

EAP & PAP Newsletter

February 2026

Scaffolding



Scaffolding is a system of support. We rely on it without thinking until it starts to wobble.

Lately, a lot of what once felt stable no longer does. Personal structures. Institutional ones. Assumptions we trusted. When that happens, the usual responses of fight, flee, freeze don't always help. Sometimes the scaffolding itself is what's failing.

The practical question then becomes simple and uncomfortable... **What's left when external supports weaken?**

One answer is internal capacity, but it needs an anchor. That anchor is **sovereignty: the ability to generate stability from within rather than borrow it from outside conditions**. Sovereignty isn't isolation or self-sufficiency. It's the ability to remain self-directing when circumstances are volatile.



The goal of stress and trauma is to contract. It's to have us scared with our doors closed, hiding under the covers. The goal of Sovereignty is to expand, is to grow, is to say: "How can I grow that helps those around me grow?"

--Dr. Darryl Tonemah,
"Your Personal Sovereignty Coach," My Stress Tools

Many people try to replace failing scaffolding with substitutes: work, organizations, belief systems, distractions. Some help. Some don't. But none are guaranteed to last. In my work, I see people reach for substitutes when order starts to slip. It's perfectly understandable and can appear helpful in the short term. Substitutes manage the feeling of instability without actually fixing what's unstable.

Sovereignty matters because it doesn't depend on circumstances changing. Think of it as a solid foundation. The house can be open to wind and weather. The foundation stays put and is maintained through practice.

Internal scaffolding is built gradually, through pauses, attention, and deliberate choices. The discipline of response rather than reaction. These are small acts, but they are self-generated. That's the point.

Given current conditions, this isn't abstract advice. It's practical preparation.

If you want a structured place to begin, there's a great set of 2-minute **Personal Sovereignty videos** in the **Once-A-Day Wellness** section of our new **My Stress Tools** featuring Dr. Darryl Tonemah.

Sign up for My Stress Tools:

<https://www.eapacific.com/employees/my-stress-tools.html>

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Counselors are available across Hawaii.
Legal/Financial/Eldercare/ID Theft/Mediation Consultation is also available.



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EAP & PAP Newsletter

Two Free Webinars in February!

Simple Self-Care Strategies for Everyday Stress

Learn practical ways to reduce stress, protect your energy, and support your mental and emotional well-being – with tools you can start using right away.

Date
Feb 18, 2026

Time: 8:00 a.m. HST

WATCH THROUGH THE MY STRESS TOOLS PLATFORM

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act Affects 2025 Taxes

A Special Live Event

How 2025 taxes will differ, and what it could mean for you.

With sweeping legislative changes and recent tax law changes, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBBA) may impact how you file your 2025 federal tax return, and this special event will help everyday filers make sense of the updates.

This is a conversation you need to be a part of.

Join us as we break down key parts of the OBBBBA that impact your 2025 tax filing:

Wednesday, February 18th, 2026

Choose your session 7am or 10am Hawaii Time

We will discuss the changes to:

- Deductions
- Credits
- Income rules

You'll learn:

- Which updates apply to your 2025 tax return
- Who may be most impacted
- What to keep in mind as you prepare for tax season

Open to all employees and household members.

Hosted by MSA as part of your Financial Well-being benefit.

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Simple Self-Care Strategies for Everyday Stress

Feb. 18 at 8am Hawaii Time

Register for [My Stress Tools](#) in your EAP website

(call us if you need your employer passcode!)

Then watch through My Stress Tools

How the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” Affects 2025 Taxes

Feb. 18 at 7am Hawaii Time

[Register here](#)

Or

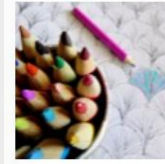
Feb. 18 at 10am Hawaii Time

[Register here](#)

Articles On Our Website

Did you know about all the resources available to you from your EAP's website?

Here are a few examples:



COLORING FOR GROWNUPS

The adult coloring books available almost everywhere are proving that picking up your crayons or colored pencils isn't just a...

[Read More](#)



MINDFUL EATING

Mindfulness simply means paying attention. A downloadable handy tool to help you eat more mindfully.

[Read More](#)



HARASSMENT

Has your workplace behavior ever crossed the line into workplace harassment? The answer may surprise you.

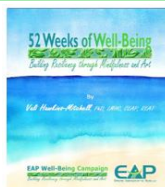
[Read More](#)



SLEEP

What if scientists discovered a centuries-old remedy that can help you live longer, improve your memory and creativity? They have...

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SIGN UP FOR 52 WEEKS OF WELL-BEING

You can sign up to receive weekly emailed tips for a year that help you build your resiliency. Written by our own Dr. Vali Hawkins-Mitchell...

[Read More](#)

(If this is a pdf you may be able to click the links to each article above!)

Check out your EAP's website at

www.EAPacific.com

Or your PAP website at www.HawaiiPAP.com

Please note that work/life services (legal, financial, eldercare, ID theft, mediation) are available to most, but not all, EAP customers. Call us if you have a question.



EAP and PAP provide short-term confidential counseling and work/life services, provided to you by your employer, that can assist in identifying and resolving issues that may be interfering with your job or personal life. Access to our experienced counselors and work/life services is available across the Islands and can be contacted by phoning or emailing our Honolulu office.



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