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EAP News #74

# Protect Yourself From Head and Neck Injuries

An estimated 200,000 Americans have a spinal cord injury. Each year, this figure increases by approximately 10,000 – meaning everyday 27 more Americans suffer a spinal cord injury. Most are injured in auto and sports accidents, falls and industrial mishaps. The following are precautions you can take to help prevent a spinal cord injury.

## **Sporting Activities:**

- ? Never dive into a body of water headfirst until you are sure it is deep enough. Lower yourself into the water feet first.

## **Driving:**

- ? Always wear a seat belt when driving or riding in a car.
- ? Do not drink and drive.
- ? Always wear a safety helmet when riding a motorcycle or a bicycle.

## **At Home or at Work:**

- ? Make sure that all lamp, extension, telephone and other cords are placed out of the flow of traffic.
- ? If you are using a step stool, make sure it has a handrail that you can hold onto while standing on the top step.
- ? Make sure that the hallways; passageways between rooms, and other traffic areas are well lit.
- ? Make sure that exits and passageways are kept clear. Remove boxes and clutter.

## **Bathtub and Showers:**

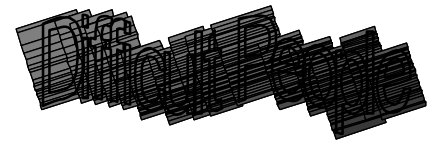
- ? Make sure bathtubs and showers are equipped with non-skid mats, abrasive strips, and that surfaces are not slippery. Bathtubs and showers should have at least one grab bar.

## **Stairs:**

- ? Make sure that stairs are well lit with light switches located at both the top and bottom of inside stairways.
- ? Stairs should also have sturdy handrails running continuously from the top to the bottom of the

- entire flight of stairs; the handrails should be fastened securely on both ends of the stairway.
- ? Make sure that steps allow secure footing.
- ? Steps should have non-skid strips, or securely fastened carpeting on them.
- ? Avoid wearing only socks or smooth-soled shoes or slippers when using the stairs.
- ? Make sure that steps are of the same size and height. If some steps are especially narrow or have risers that are higher or lower than the others, make sure you mark them and be especially careful of these steps when using the stairs. *(Continued on page 2)*

*Dealing  
With*



Do you have frustrating days when someone at work drives you a little bit nuts? Is there a difficult boss, co-worker, or customer who repeatedly gets on your nerves?

You're not alone. A major factor in being successful at work is learning how to stay healthy, clear-minded and thoroughly professional when you're faced with extremely difficult people.

## **IS THIS PERSON GETTING TO YOU?**

1. Do you feel tongue-tied or frozen inside, unable to function at your best after a verbal assault from this difficult person?
2. Do you sometimes think about quitting because this person has soured your feelings about your job or career?
3. Do you sometimes get caught up in thoughts of revenge or getting back at this person for mistreating you?
4. Are you beginning to notice physical symptoms, headaches, stomach problems, back tensions, itchy skin rashes, or increased susceptibility to colds and flu's, because of your repeated encounters with this toxic person? *(continued on page 2)*

## Difficult People

5. Does working with an angry or impatient person cause you to make more mistakes, forget things, or hold back your creativity or good ideas?
6. Does working with a verbally assaultive person wear you down such that you are becoming more impatient and short tempered with your loved ones?

### **What can you do about it?**

According to Dr. Felder, there are several positive steps you can take to improve your health and personal effectiveness when confronted by even the most difficult bosses, co-workers, or customers. He advises:

1. **Protect yourself by using a silent refocusing technique.** Anyone who has studied meditation knows that even in the middle of stormy chaos you can regain your calm and strength by repeating a silent word or phrase. When an angry or verbally abusive person begins to speak, say to yourself silently over and over again: *"Hear the valuable stuff. Ignore the anger. It's not mine"* No matter how insulting or oppressive the other person acts, you can maintain your inner strength and your professionalism by staying focused and alert as you repeat this simple phrase.
2. **Find the vulnerable spot.** It helps to notice something imperfect, awkward or humorous about the other person so that you won't feel one down or intimidated. For instance, silently look over and find something about this angry person's physical

### *~Super Tomato~*

Whether you say "tomato" or "tomaaato," there's a new one coming in a few years. Scientists at the Agricultural Research Service Laboratory have developed a new tomato that has 10 to 25 times more beta-carotene than today's varieties.

appearance, way moving or, way of speaking that is quite vulnerable or humorous.

3. **Use a comeback line that shows caring and professionalism.** Rather than being defensive or argumentative, the best way to handle a verbally aggressive person is to show concern and take the lead in offering to help this irate person find a solution to the problem. In other words, don't become this person's enemy but rather become this person's strong and professional ally right from the start.

You can calm even the most volatile customer by saying, "Let me write this down. I really want to make sure I get what you are saying here." Just pulling out a pad of paper and starting to write down this person's concerns will force him or her to speak slower and to start treating you like a trusted ally.

Or you can calm an explosive or irate boss by saying, "Let's make sure we get his thing handled right this time. You go first and I won't interrupt until you're done. I want to hear exactly what you need." Instead of being a passive doormat for the other person's anger, you've now established that you are managerial, professional and actively involved in the solution. This will demonstrate over time that you deserve respect

and trust, rather than additional verbal abuse.

If you are troubled by a particularly difficult situation at work, your Employee Assistance Program can help you. Remember, your EAP can provide Free and Confidential counseling to assist you with any type of personal, family or work-related concern.

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## Head and Neck Injuries

### **First Aid for someone who may have a spinal cord injury:**

Injury to the spinal cord requires immediate hospitalization. If you are with a person who has had an accident and cannot move his or her legs, use the following guidelines:

- ? Get professional medical help immediately.
- ? **Do not** try to move the injured person; the wrong type of movement can cause more damage.
- ? Stay calm and reassure the injured person that help is on the way.

**HBA is your 24-hour employee assistance program. Eligible employees and family members may call for confidential assistance with personal, legal, childcare, financial, alcohol/drug and other problems. HBA has identified a variety of community resources and self help associations. Also available is a panel of professional counselors and hospitals that have agreed to provide free or low cost counseling and treatment services to persons who have been referred by Human Behavior Associates. Dial 1-800-937-7770 for information or assistance.**