



# STATE OF NEW JERSEY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

February  
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

#### HOW TO UTILIZE COMMUNICATION SKILLS TO MAXIMIZE CAREER SUCCESS

##### About the Webinar:

Many experts agree that good communication skills are vital to career success. This important session will discuss the core skills necessary to communicate effectively in both one-on-one and group settings, including emotional intelligence, listening respectfully, having collaborative conversations, and making memorable presentations.



**Date: February 26, 2026**  
**Time: 2:00-3:00 PM**

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# Employee Advisory Service

*Support - Empowerment - Growth*



**Credit Union  
of New Jersey**

The freedom to prosper.

## Q1 Financial Wellness Webinar

# Budgeting and Planning for Financial Milestones

Join EAS for our first financial wellness webinar of 2026. This webinar offers a comprehensive approach to financial planning.

Topics include

- Strategies to build a basic budget &
- Financial milestones

**Tuesday,  
February 17, 2026**

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

**WEBINAR**



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**SCAN TO REGISTER**





# HOW TO USE CONFLICT TO DRIVE POSITIVE CHANGE

Conflict is a natural part of life, whether in personal relationships, at work, or even within ourselves. But not all conflicts are created equal. Amanda Ripley, journalist and author of *High Conflict: Why We Get Trapped and How We Get Out*, distinguishes between two types of conflict: high conflict and good conflict. Understanding the difference can transform how we approach disagreements and help us move beyond entrenched positions.

## High Conflict vs. Good Conflict

In Ripley's framework, high conflict is the kind of disagreement that escalates quickly and becomes all-consuming. It involves intense emotions, demonization of the other side, and a sense that there's no way out. High conflict often traps people in a cycle of escalation, making it hard to think clearly or find common ground.

In contrast, good conflict is constructive. It's the kind of disagreement where both sides feel heard, and there's room for understanding. Good conflict encourages curiosity, problem-solving, and finding solutions that satisfy everyone's needs without shutting down the other person or resorting to personal attacks.

Ripley's insights show that it's not about avoiding conflict entirely; it's about fostering the right kind of conflict—the kind that leads to growth, insight, and stronger relationships.

## Managing Conflict: Understanding Over Resolution

Rather than rushing to resolve a conflict immediately, Ripley suggests that a better approach is to focus on understanding the root causes of the disagreement. When considering the 'understory' of any conflict, there are four primary categories: care and concern; respect and recognition; power and control; and stress and overwhelm.

For each of these types of conflicts, here are three strategies to help manage conflict in a way that prioritizes understanding:

- **Practice Active Listening:** Instead of preparing your counterargument or waiting for your turn to speak, listen to understand. This means acknowledging the other person's perspective, even if you don't agree. By validating their feelings or concerns, you create a space for dialogue that is less about winning and more about mutual understanding.



- **Avoid Tripwires:** Ripley highlights that certain topics or phrases can act as emotional “tripwires” that immediately escalate a conflict. For example, phrases like “you always” or “you never” often trigger defensiveness. By being aware of these tripwires, you can choose more neutral or open-ended language that keeps the conversation productive and reduces the chances of escalating the conflict.
- **Use “Looping” to Reflect and Clarify:** One of Ripley’s most effective tools for managing conflict is “looping,” which involves repeating back what the other person is saying in your own words. This technique shows that you are actively listening and gives the other person a chance to correct any misinterpretations. For example, you might say, “It sounds like you’re saying that you feel overlooked in meetings, is that right?” Looping helps de-escalate emotional tension and fosters a deeper understanding of the other person’s perspective.

By focusing on understanding rather than jumping straight to resolution, we can shift from high conflict to good conflict, creating healthier and more productive conversations. The goal isn’t necessarily to “win” the conflict but to navigate it with empathy, respect, and a deeper understanding of the needs at play.

There may be times when it’s helpful to seek guidance from a mental health professional. Free, confidential support is available through EAS.

Source: <https://allonehealth.com/insights/how-to-use-conflict-to-drive-positive-change/>



# HOW PRIORITIES AND BOUNDARIES HELP SUSTAIN SUCCESS

ABY Jill Hinrichs, Leadership and Team Development Coach, AllOne Health

Many professionals accept high-pressure work environments as a necessary part of success. The idea that demanding workloads and constant busyness are unavoidable can lead to stress and eventual burnout. However, research suggests that maintaining a healthy work-life balance is not only possible but essential for long-term performance and well-being.

