FOUNDATIONS EAP
Your Partner in Workplace Wellness

FALL 2026 • WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

Caring for the People Who Care for Sumter County

A season-of-change check-in for our Sumter County workforce



In this new season, Foundations EAP encourages Sumter County workers to take advantage of their Employee Assistance Program (EAP) benefit. You are eligible for up to 5 free, sponsored counseling sessions and a host of other wellness services designed to serve you as you serve others. All services are completely confidential and can be easily requested by phone at 803-233-4447 or via our website at buildfirmfoundations.com using the EAP Code: **SUM_CNTY**.

A Warm Welcome

Fall brings a natural shift in rhythm: cooler mornings, earlier sunsets, football Fridays, and a busier schedule. For everyone who keeps Sumter County operating smoothly, this time of year can also bring unique pressures and increased demands.

Whether responding to emergency calls, maintaining roads, assisting residents at front desks, or leading team efforts, you dedicate immense energy to our community. This season, we encourage you to take a moment and reflect: *who is supporting and caring for you?*

> *"Just as trees let go of what they cannot carry through winter, we are allowed to set down what is weighing on us."*

Fall Check-In: Recognizing Stress Signs

Stress presents differently for everyone. Being mindful of these common indicators can help you spot when it is time to slow down:

Physical	Mental	Relational
Trouble sleeping, persistent fatigue, frequent headaches, or physical tension.	Continuous worry, difficulty focusing, overthinking, or feeling unmotivated.	Short temper, withdrawing from friends or colleagues, or feeling isolated.

Experiencing these signs does not mean you are failing; it simply means you are human. Reaching out early makes a meaningful difference.

Supporting Every Role

Every position across Sumter County government brings unique demands:

First Responders

Frequent exposure to critical incidents builds up over time, even for experienced personnel.

Field Operations

Long shifts, physical labor, weather conditions, and on-call duties impact physical endurance.

Administrative & Public Staff

Managing public inquiries and frustrations daily requires emotional patience and energy.

Supervisors & Managers

Balancing team performance and well-being alongside personal responsibilities can feel heavy.

A 2-Minute Grounding Exercise

Try this simple 5-4-3-2-1 technique at your desk, in your vehicle, or during a break to reset focus:

1. **5 things you can see:** Notice the autumn colors, light through a window, or details on your desk.
2. **4 things you can feel:** Pay attention to cool breeze, solid ground under feet, or warmth of a jacket.
3. **3 things you can hear:** Listen for distant traffic, rustling leaves, or quiet indoor ambient sounds.
4. **2 things you can smell:** Notice fresh outdoor air, morning coffee, or seasonal scents around you.
5. **1 thing you are grateful for:** Identify one positive moment, person, or supportive resource today.

Five Healthy Habits for Autumn

- **Get outside daily:** Even ten minutes of daylight during a break helps regulate sleep and mood as days shorten.
- **Prepare for time changes:** Clocks fall back on Sunday, November 1. Ease in by adjusting bedtimes slightly earlier this week.
- **Protect personal time:** Designate a daily meal, walk, or family moment as non-negotiable downtime.
- **Check on colleagues:** A genuine “How are you doing today?” builds mutual trust and connection across departments.
- **Reach out early:** You do not need to wait for a crisis to access counseling or support resources.

Team Wellness Ideas

Shared team habits strengthen workplace culture and bolster individual well-being. Consider trying:

Soup & Chili Potluck

Host a casual shared lunch where teammates bring a favorite comfort dish.

Walking Break

Organize a brief 15-minute outdoors stroll to refresh focus and step away from screens.

Gratitude Wall

Create a space to highlight achievements, peer support, and weekly shout-outs.

Seasonal Contests

Coordinate lighthearted office door or pumpkin decorating to boost team morale.

For Supervisors: Supporting Your Team

- **Check in proactively:** Observe shifts in attendance or mood, initiating supportive conversations with empathy.
- **Lead by example:** Openly discussing workload management and stress reduction encourages staff to do the same.
- **Promote EAP resources:** Ensure your team understands how to access Foundations EAP confidentially.
- **Maintain clear roles:** EAP services complement standard management practices, safety standards, and HR policies.

EAP: Common Myths vs. Realities

MYTH: “Asking for assistance indicates I cannot handle my job.”

REALITY: Seeking guidance is a proactive step that protects your long-term health and performance.

MYTH: “EAP is exclusively reserved for crisis situations.”

REALITY: Services cover everyday stress, life transitions, interpersonal conflict, and goal setting.

MYTH: “Counseling is a rigid, one-size-fits-all approach.”

REALITY: Care is tailored to your unique preferences, goals, and personal schedule.

Navigating Seasonal Transitions

While autumn brings festive occasions, it can also bring feelings of grief, financial tension, or family stress. If you are experiencing loss or extra demands, counseling offers a safe, professional space to process feelings at your own pace.

Reflective Prompts for This Season:

- Who supported me this week, and have I thanked them?
- What small moment brought me comfort or joy today?
- What expectation am I ready to release to reduce personal stress?

Your Employee Assistance Benefit: Foundations EAP

Foundations EAP, provided by Firm Foundations Counseling and Consulting, offers confidential, professional care for employees and eligible family members. Licensed clinicians assist with:

- Stress management, anxiety, burnout, depression, and trauma support
- Grief and bereavement care
- Workplace interpersonal challenges and conflict resolution
- Substance-use guidance and early intervention
- Family, relationship, and life transition counseling

Flexible telehealth and in-person options are available, alongside 24/7/365 crisis support. Contact HR or call Foundations EAP directly for plan details.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an EAP?

An Employee Assistance Program is an employer-provided benefit that offers confidential, professional support for personal, family, and work-related challenges.

Is my participation confidential?

Yes. Foundations EAP operates under strict confidentiality protocols. Your manager and employer are not notified when you utilize self-referred services.

What topics can I discuss?

Stress, anxiety, burnout, depression, grief, family dynamics, workplace communication, parenting concerns, and life adjustments.

Emergency & Crisis Resources

Call or text 988 for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (free, confidential, 24/7). For immediate life-threatening emergencies, **call 911**. EAP services complement, but do not replace, emergency medical response.

Featured Resource Library Articles

Explore articles and guides on buildfirmfoundations.com:

- *What Is Counseling? How Can It Help Me?*
- *Unraveling the Truth: Understanding Adult ADHD*
- *Navigating Crisis Support: Suicide Prevention Hotline Guide*
- *Understanding Yourself: Introduction to the Enneagram*

Take the First Step

Reaching out is a sign of strength. We are here to support you whenever you are ready.

Call (803) 233-4447

buildfirmfoundations.com/employee-family-benefits

Firm Foundations Counseling and Consulting, LLC • Foundations EAP
Wishing you a calm, cozy, and well-supported fall.