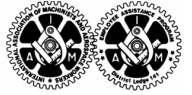




Helping Hands

District Lodge 141



Employee Assistance Program

www.iam141.org/eap/eap.html

May 2009

Dealing with Debt and Credit Problems

Are You in Trouble with Debt?

- An increasing amount of income is going to debt payments.
- You pay only the minimum on loans and credit cards.
- You have reached your limit on credit cards.
- You use credit cards for things you used to pay with cash.
- Debt prevents you from saving for retirement.
- You are worried, anxious, or sleepless over debt problems.
- You were in debt before, paid it off, but are in debt again.

Take Action Now

The first step to resolving debt problems is to decide on the steps to accomplish your goal. This includes making a complete list of the amounts owed and the terms of payment for each amount. Chances are you could use some advice on how to proceed. Many books exist on the subject of eliminating debt. Most bookstores will have numerous offerings. There are also non-profit organizations in every state. They can help you identify steps to take and provide other related services. These include working with your creditors to help make payments easier and advising you on the consequences of claiming bankruptcy, which should only be done with appropriate professional and legal guidance.

Credit Repair Service Scams

The Federal Trade Commission says don't believe advertisements heard on radio, newspapers, TV and the Internet that offer to erase, for a fee, accurate negative information in your credit file. Some of these companies promise to show you how to create a new credit history using a new employer identification number. Then, they advise you to use it instead of your social security number when you

apply for credit. Misrepresenting your social security number is illegal. The FTC says that virtually everything a credit repair service can do legally, you can do yourself.



What About Debt Repayment Services?

Debt repayment services can work, but you should review the options available in your community. Before you do business with any company, check it out with your local customer protection agency or the Better Business Bureau in the company's location. Some debt counseling service firms may charge high fees and fail to follow through on the services they sell. Others may misrepresent the terms of a debt consolidation loan, failing either to explain certain costs or to mention you are signing over your home as collateral.

What the EAP can Do

The EAP can refer you to services in the community where you can obtain help for problems with debt. The EAP will help you find information about budgeting and money management help, debt repayment services, and financial counseling programs. These services can help you develop budget, spending, and debt payment plans.

"Faced with high expenses, too many people are unwilling to change their lifestyles. Being unwilling to change is as deadly as being unable to change."

Ric Edelman, financial expert

Older Americans Month

Since president John F. Kennedy signed the proclamation in 1963, May has been considered Older Americans Month (formerly Senior Citizens Month.) The idea is for the nation to pay tribute to older Americans in some way. Here's one idea: Do something to intervene and help prevent an elderly person you know from falling down. Seventy percent of accidental deaths in older Americans over age 75 result from falls. Did you know that the United States ranks second among the nations of the world in the number of people aged 80 and over? Only China has more!



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Aging, and the International Fall Prevention Institute.

IAM-EAP Peer Coordinators

The mainstay of the District 141 EAP is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer much of their personal time to assist our brothers and sisters who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations. However, coordinators are trained to make a basic assessment of the situation and then refer to a professional resource for a more detailed evaluation and course of action. A complete listing of IAM EAP coordinators, including phone contact numbers, can be found on the District 141 Website at www.iam141.org/eap/eap.html.



Supporting Someone with Depression

If you know someone with depression, you know the pain of frequently feeling helpless. Although depressed people need support, they may not want or ask for it; and if they do accept it, your care and support may not help. In fact, the illness of depression may continue to grow worse. Your first step in a supportive role is to learn about depression. Encourage your friend or family member to get treatment. Major depression is as real as a broken leg. Depressed people can have trouble staying on top of their affairs, daily responsibilities, and routine household tasks. It's not a sign that they don't really care. It's just that their "get up and go" is gone. Medication for depression usually works. There are many different medications available. It can take weeks, however, for the right medication to take effect and for the depressed person to feel relief. So be patient, encouraging, and supportive—and if you need counseling for yourself, don't dismiss your need or desire for someone to talk to. Your employee assistance program, healthcare provider, or other professional person with a good listening ear can help dissipate that isolated feeling. A support group in your community may be very effective too. Like the movement to support caregivers of the elderly and disabled persons that is now gaining momentum in society, your role as a friend or a family member of a depressed person deserves the same support.



Trouble with Assertiveness?

Do you find it hard to say no when other people ask you for favors? Would you be more assertive and not take on other people's responsibilities if only you could say "no" without feeling guilty? The missing pieces of your motivation might be the following: Remember that every time you don't say no to people asking you to do their job or task, you're really saying that what you would otherwise be doing is not as important as what they want you to do. You are also saying that their time is more valuable than yours. To complete the assertive approach, also be prepared to offer them alternatives.