When workplace stress becomes persistent, it is crucial to take proactive steps to restore equilibrium. Managing stress effectively allows individuals to stay engaged, productive, and resilient without sacrificing their health. The key lies in understanding how to regulate stress levels and maintain a sustainable approach to work and personal growth.

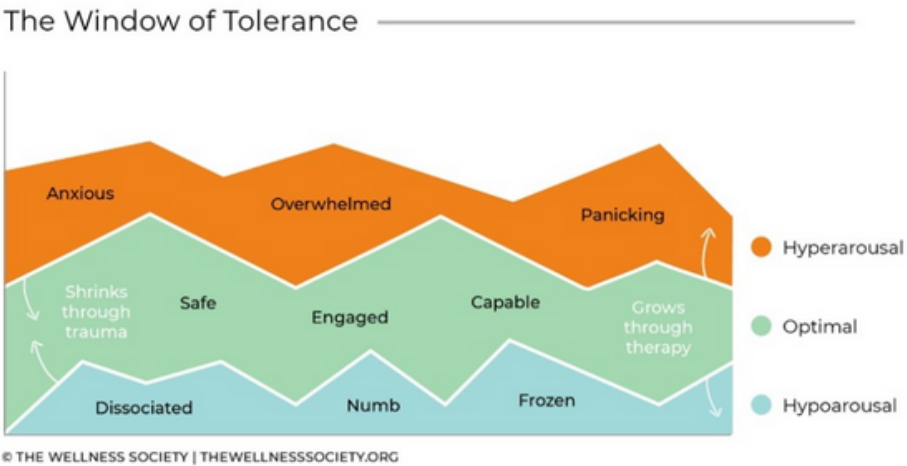
### Balancing Stress: The Window of Tolerance

In *Burnout Immunity*, Kandi Wiens introduces the “window of tolerance” concept, initially developed by Dr. Dan Siegel. This term describes an optimal zone of arousal within which we can effectively process and respond to daily demands. When we are within this window, we have access to our executive functioning skills—enabling us to plan, regulate emotions, and manage priorities efficiently.

Psychotherapist Linda Graham describes this as a state of regulation and equilibrium, where we are engaged yet calm, relaxed yet alert. Moderate stress can enhance cognitive function and working memory, but excessive stress can lead to decreased concentration, learning difficulties, and burnout. The goal is to maintain an ideal level of stimulation where performance and well-being align.

### The AllOne Consulting Four-Part Approach to Sustainable Success

AllOne Consulting has worked with hundreds of organizations across industries and developed an evidence-based, four-part approach to preventing burnout and fostering resilience. This framework helps professionals stay engaged, productive, and healthy without falling victim to chronic stress.



## 1. Awareness: Self-Reflection and Values Alignment

Self-awareness is the foundation of stress management. By regularly assessing our energy levels, work habits, and values alignment, we can make proactive adjustments to stay within our window of tolerance.

To cultivate self-awareness:

- Identify work activities that make you feel calm, engaged, and productive.
- Recognize positive habits that help maintain this state (e.g., sleep, exercise, nutrition).
- Take inventory of the support systems and resources that work best for you.
- Reflect on your top 4-5 personal values. When do you feel most aligned or misaligned with them at work?

Recognizing misalignment between values and daily tasks is crucial. Even subtle conflicts—like people-pleasing or conforming to a company culture that feels inauthentic—can contribute to burnout. Awareness allows us to make necessary changes to restore balance.

## 2. Bandwidth Management: Prioritization and Boundaries

Effective bandwidth management goes beyond time management—it involves accurately assessing personal limits and setting boundaries to protect energy levels.

A survey of 1,260 managers found that 68% struggle with prioritization, and 80% lack a structured process for focusing on what matters most. AllOne Consulting's *Do What Matters Most* workshop provides a research-backed approach to managing time, setting priorities, and maintaining work-life balance.

By applying a structured prioritization process, professionals can:

- Reduce task saturation and procrastination.
- Improve productivity by 30-50%.
- Establish boundaries that prevent stress from becoming toxic.

## 3. Teamwork: Leveraging Strengths and Psychological Safety

High-functioning teams play a crucial role in managing workplace stress. Tasks that feel draining to one person may be energizing for another, making it essential to assign responsibilities based on individual strengths.

Psychological safety, a concept popularized by Harvard professor Amy Edmondson, fosters an environment where team members feel safe to share ideas, ask questions, and admit mistakes without fear of criticism. A Psychological Safe Culture includes these aspects:

- **Trust & Respect:** Team members feel valued and heard.
- **Encouragement of Risk-Taking:** New ideas are welcomed without fear of backlash.
- **Mistakes as Learning Opportunities:** Errors are framed as opportunities for growth.
- **Inclusive & Nonjudgmental Culture:** Diverse perspectives are respected and embraced.

