



STATE OF NEW JERSEY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

April
2026

EMPLOYEE ADVISORY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

The New Jersey Civil Service Commission's Employee Advisory Service (EAS) Newsletter contains useful articles and information for managing various well-being and work-life issues in order to create a healthier, happier, and more productive workplace. EAS is committed to improving the quality of life for all New Jersey Civil Service employees by encouraging a good work-life balance.



UPCOMING WEBINAR

TAKE CONTROL BEFORE STRESS TAKES OVER: SHIFTING YOUR PERSPECTIVE FOR GREATER BALANCE

About the Webinar:

Elevated stress has become the norm, but it doesn't have to derail your productivity or peace of mind. This solution-focused session delivers concrete strategies for managing your stress response more effectively.



Date: April 23, 2026
Time: 2:00-3:00 PM

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The Power of Pause: Harnessing Mindfulness for Workplace Success
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5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT RELAXATION TECHNIQUES FOR STRESS

When you're under stress, your body reacts by releasing hormones that produce the "fight-or-flight" response. Your heart rate and breathing rate go up and blood vessels narrow (restricting the flow of blood). Occasional stress is a normal coping mechanism. But over the long-term, stress may contribute to or worsen a range of health problems including digestive disorders, headaches, sleep disorders, and other symptoms.

In contrast to the stress response, the relaxation response slows the heart rate, lowers blood pressure, and decreases oxygen consumption and levels of stress hormones. In theory, voluntarily creating the relaxation response through regular use of relaxation techniques could counteract the negative effects of stress.

1. **Relaxation techniques are generally safe, but there is limited evidence of usefulness for specific health conditions.** Research is under way to find out more about relaxation and health outcomes.
2. **Relaxation techniques include a number of practices such as progressive relaxation, guided imagery, biofeedback, self-hypnosis, and deep breathing exercises.** The goal is similar in all: to consciously produce the body's natural relaxation response, characterized by slower breathing, lower blood pressure, and a feeling of calm and well-being.
3. **Relaxation techniques often combine breathing and focused attention to calm the mind and the body.** These techniques may be most effective when practiced regularly and combined with good nutrition, regular exercise, and a strong social support system.
4. **Most relaxation techniques can be self-taught and self-administered.** Most methods require only brief instruction from a book or experienced practitioner before they can be done without assistance.
5. **Do not use relaxation techniques as a replacement for conventional care or to postpone seeing a doctor about a medical problem.** Talk to your health care providers if you are considering using a relaxation technique for a particular health condition. This will help ensure coordinated and safe care.

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING STRESS



Feeling stressed? You're not alone. Recent studies show that more people are experiencing higher levels of stress these days and for longer periods.

Stress is often defined as a normal reaction to everyday challenges. It can be short-term, long-term, or recurring. It also falls on a spectrum, from mild to severe.

Our stress response is wired into our DNA and is often referred to as our fight, flight, or freeze response. When we experience stress, our body releases stress hormones, which influence how we think, feel, and act.

Our stress response has been an important survival tool, especially when facing immediate stressors. However, much of today's stress is recurring or long-term, causing our stress hormones to remain elevated for longer periods, without having a chance to return to normal.

When stress hormones remain elevated, especially for weeks, months, or years, they can negatively impact our physical health, mental health, and behaviors.

Ten years ago, life's most common stressors centered around money, work, family responsibilities, and health concerns. While these common stressors are still with us, studies show that more people are experiencing stress from today's larger socio-economic challenges, such as inflation, violence, and political divisiveness.

While it's always helpful to address the underlying issues causing the stress, many larger issues remain beyond our control. When that's the case, it's helpful to know how to manage stress to help minimize its harmful impact. Here are some strategies to keep in mind:

- Accept that life has uncertainties.
- It's helpful to focus on what remains within your control, whatever the circumstances.
- Disrupt negative thinking.
- Avoid ruminating on the past or worrying about potential consequences. If you find yourself spiraling into negative thinking or worst-case scenarios, focus instead on the best possible outcomes and try to take steps in that direction.
- Build healthy routines.
- A lifestyle centered around healthy eating, sleeping, exercising, socializing, and moderation can help strengthen your physical, mental, and emotional health—and help you find that inner strength for managing challenges.
- Take action.
- Voting, volunteering, reaching out to friends, and getting involved in the community are meaningful activities that can help relieve stress and improve stressful situations.
- Get empowered.

