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August 2022



Wellness refers to complete health, rather than just your physical health. Wellness is not only being free of disease, illness, or stress but also having a purpose in life, being emotionally healthy, taking an active involvement in your work and in your leisure time, having joyful relationships and being happy. Wellness involves all aspects of your life beyond your physical health. To enjoy fulfilled and happy lives, it is important to take care of your well-being and to invest time in your wellness.



We have a new member on the Workforce Development and Organizational Culture Team. Ana Reyes joins us as the Coordinator for Employee Assistance Programs. Ana comes to us with a very strong background in supporting students and staff at a variety of grade levels and we are excited to have her join our team and support employees and their families.

**Contact Us**

**Employee Assistance Department:** [eap@sccoe.org](mailto:eap@sccoe.org)

**Dr. Shabby Karim**, Assistant Director-Employee Assistance: [skarim@sccoe.org](mailto:skarim@sccoe.org) or 408-453-6844

**Ana Reyes**, Employee Assistance Coordinator: [areyes@sccoe.org](mailto:areyes@sccoe.org) or 408-453-3616

## What's NEW In Benefits?

### Mental Health

SCCOE is pleased to announce we will be offering a new Mental Health plan to our employees with access to mental health coaches and wellness tools. Everyone could use a little support when it comes to handling life's most difficult situations. This plan will be available to all employees at no cost to you. This is an addition to the current resources available through our Employee Assistance Program (SISC EAP). Enrollment is not required.

### Fertility Planning

SCCOE will also be offering a fertility plan to make fertility care and family forming more accessible and affordable for you or your eligible spouse. Regardless of your path, some support for fertility planning will be available every step of your journey. This plan will be available to all employees. Enrollment is not required.



## Emotional

### First Steps to Facing Your Return to Work Anxiety

With return to work right around the corner, whether from summer break or a longer work from home experience, you are not alone if you're feeling anxious and stressed. The change in routine and social interactions, as well as the fear of the unknown, are all major contributors to this feeling of anxiety. It can affect both those of us returning to work for the first time since last March, as well as those who remained working on campus and have adjusted to a less densely populated campus. It's important to stress that you are not alone and there are resources across campus to support you through this transition. We encourage you to take some time to review the tips below, refer to the various resources, and reach out for help if needed.

#### Tips for Facing Your Return to Work Anxiety

- Acknowledge your Feelings. With the unavoidable change and uncertainty associated with the return to work, it's important to expect some level of anxiety and not be surprised by it. Anxiety is normal when faced with these types of changes, and it's not an indication that something is bad or unsafe for you. Keep in mind that it will dissipate in time and there are resources to help you work through it.
- Plan Ahead. While you can't anticipate how everything will go when you return, there are many things within your control, and simple planning ahead can help regain a sense of control. Is there a pre-pandemic routine that you envision changing, and if so, how will you plan ahead to adapt to this new routine? This

could be a shift from eating lunch out most days to instead meal prepping each weekend so you have something to bring with you for lunch each day.

- **Focus on the Positive.** While we're hard-wired as humans to pay more attention to the negative, it's important to take a step back and remember what we miss about working on campus. Was it a quick lunchtime walk or maybe catching up with colleagues each morning? Remembering what previously brought you joy each day can help make the transition easier.
- **Be Considerate and Aware of Others.** One thing we've learned from the pandemic is that everyone's comfort and safety level is different, and the transition will affect us all in very different ways. Furthermore, please be sensitive and aware of the unique stress of employees with marginalized identities. Many people with marginalized identities have enjoyed less of a need to conform to majority culture appearance standards and greater protection from the trauma of microaggressions. Returning to in-person work for many brings increased anxiety and exposure to microaggressions.
- **Reach out for Help.** Despite best efforts, you might still need help, and that's ok. There are resources available to help you through this transition. We encourage you to keep an honest and open line of communication with your manager, as well as to reach out to the Employee Assistance Department for further resources.

