

# SOLUTIONS

## Overhaul Your Morning Routine

Don't slug through a morning routine that barely gets you out the door. Maximize your routine for improved work-life productivity. The payoff will be a happier you. More excitement about goals, a better mood, improved health, and finding more meaning in your job can all flow from an optimized morning routine. Experiment with a few tweaks, and keep notes about any positive impacts on yourself. Everyone is different, so don't simply copy an online "do this" formula. Whether it is drinking a glass of water first thing after awakening, avoiding the snooze button, doing 20 pushups, making your bed without fail, or meditation—hundreds of ideas exist. Some will be perfect for you. Start at [www.inc.com](http://www.inc.com) (search "morning routine ideas").



## In a Relationship with a Problem Gambler?

If you love someone who has a gambling disorder, then you are no stranger to secrecy, lying, reckless borrowing, unpaid bills, and broken promises. It's time to get help. Start with a professional counselor and step one—support for yourself and the isolation you feel. Next steps: work on change, intervention, and taking actions that can motivate the gambler to enter proper treatment. Loved ones of pathological gamblers experience anxiety in the same way that other people do who are in relationships with addicts. Coping fails to help and can make problems worse. Compulsive gambling is a mental disorder, not a willpower failing that resolves itself with a crisis that inspires motivation to quit "this time forever." Talk to your EAP or a mental health professional for help locating an expert who understands gambling disorders and helping the family.



## Helping Your Teenager Find a Summer Job

The first summer job is when many teens discover how the real world works. If finding one is getting off to a slow start, try these few tips to locate one sooner. 1) Use LinkedIn. At the top of the page, combine and experiment with search terms like "your city" + "summer jobs" + "part time." (There is also a jobs link on LinkedIn, but it is only a fraction of what's really out there.) 2) Don't underestimate the desperation small businesses have for help. Small businesses are burdened by to-do lists that include real skill-building tasks. So ask. Your teen may be a dream come true. 3) To better compete for that one job at the horse stable all the other kids want, search the Internet on "how to take care of horses." Have your teen read up and "learn the ropes." Then, let them head out to ace the interview.





## Is Loneliness a Health Problem?

Chronic loneliness can have negative health effects, so CIGNA surveyed 20,000 Americans to gauge the prevalence of this emotion. One in five respondents reported no close relationships at all, and one in four reported having no one with whom they can have a meaningful conversation. Those survey respondents aged 18-22—despite their proficiency with social media—report being most lonely. Loneliness is a symptom of a larger problem, because those less lonely reported getting more sleep, spending more time with family, not overworking, and getting proper exercise. If loneliness affects you, take action, engage, or get counseling to overcome it.

Source: [www.multivu.com](http://www.multivu.com) (search “health,” then “CIGNA loneliness”).

## Doing Your Own Team Building

Team building improves communication, increases morale, and boosts productivity. But what if your employer doesn't offer those big off-site team-building retreats? How can small two-person teams benefit? Try do-it-yourself team building! Simple exercises can rejuvenate you. Find exercises (hundreds are at online bookstores) that 1) focus on building trust; 2) offer the experience of being open with feelings; 3) allow team members to practice nonjudgmental thinking about each other; and 4) give each team member the opportunity to feel vulnerable but have the vulnerability rewarded with safety and acceptance. Team desire to maintain emotional closeness following team building is its own motivation to reduce conflict and practice healthier communication. Refreshing the commitment team members have for one another, even with one team-building exercise, helps walls from forming between members. This dynamic arises from workplace stress—it's all normal.



Understanding the gains from team building will have you doing it more often. Try an exercise: One team member shares a negative experience of their workday with another team member—the more personal the better. One coworker repeats what was shared, but focuses only on the positive aspects of the negative experience. The goal is to identify the positive benefits of negative experiences. Then, switch roles. With this experience, team members learn to reframe negative experiences into positive ones that build resilience, while feeling accepted and supported.

## Overcoming Ageism in the Workplace

Like racism or sexism, ageism is discrimination, and it is rooted in prejudice based on age. You can steer clear of ageism by 1) Avoiding seeing coworkers through a lens of their age. Instead focus on their ability, potential, productivity, and impact. 2) Being aware of how older persons are negatively depicted on television. This exercise will help inoculate you and reverse age bias. 3) Considering that by 2020, 67 percent of those who are 65-74 years old will be working. This trend may well include you. 4) Being a “change agent.” Speak up when you witness language or behaviors that perpetuate ageism. 5) Living with awareness so you can make choices—ageism is everywhere and ingrained in culture. You will find it in comic strips, bedtime stories, and product advertising, because it has been overlooked and accepted for centuries.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics> (search “productive aging and work”).