EAS is a tool that can help you manage life's many challenges by providing a whole health approach to wellness, with services to help you strengthen your mental health, physical health, financial health, and relationships, and find support and referrals for managing life's many other challenges.



Employee Advisory Service UPCOMING WEBINARS

REGISTER NOW



NJ EAS Supervisor / Manager Webinar

Recognition That Works: Practical Strategies to Drive Team Performance

Date / Time

- April 23, 2026
- 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

About this webinar:

Most managers recognize their employees inconsistently—or not at all. This session cuts through the feel-good rhetoric to show you what actually works. You'll learn the recognition methods proven to increase productivity, how to implement them without adding hours to your week, and why recognition is one of the highest-ROI management tools at your disposal.

NJ EAS Employee Webinar

Take Control Before Stress Takes Over: Shifting Your Perspective for Greater Balance

Date / Time

- April 23, 2026
- 2:00 – 3:00 PM

About this webinar:

Elevated stress has become the norm, but it doesn't have to derail your productivity or peace of mind. This solution-focused session delivers concrete strategies for managing your stress response more effectively. Through deliberate stress management techniques, emotional intelligence development, and better utilization of your professional and personal resources, you'll learn to not just survive stress—but thrive despite it.

2026 MENTAL WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM

Date / Time

- May 28, 2026
- 12:00 – 2:00 PM

The Power of Pause: Harnessing Mindfulness for Workplace Success

Employee Advisory Service (EAS)
Support - Empowerment - Growth

Your privacy is important to us. Your confidentiality is protected by state and federal law and regulations. All of the services offered are guided by professional and ethical standards. Contact us to learn more.



EAS_Help@csc.nj.gov



866- 327-9133



<https://nj.gov/csc/employees/advisory/>

How Can We
Help You?

Employee Advisory Service

Support - Empowerment - Growth



**Credit Union
of New Jersey**

The freedom to prosper.

Q2 Financial Wellness Webinar

Protecting Your Financial Identity

A financial wellness webinar designed to address current digital security concerns.

Topics include:

- Identity theft and
- AI understanding as strategies to protect yourself.

**Tuesday,
April 21, 2026**

- **Session A:**
 - 11am - 12noon
- **Session B:**
 - 1pm - 2pm

WEBINAR



SCAN TO REGISTER



Employee Advisory Service

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2026

MENTAL WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM

THE POWER OF PAUSE: HARNESSING MINDFULNESS FOR WORKPLACE SUCCESS

DATE: THURSDAY, 5/28/2026

TIME: 12PM TO 2PM

During these demanding times, this important session provides practical strategies for harnessing the power of pause to improve your workplace success. This workshop will enhance your ability to respond thoughtfully to difficult circumstances, manage emotions more effectively, and strengthen both your workplace relationships and your personal and professional support system.

AGENDA

- ~ **Power of Pause**
Greg Brannan
- ~ **How to use Yoga in the Workplace**
Takeema McCaskill
- ~ **Interactive Presentation**
Lynette Sheard and NJ Mental Health Players
- ~ **Reflection and Guided Meditation**
Djenaba Figueroa

**A VIRTUAL
EVENT**

RSPVP TODAY!



BREAK
TIME!



Contact EAS Today for Confidential 24-hour Support

Helpline: (866) 327-9133 Email: EAS_Help@csc.nj.gov

2026 MENTAL WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM GUEST FACILITATOR(S)

NJ MENTAL HEALTH PLAYERS



Mental Health
Association in
New Jersey, Inc.

Proud Affiliate of Mental Health America

Need emotional support,
information and referrals?

