted well-being partners.
Click each title to view course details and to register.

Date	Time	Event	Host
On-going	On-Demand	Well Wisconsin Radio Podcasts	Well Wisconsin
On-going	On-Demand	Well Wisconsin Recorded Webinars	Well Wisconsin
On-going	On-Demand	Group Fitness Classes	Well Wisconsin
On-going	On-Demand	EAP Recorded Webinars	EAP
Every Tue	11:40am – 12:00pm	Weekly Mindfulness Practice with Dan Tyler	Enterprise Wellness
Every Thu	11:00am – 11:20am	Weekly Mindfulness Practice with Dan Tyler	Enterprise Wellness
Varies	Varies	December Well Wisconsin Events	Well Wisconsin
December 1	9:00am – 9:45am	Getting to Know Your EAP	EAP
December 1	10:00am – 10:45am	Getting to Know Your EAP For Managers	EAP
December 9	12:30pm – 1:30pm	How to Forgive and Let Go	EAP
December 16	11:00am – 12:00pm	NEW DATE: Mindfulness for Stress Relief	Enterprise Wellness

Stay informed! Receive this newsletter, resources, and learning opportunities directly by joining our mailing list. Email wellness@wisconsin.gov to sign up.

Newsletter produced by the Bureau of Equity and Inclusion for State of WI employees.