

# EAP & PAP Newsletter

May 2026

## Ready or Not... Here Comes Summer!



School is almost out. Routines shift. Energy changes.

If you have kids, you'll feel it right away. If you don't... you'll still notice it.

Every May in Hawaii, life seems to speed up. May Day comes and goes, and suddenly we're in the rhythm of summer. While it can be a joyful time, it also brings new logistics to manage. Work, family schedules, social events, and the desire to relax and enjoy the season can quickly pile up.

For some, summer stirs memories of carefree childhood days, making it harder to stay focused at work while others head to the beach. For others, summer means more responsibility: sports, vacations, summer school, church events, family gatherings, weddings, and more. Before long, summer doesn't feel like a break. It feels like noise.

### Quieting the Noise

Here's the good news: it only takes a few small moments to reset your mind.

In Hawaii, one of the most powerful tools is right outside your door: fresh air. Even if stepping outside means a parking lot or a busy street, the air is still there, ready for you.

In high-stress environments, including disaster response work, one of the most effective tools for managing overwhelm is simple: pause and take a deep breath. Even one or two intentional breaths can help stabilize your body and quiet your mind. If a few breaths can help in those situations, imagine what a full "Aloha breath" can do for you during a busy day. Try it.

### Why It Works

Mental "noise" happens when your brain is trying to manage too much at once. Psychologists call this cognitive overload, and it can show up as: Forgetfulness, Irritability, Trouble Concentrating, and Feeling Mentally Drained. Seasonal transitions, like the start of summer, can naturally increase this load.

The good news? Research shows that time in natural environments can reduce stress hormones, lower blood pressure, and improve mood. In Hawaii, we have year-round access to ocean air, mountains, and open spaces (except during the occasional Kona low). And it doesn't take much.

### Simple Ways to Reset

- Take a 10-minute barefoot walk on grass or sand.
- Go for a short evening walk to transition out of "work mode."
- Eat lunch outside instead of at your desk.
- Sit near water, trees, or open air. And simply breathe.

Give yourself permission, even for a few minutes, to **not solve, plan, organize, or produce anything**.

You may be surprised what even five minutes can do.

(Continued)



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Counselors are available across Hawaii.

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## A Few More Ways to “Let It Go”

1. **Do a quick mind dump.**  
Time yourself and spend five minutes writing down every task, worry, or random thought on your mind. Getting it onto paper frees up mental space.
2. **Scribble freely.**  
Grab a pen or crayon and make random lines and shapes. No goal. No outcome. Just let your mind slow down.
3. **Set “no-screen” time.**  
Even 30 minutes without your phone, email, or TV allows your nervous system to reset; especially when paired with time outdoors.
4. **Leave some space unscheduled.**  
Not every hour of summer needs a plan. Some of the best moments happen when nothing is scheduled at all.

## When You Need More Support

Sometimes mental noise is a sign of something deeper—stress, burnout, or anxiety that has built up over time. That’s exactly what your **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** is here for. EAP services are:

- **Free**
- **Confidential**
- **Available to you and your household members**

Whether you want to talk something through or connect with longer-term support, help is just a call away. And sometimes, it simply helps to talk with a professional who is there to listen.

## Take Your Breath

**This May, let Hawaii help you transition into summer.**

**Step outside.**

**Breathe in the air.**

**Give your mind a fresh start each day.**

**You’ve earned it.**

And remember, winter holidays will be here before you know it.

So take a break while you can!

Author: **Vali Hawkins Mitchell**, PhD, LMHC, CEAP, General Partner



## Articles On Our Website

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

**Here are a few examples:**



### COPING WITH JOB LAYOFF

When dealing with the stress of a job loss, be sure to take care of yourself by getting enough rest...

[Read More](#)



### SOME MOTIVATION FOR MOTIVATION

What happens when your “Get up and Go” gets up and leaves?

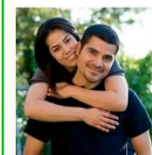
[Read More](#)



### SELF-CARE PRACTICES

Here are some self-care tips we have found helpful for people experiencing difficult times or situations...

[Read More](#)



### OFFICE DATING

When you consider that most people spend half their waking hours at work, it's not surprising that office dating is as common...

[Read More](#)



### SIGN UP FOR 52 WEEKS OF AFFIRMATIONS

You can sign up to receive affirmations every week for a year!

[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](http://www.EAPacific.com)**

Or your PAP website at [www.HawaiiPAP.com](http://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.



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