Call (866) 202-HELP (4357)

Daily: 8am – 8pm

Concerned about a loved one's
substance use? Call (855) 652-3737

Weekdays: 8am – 8pm

Weekends: 10am – 4pm

www.mhanj.org/nj-mental-health-players



Our Mission is to increase
awareness and education,
decrease stigma and
break the silence

ART AND MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY

TAKEEMA MCCASKILL CERTIFIED YOGA INSTRUCTOR

Check out Fitvational Yoga Home page!

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Fitvational Yoga



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fitvationcoach@gmail.com



Djenaba Figueroa

Speaker | Facilitator | Community Educator

Djenaba Figueroa is a speaker and facilitator who designs transformative learning experiences that strengthen voice, identity, well being and communication for youth, adults, and multigenerational audiences. Her work integrates public speaking, inclusive communication, mindfulness and reflective practice to support confidence, presence and personal growth. She is the former Director of Communications for University Equity and Inclusion at Rutgers University and the host of *Freestyle with Djenaba*, a storytelling platform and live podcast that explores life, purpose and authentic expression.

CORE TOPIC AREAS:

Voice, Identity and Storytelling

- Public speaking and self expression
- Confidence building
- Storytelling as a leadership practice
- Honoring lived experience

Resilience, Wellness, and Mindfulness

- Navigating change and uncertainty
- Sustainable resilience without burnout
- Mindfulness and stress reduction
- Grounding and reflection practices

Inclusive Communication and Connection

- Communicating across difference
- Respectful and inclusive language
- Listening as a leadership skill
- Building trust and belonging

Youth Confidence and Self Expression

- Voice development & public speaking
- Self confidence and self trust
- Emotional awareness
- Positive identity formation

Journaling and Reflective Practice

- Guided journaling for clarity
- Writing for resilience and processing
- Reflection during transitions
- Individual and group journaling experiences

Contact Information:

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Employee Advisory Service

Support - Empowerment - Growth



DID YOU KNOW?



EMPLOYEE ADVISORY SERVICE (EAS) CAN HELP STRENGTHEN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS.

Good relationships don't necessarily just happen. Developing and maintaining healthy partnerships with your spouse, family, friends and colleagues takes time, effort and understanding.

From improving communication skills, learning to give and take, and respecting one another to making time for yourself, problem-solving, having fun together, and more, EAS can provide guidance and helpful support. Call the Helpline today for confidential assistance.

Available Features

- 24/7 in-the-moment telephonic support
- Individual, marital and family counseling
- Information on pre-marital and marital counseling
- Referrals to local resources



**Contact EAS Today for
Confidential 24-hour Support**



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Email: EAS_Help@csc.nj.gov



<https://nj.gov/csc/employees/advisory/>



Employee Advisory Service

Support - Empowerment - Growth

EAS OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

Employee Advisory Service (EAS) is a program designed to assist employees and their dependents with personal, family, or work-related issues that may adversely impact their work performance. EAS provides confidential assessment, counseling, and referral services to help restore the health and productivity of employees and the workplace as a whole.

Here are some key points about EAS:

- **Purpose and Scope:**
 - EAS supports both employees and their household members.
 - It addresses a wide range of issues, including personal, family, and work-related challenges.
 - The goal is to provide timely and effective assistance while maintaining confidentiality.
- **Services Offered:**
 - *Assessment:* Employees can self-refer or be referred by their Appointing Authority for an intake/assessment session with a counselor.
 - *Counseling:* Professional counselors collaborate with regional providers to offer services throughout New Jersey.
 - *Referral:* EAS helps connect individuals with appropriate resources based on their needs.
- **Benefits for Employers:**
 - Employers can benefit from EAS services by promoting employee well-being, effectiveness, and efficiency.
 - EAS offers webinars and events focused on various topics relevant to employees and supervisors/managers.

If you have any concerns or need support, consider taking advantage of the resources provided by EAS. Our Outreach Team will visit your agency to inform employees about the free benefits that we provide, and how they can request our services. Ask your Human Resources Department to schedule an information session for your team today.



NUMBER:
1-866-327-9133

EMAIL:
EAS_HELP@CSC.NJ.GOV

24 HOURS A DAY 7 DAYS A WEEK
(EMERGENCY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES)

