

# Employee Assistance Program

Confidential resource for DA Civilians,  
Family members and Retirees.

PLANS FOR RETURNING  
TO THE  
WORKPLACE

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**\*\*Currently working remotely but STILL AVAILABLE via email and phone!!!**

For immediate EAP issues, please call 315-772-2597 \*\* Follow our Facebook page for

daily posts, videos & information to get through these stressful times!! [www.facebook.com/FortDrumASAP](https://www.facebook.com/FortDrumASAP)



## The New "Norm"

As the world begins to remove restrictions and slowly open up, more and more employees will be returning to the office. How each person handles returning to work in this new "normal" of continued social distancing, masks and anxiety is going to be different. The new type of coping will need to address how to reemerge into the world and deal with the various post-traumatic stress feelings it has caused.

"With COVID — and as things start to open up — this threat is invisible," says therapist Dawn Delgado. "This is something we can't see; this is not someone in a dark alley coming towards us. Since our nervous system is wired to seek out threats, this is an invisible threat, and that can only amplify anxiety for people."

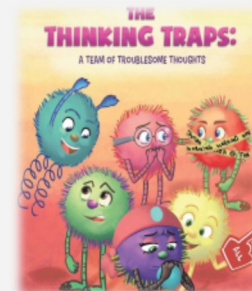
One thing we all need to keep in mind is not everyone reacts to stressors the same way. This certain stressor is unlike any other we, as a society, have faced. So remember this when your coworker asks you to please stand 6 feet away when you approach to discuss work. Or if someone requests you wear your mask during a meeting. Be aware of others feeling in the workplace. Some concerns will be amplified. There are going to be two types of employees returning to work:

**Employee A** will be excited they can finally leave their four walls and venture into the great outdoors to see all of the friends, coworkers or any other human they have so desperately missed. All while practicing safe guidelines.

**Employee B** will be having that growing anxiety feeling deep in their chest as they pack their bags with hand sanitizer, gloves, masks, Lysol sprays and wipes. They are about to leave their four walls they have been safely locked down in over the last 8+ weeks and venture out into the unknown to interact with others in an environment they are unsure is safe. Everyday might be filled with increasing emotions and worry until a vaccine is developed.

Keep mindful of others concerns in the "new" workplace. Remaining mindful of our thoughts can help ease the stress as we begin adapting to the new reality of living with the coronavirus. Don't shy away from the fact that sometimes the emotion people are feeling is simply fear.

Own the feeling Name it Realize it Then breathe through it  
Doing resilience and mindfulness practices keep us calm. So, even if those weren't a part of your daily practice prior to covid, now's a great time to integrate some meditative practices! This time of isolation showed us that we are more resilient than we knew!! Open up and continue to harness your post-traumatic growth and you will find you will be stronger than before the pandemic.



**\*\*\* If you would like more information on Avoiding Thinking Traps or other Resilience tools for your staff, contact me!! I would be happy to talk to you about how your team can benefit from Resilience training\*\*\***

## COVID-19 and Emerging into the World Again — Avoid Thinking Traps

When going back into the workplace and the new world, both employee types must ensure they are cognizant to avoid common thinking traps that may occur. What are thinking traps?? How could they affect our ability in assessing of certain situations?

**Thinking Traps** is another area addressed in Resilience training. Thinking Traps are rigid patterns in our thinking. They interfere with our ability to be accurate in assessing situations or individuals. So how could we find ourselves falling into Thinking Traps when we return to the workplace?

Employee A may see Employee B as overly dramatic and exaggerating the need to sanitize the world around them. Employee B may fall into the trap feeling Employee A has no concern for their well being; that Employee A doesn't care if Employee B falls ill to the coronavirus. When we are in a Thinking Trap, we are certain of our perception without evidence to support it. Are either of these thoughts true? No. But one moment in the office could trigger these thoughts...these thinking traps. Thinking Traps can be difficult to change if you do not work at it. Once we "fall" into these traps, it will be very difficult to change these thoughts if we do not work on them. If we can identify possible thinking traps in the moment, we can enhance our resilience and performance, and move forward in building strong relationships.

**So what are some common Thinking Traps we need to watch out for?? When reading these, think about times where you may already experienced these Traps in your professional and personal lives. Identifying the thought when it is occurring is the first step to moving past them and increasing our resilience.**

- ◆ **Jumping to Conclusions** is when you are CERTAIN about a situation despite having LITTLE or NO EVIDENCE to support it. Jumping to Conclusions can lead to a variety of Consequences, including Emotions in the sadness, anger, and guilt families. This is the *mother of all Thinking Traps*. Finding ourselves trapped in this cycle completely undermines our resilience.
- ◆ **Mind Reading** is when you ASSUME that you know what another person is thinking or EXPECTING another person to know what you are thinking. Mind Reading can lead sadness, anger, and guilt. Mind Reading can prevent effective communication because we can find ourselves not hearing what someone is saying because you think you already know what they think but are not saying. Mind Reading has two components: assuming you know what someone is thinking and expecting another person to know what you are thinking. Mind Reading is common in close relationships.
- ◆ **Me, Me, Me** is when you believe you are the SOLE CAUSE of EVERY problem you encounter. Me, Me, Me can lead to guilt, sadness, and embarrassment. There are times when it's important to take full responsibility for a situation if warranted but you must also look at all of the possible contributing factors to a problem. By recognizing that you are not the sole cause of every problem, you can hold other people accountable for their actions, allowing the people around you to take responsibility and grow/improve from the situation.
- ◆ **Them, Them, Them** is when you believe that other people or circumstances are the SOLE CAUSE of EVERY problem you encounter. Them, Them, Them can lead to anger and aggression, then ultimately, to a victim mentality in which you believes that they are at the mercy of other people or circumstances. It's critical to look at all of the possible contributing factors to a problem, which could include your own actions. This allows an accurate root cause analysis and also allows for you to take responsibility for your actions and identify areas that need growth and development.
- ◆ **Always, Always, Always** is when you believe negative events are UNCHANGEABLE and you have LITTLE or NO CONTROL over them. Can you think of a time you fell into this Trap? Always, Always, Always can lead to sadness and withdrawal. Over time, it can also lead to hopelessness, helplessness, and giving up. This Thinking Trap refers to time and is one of the most toxic Thinking Traps because it leads to helplessness and hopelessness. This could undermine resilience, effectiveness, and well-being by keeping you from seeing the situation accurately, similar to previous Traps.
- ◆ **Everything, Everything, Everything** is judging another person or oneself based on one event, and believing that the cause of one problem will negatively affect most areas of one's life. This Trap can lead to sadness and withdrawal. Over time, it can also lead to hopelessness, helplessness, and giving up. It refers to scope, or how many areas of your life will be affected. This is another toxic Thinking Traps, along with Always, Always, Always, because it leads to helplessness and hopelessness. This Trap limits one's ability to target behavior to effect change and leads to the inability to quarantine problems or compartmentalize into one area of life.