Source: <https://www.bu.edu/wellness/first-steps-to-facing-your-return-to-work-anxiety/#:~:text=Acknowledge%20your%20Feelings.,bad%20or%20unsafe%20for%20you.>

### More Resources for Emotional Well Being

#### [Headspace app](#)

Headspace makes mindfulness practice easy with short, animated segments on topics like stress and anxiety, mental focus, and sleep as well as overcoming common obstacles like attitude, anger, impatience, self-compassion and more.

- [Sign up for a free account](#) identifying yourself with Santa Clara County Office of Education.
- [Learn more about the Headspace app](#) and [how meditation works \(1:13 video\)](#) with Headspace

#### **Calm app**

Kaiser members have free access to the full service Calm app and non-Kaiser have access to basic modules on this app. Calm is designed to lower stress and reduce anxiety with guided mindfulness training for mental resilience, confidence, happiness, mindful eating, pain, relationships, and more.

- Kaiser members [sign up for the Calm app through the Kaiser website](#)
- Non-Kaiser members can access the basic plan by downloading the Calm app on a mobile device or going to Calm.com

[Take a peek at the Calm app](#) ( 1:13 video)



## Financial

Financial well-being is an important part of your overall personal well-being and can be achieved regardless of income.

Being financially well means you can meet your current and ongoing financial obligations, feel secure in your financial future, and are able to make choices that allow you to enjoy life – in other words, financial freedom.

However, data shows that personal finances continue to be a leading cause of stress for many Americans. Financial stress occurs when there is uncertainty around finances, a sense of worry about the future, and a lack of security. Like most types of stress, this can impact your:

- Ability to sleep
- Physical health
- Emotional health
- Relationships
- Performance at work
- Family life

If you have or are currently experiencing financial stress, you're not alone – there are many resources and professionals available to help and it's going to be okay. Getting to a place where you are financially well takes time but it's never too late to start thinking about your finances.

## **The Basics of Financial Literacy**

### **What is financial literacy?**

Financial literacy means having a basic understanding of how to handle money matters like saving money, paying bills, debt management, investing, etc.

Financial well-being begins with understanding how to manage your money. Boosting your financial knowledge increases your ability to make good financial decisions for you and your family.

### **Self-assessments – measuring your financial health**

If you're not sure where to start, these resources can provide you with a snapshot of your financial well-being:

- [FinHealth Score®](#)
- [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Measurement Tool](#)

### **Six core areas to becoming financially literate:**

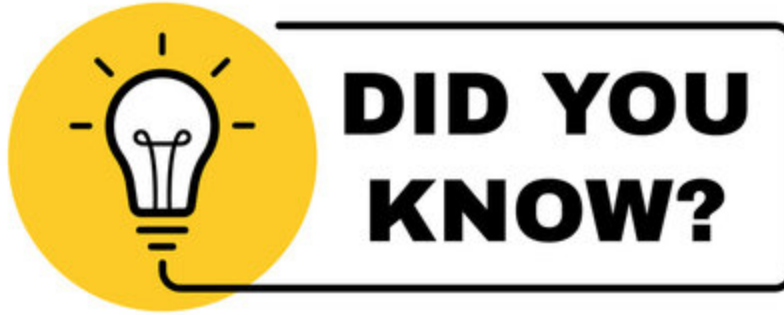
- Budgeting to manage your money
- Paying bills and saving money
- Basics of debt (mortgages, credit cards, etc)
- Credit history and credit scores
- How investing works (401k's, the stock market, etc.)
- Setting financial goals

### **Helpful resources:**

- [Consumer protection basics... plain and simple](#) (consumer.gov)
- Provident Credit Union [www.providentcu.org](http://www.providentcu.org)
- Santa Clara County Federal Credit Union [www.sccfcu.org](http://www.sccfcu.org)
- Commonwealth Central Credit Union [www.wealthcu.org](http://www.wealthcu.org)

Source: <https://hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/health-well-being/mhealthy/faculty-staff-well-being/financial-well-being>

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## **There is financial assistance available to help pay for gas in specific situations?**

Below are a few resources.