By fostering psychological safety, teams enhance collaboration, innovation, and overall workplace well-being.

## 4. Renewal Habits: Building Sustainable Behaviors

Maintaining balance requires intentional renewal habits. Drawing from James Clear's *Atomic Habits*, AllOne Consulting emphasizes small, consistent improvements that compound over time.

Four key principles of behavior change include:

- **Make it Obvious:** Design your environment to support good habits.
- **Make it Attractive:** Pair habits with rewards for motivation.
- **Make it Easy:** Start small and reduce friction (e.g., the "2-minute rule").
- **Make it Satisfying:** Use immediate rewards to reinforce positive behaviors.

## Take the First Step Toward Sustainable Performance

Managing stress effectively is a lifelong process. To get started, consider these small but impactful actions:

1. **Self-awareness:** Identify work that energizes you.
2. **Bandwidth Management:** Set one boundary that protects your well-being.
3. **Teamwork:** Align team tasks with individual strengths.
4. **Renewal Habits:** Establish one daily habit that supports your health.

Burnout is not a prerequisite for success. With the right strategies, professionals can thrive in demanding environments without sacrificing well-being. NJ EAS is here to help organizations and individuals navigate the tightrope of stress, ensuring sustainable performance and long-term fulfillment.



# EMPOWERING OUR CAREGIVERS

*By Kate Scheirman, MSW, LSW, Patient Health Advocate, and Lisa Bolt, AllOne Health*

Only when we first help ourselves can we effectively help others. Caring for yourself is one of the most important things you can do as a caregiver—and one of the most overlooked. When your needs are taken care of, the person you're caring for will benefit, too.

However, caregivers often report concerns with managing their own well-being while also managing caregiving responsibilities. Concerns include sleep deprivation, poor eating habits, failure to exercise, and failure to take care of themselves when ill or make timely medical appointments for themselves.

While it's important to take care of yourself first, we all know that's easier said than done. Recognizing your limitations and looking for ways to ease your stress and build resiliency is critical.

Allow time to refuel with rest and relaxation, maintain a healthy diet, and take care of your own health. After all, your mood is very important to the person you are caring for, and providing the best care possible will be challenging if you are exhausted or stressed.

To move forward on your path to wellness, you must continually commit to authentic self-care that includes:

- Health-building activities, such as exercise, massage, yoga, meditation, eating healthy foods, drinking plenty of water
- Practicing the art of self-management: Just say no
- Developing a healthy support system with people who contribute to your self-esteem, listen well, and care about you.
- Organizing your life so you become proactive as opposed to reactive
- Reserving your life energy for worthy causes

## **Preparing for what's next**

Take steps to prepare for what might happen. When a situation becomes stressful, you will be able to make better decisions and options will be readily available. Being prepared will help you avoid falling into “analysis paralysis.”

Being prepared is often referred to as “common sense preparedness.” Just as athletes train and musicians practice, you can learn new skills, gain knowledge, and line up support that will help you remain level-headed, focused, and forward-thinking.

EAS is here to help—providing free confidential support.

Source: <https://allonehealth.com/insights/empowering-our-caregivers/>



# Employee Advisory Service UPCOMING WEBINARS

**REGISTER NOW**



## NJ EAS Supervisor-Manager Webinar

### EAS Supervisor-Manager Orientation Webinar

**Date / Time**

- February 10, 2026
- 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

### The Keys to Creating a Thriving Team Culture

**Date / Time**

- February 26, 2026
- 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

**About this webinar:**

This important session is designed to help leaders to better understand the characteristics of a great team culture and provide several strategies for creating and maintaining a workplace environment in which their employees can thrive.

## NJ EAS Employee Webinar

### EAS Employee Orientation Webinar

**Date / Time**

- February 26, 2026
- 2:00 – 3:00 PM

### How to Utilize Communication Skills to Maximize Career Success

**Date / Time**

- February 26, 2026
- 2:00 – 3:00 PM


**About this webinar:**

Many experts agree that good communication skills are vital to career success. This important session will discuss the core skills necessary to communicate effectively in both one-on-one and group settings, including emotional intelligence, listening respectfully, having collaborative conversations, and making memorable presentations.

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](mailto: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*



## 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**



Helpline: (866)- 327-9133



Email: [EAS\\_Help@csc.nj.gov](mailto:EAS_Help@csc.nj.gov)



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



# Employee Advisory Service

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## 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)

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