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SUPPLEMENT

**IMPACT**

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## Keys to Coping with Information Overload

In-boxes are overflowing with magazines, reports and memos; e-mail boxes are brimming with half-read and unread messages.

"More and more managers tell me they're spending three or four hours a day responding to e-mail and doing so isn't making them more productive," says Lyle Sussman, Ph.D., a speaker, author, management consultant, and professor of management at the University of Louisville in Kentucky.

"Staying abreast of developments in your field is more important than it has ever been," he says.

Yet even as demand for data skyrockets, the supply of information -- particularly that available on the Internet -- is outpacing demand. Anyone who works in an office or answers e-mail can experience information overload.

Instead of spending a large chunk of your workday sorting through irrelevant data and correspondence, Dr. Sussman recommends you become an intelligent consumer of information.



### To send or not

Tell people what they should or shouldn't send you. It's so easy now for e-mail users to attach documents or to refer political messages to anyone in their networks. Be more assertive with your networks about what you want and don't want to receive.

"I've received messages from people in my network saying they would prefer I not send jokes I run across," says Dr. Sussman. "People are trying to set limits on the supply side."

### Make the call

Ask people to use the telephone or to stop by in person. "Phone calls and face-to-face conversations are becoming lost arts," Dr. Sussman says. "I've been telling my professional colleagues that if it's something important, they should come down to my office and talk to me. I get a lot more information that way."

### Focus on problem-solving

It's fine to search the Internet and scan magazine and newspaper articles, but you can physically control what lands in your in-box by not searching so much and then by searching only for what you need.

### Find a gatekeeper

Develop closer contacts with trusted colleagues who can act as information agents. Who do you know who's knowledgeable in your field, whose opinion you value and who can point you toward relevant information?

"If everyone located two or three such friends who can act as gatekeepers, it's amazing how much time and frustration they could save themselves," says Dr. Sussman.

### Try a screening agent

Use artificial-information agents, such as e-mail newsletters, that automatically feed your e-mail box with topical information.

"Services like these are why Reader's Digest will never go out of circulation," says Dr. Sussman. "They scan a wide variety of news sources and deliver to you only those items containing key words of your choice."

### Use these agents selectively

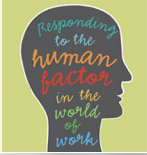
Dr. Sussman has friends who rely on seven or more artificial agents. But rather than simplify their categorical use of information, all those agents make their jobs more complex, he says. Choose just one or two of these services -- the ones that consistently send you the highest quality, most relevant information -- and drop the others.

"Unlike the CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, most of us aren't in a position to pay someone to screen our e-mail," says Dr. Sussman. "So we have to sort the wheat from the chaff ourselves. What makes it frustrating is that you never know what the wheat is and what the chaff is, because the world is changing so fast. We have to look at our information-search procedures in a much more pragmatic way -- they have to be driven by problem-solving."

### A Message to Managers from Claremont EAP

Often, the employee who needs their Employee Assistance Program the most doesn't think to call for assistance. A manager's referral to the EAP can be an effective strategy for improving an employee's effectiveness, productivity, motivation and morale. A referral to the EAP can also decrease absenteeism, reduce turnover, foster acceptance of change and reduce stress. **An EAP referral can make a difference.**

For confidential help, call: **800-834-3773** or visit **claremonteap.com**



# How to Respond to a Medical Emergency

**Knowing what to do if someone you're with is bleeding profusely or appears to be having a heart attack could save the person's life.**

**Taking a standard first-aid and CPR class can help prepare you for most medical emergencies. The National Safety Council, the Red Cross and many hospitals offer classes.**

**The following suggestions can help you respond appropriately.**

## Burns

For first-degree burns (those without blisters), put the injured area under cool water. Second-degree burns with blisters should be washed with soap and water and treated with an antibiotic ointment. If the blisters are severe, cover the burn with a sterile gauze bandage and seek medical attention.

Seek immediate emergency treatment if the burn is on the face, hands, feet or genitals; covers more than one square inch of skin; or causes respiratory problems because of smoke inhalation, indicated by coughing, wheezing, soot-tinged spit or red sores in the mouth.

## Choking adult

Stand up and hold the person from behind. Wrap your arms around his or her waist and put one fist against the abdomen. Make sure your fist is slightly above the navel but below the rib cage. Holding your other hand over your fist, quickly thrust in and up with both hands 4 to 10 times. Call for emergency medical help if the person continues to choke.

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## Heart attack

**If you suspect someone is having a heart attack:**

- ✚ Call 911 or your local access number for emergency medical service. Tell the dispatcher where you are. Don't hang up until you're told to do so.
- ✚ Give the person CPR only if you've been properly trained to do so. While waiting for emergency help to arrive:
  - Give the person an aspirin.
  - If possible, get the person into a relaxed sitting position, with the legs up and bent at the knees, to ease strain on the heart. Loosen tight clothing around the neck and waist. Stay calm and reassuring.

## Poisoning

If someone has been poisoned, call a poison-control center or 911. Try to determine what the person has swallowed by finding the product container. Don't induce vomiting unless instructed to do so by medical personnel.

## Severe bleeding

Elevate the injured area, support it, then use a sterile pad to apply pressure to the wound. If blood seeps through the pad, place additional clean pads on top of each other. Wear rubber gloves or place plastic bags over your hands to prevent hepatitis or HIV infection. Call for emergency medical assistance.

## Stroke

If someone is having a hard time breathing, talking, seeing or moving one side of his or her face or body, the person could be having a stroke. Call 911 or seek emergency medical help right away.