Visit <https://www.findhelp.org/transit/help-pay-for-gas--san-jose-ca?postal=95101> for more information.

- [Above and Beyond through Coordination \(ABC\) Program](#) by [Outreach](#) - Above and Beyond through Coordination (ABC) Program offers a “gas card” subsidy to persons facing transportation barriers such as needing to have a family member drive them and remain with them.
- [Healthcare Ground Transportation](#) by [Mercy Medical Angels \(MMA\)](#)- Mercy Medical Angels’ non-emergency ground transportation program provides financially qualifying patients with non-local medical-related treatment traveling more than 50 miles from your home. The typical trip does not exceed 300 miles. This program provides: Gas cards (Provided to help off-set fuel cost for patients), Bus Tickets (Greyhound, Trailways, etc.), Train Tickets (Amtrak).
- [Bus Passes](#) by [Midtown Family Services](#) -Midtown Family Services provides bus passes for individuals with a low income.Services provided include Bus passes

### **EAP Services (800-999-7222)**

EAP is your resource for assistance with managing problems at home and at work. EAP provides you and eligible family members with a no-cost, confidential and user-friendly resource for life management concerns such as:

- Emotional and mental health well-being
- Maintaining a healthy life style
- Successful communication
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Relationship issues
- Legal concerns
- Financial concerns

- Dependent adult care
- Childcare needs
- Everyday concerns and resources

### **What Services are Available?**

**Telephone Consultations:** EAP provides 24 hour, 7 day a week toll free telephone access to licensed mental health professionals for consultation, information, assistance and resources for a variety of concerns.

**Face - to - Face Counseling Visits:** EAP provides you and eligible family members with access to professional mental health providers near your work or home to assist with many concerns. Please call EAP at 800-999-7222 and our consultants will assist you and family members with accessing services..

**Legal Services:** EAP provides consultations with a legal professional. You and eligible family members can call EAP and request one 30 minute in-person or telephonic consultation, per separate issue, with a network attorney at no cost to you. If you choose to continue working with the attorney, continued services are offered at a discounted rate from the attorney's usual hourly rate. Examples of services include:

- Divorce/custody
- Criminal concerns
- Civil issues
- Estate planning
- Consumer issues

Legal issues involving employer and health insurance situations are not covered by this service.

**Financial Services:** EAP offers telephone consultations for you and eligible family members with a financial professional. Telephone consultations are typically 30-60 minutes in length, per separate issue. Examples of consultations include:

- Debt and credit management
- Saving for education and retirement
- Life event planning such as buying a home

**ID Theft Protection and Recovery:** EAP offers free support for you and eligible family members with assessing your risk level and then identifying steps to resolve potential identity theft. For those who have had their identity stolen a specialist can assist, at no charge to you, with:

- completing any necessary paperwork
- reporting to the consumer credit agencies
- negotiating with creditors to repair debt history

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## FINANCIAL WEBINARS

<https://www.sccoe.org/depts/Human-Resources/Health-Wellness/Pages/events.aspx>

## COVID-19 Testing

Routine testing for essential education workouts and their families is a healthy practice and improves public safety. We encourage monthly testing.

You and your families have access to free routine Covid-19 testing at SCCOE locations, through your health provider, and through public events

- [Testing Ridder Park](#) Tues. and Fri., 7 am -11am and noon to 3:00 pm at Ridder Park (drop in, no appointment required)
- [SCCOE site Specific Test](#) - schedule changes each week (sign up required)
- [FREE SC County Testing](#)

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## About the Santa Clara County Office of Education

*Working collaboratively with school and community partners, the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) is a regional service agency that provides instructional, business, and technology services to the 31 school districts of Santa Clara County. The County Office of Education directly serves students through special education programs, alternative schools, Head Start and State Preschool programs, migrant education, and Opportunity Youth Academy. The SCCOE also provides academic and fiscal oversight and monitoring to districts in addition to the 22 Santa Clara County Board of Education authorized charter schools.*

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