

IN-SYNC

Newsletter



From CEO/Human Resources

October - December 2018

OPEN ENROLLMENT NOVEMBER 1 - 30, 2018

Plan Year 2019 Changes Include:

- * A \$50 increase in your Flexible Credit biweekly amount. Refer to your MOA for your increase start date.
- * New outside medical plans will replace the current Anthem EPO and the High-Deductible PPO plans.
- * Dental plan benefit enhancements, including an increase in the orthodontia lifetime maximum.
- * Flexible Spending Accounts will now be administered by our new outside FSA Administrator, which will offer our employees best-in-class technology, with smart and intuitive tools for account management.

For More Information About the Changes:



Attend an [Open Enrollment informational meeting](#). These meetings will be held during the month of October. Dates, times and locations are available on the Benefits page of the HR website.



Review your **Personal Enrollment Worksheet** and Benefits Bulletin. These items will be mailed to you in late October.



Review the updated [Benefit Plans Handbook](#). The online handbook will be available in mid-October on the Benefits page of the HR website. Hard copies of the handbook will be distributed to all employees by HR/Benefits Department Representatives in late October.



Attend the annual [Health & Wealth Fair](#) on October 25, 2018 from 10am - 1pm, at the Outdoor Courtyard at the Government Center (between HOA & HOJ). Benefits staff and health plan partners will be in attendance to answer all of your questions.

OPIOIDS: What You Need To Know

This October marks the 2nd annual National Substance Abuse Prevention Month – an observance to highlight the vital role of substance abuse prevention in individual and community health. CEO Mike Powers reached out to County employees recently by mail to bring attention to the opioid-focused education campaign spearheaded by the Behavioral Health Drug and Alcohol Programs. This issue of the InSync newsletter looks at opioids in the workplace and how addiction can impact members of our County family.



Take the OPIOID QUIZ

Test your knowledge and be entered to win prizes!

See MyVCWeb during the month of October.

Information In This Issue:

- ◆ Open Enrollment
- ◆ Opioids: What You Need to Know
- ◆ Nat'l. Retirement Security Week
- ◆ Health & Wealth Fair
- ◆ Diversity & Inclusion Corner
- ◆ LinkedIn Learning
- ◆ Agency Softball Tournament
- ◆ Online Positive Parenting Resource



HR.Admin@ventura.org

Opioids: What You Need To Know

Opioids in the Workplace

According to estimates by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 75% of individuals currently misusing substances are in the workplace. Since 2012, the number of people dying from drug or alcohol related causes while on the job has been growing by at least 25% each year, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

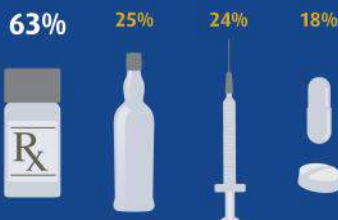
Opioids are legitimate drugs when supervised by licensed providers for pain and many individuals in the workplace require them for appropriate purposes. There is no automatic conclusion that an individual who requires these types of painkillers has a dependency or addiction problem. However, there is still a risk to be considered for both the short term and chronic user in the workplace. An employee using opioids while at work risks personal injury and injury to others, as well as creating risk at the workplace for incidents and errors. Workplace behavior prompted by opioid misuse, can be evident in negative attitudes, moodiness, and irritability throughout the day or in unpredictable patterns. Interpersonal relationships, team cohesiveness, and the overall mood of the workplace can be indirectly impacted.

Another problem associated with opioid use is when an employee shows up for work but is not productive, referred to as *presenteeism*. The employee may be hung over, in withdrawal or under the influence. Employees with addicted family members may be distracted because of the turmoil and worry. Such distraction impacts productivity, and can lead to workplace errors and injuries.

The National Safety Council estimates that 80% of employers do not know how to either broach the topic or know what resources to provide. In response to this estimate, the Council has developed a [Prescription Drug Employer Kit](#) to help managers understand the impact of prescription opioid use and misuse in the workplace and effectively communicate with employees. This is a free tool kit that can be useful in educating employees and providing resources.

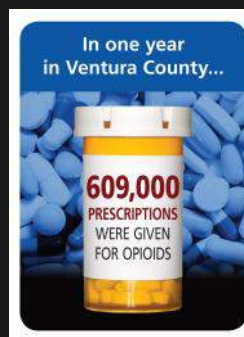
Prescription drugs account for most overdose deaths (63%), far above other substance categories:

- 25% alcohol-related
- 24% heroin-related
- 18% illicit-drug related



Is There a Difference Between Opioids and Opiates?

It may not sound like there is a difference, but there is. While subtle, the distinction between opioids and opiates is significant. An opiate is a drug naturally derived from the flowering opium poppy plant. Examples of opiates include heroin, morphine and codeine.



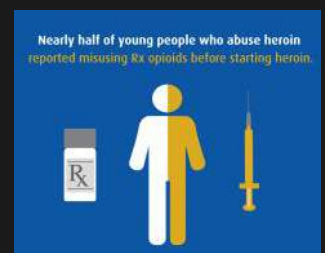
The term opioid is a broader term that includes opiates and refers to any substance, *natural or synthetic*, that binds to the brain's opioid receptors – the parts of the brain responsible for controlling pain, reward and addictive behaviors. Some examples of synthetic opioids include the prescription painkillers hydrocodone (Vicodin) and oxycodone (OxyContin), as well as fentanyl and methadone.

It is important to note that while all opiates are opioids, not all opioids are opiates. Additionally, just because opiates are natural does not mean they are less harmful. Just like opioids, opiates are highly addictive and frequently misused.

Non-Opioid Alternatives

There are many non-opioid treatments available for pain, including prescription and over-the-counter aspirin, ibuprofen and acetaminophen; nondrug remedies such as massage, physical therapy, meditation, hypnotherapy, and acupuncture; and high-tech treatments using radio waves and electrical signals.

Although opioids are often legitimately used for more severe pain such as back injuries and chronic back pain, they may not need to be the first line of treatment. Individuals who use opioids, even prescribed, for 10 or more days have a 20% chance of becoming dependent. There is indication that long-term use of opioids may increase an individual's sensitivity to pain – a phenomenon called hyperalgesia.



Opioids: What You Need To Know cont.

Impact on the Family

Family members need to understand that the most dangerously misused drug today may be sitting in their medicine cabinets. While there are legitimate reasons for these drugs to be prescribed, the reality is that they are the most frequently prescribed medication by the majority of health plans throughout the country, including those within the County of Ventura.

A “chronic user” is defined as someone who has taken these types of substances for at least 200 days in the past year (JAMA Internal Medicine). Chronic users get their medication from a variety of sources. Written prescriptions account for 27% of the source, while 26% are given their substances from family and friends, and 37% find other sources in which to purchase the substance either from dealers, family, or associates.

Recognizing the possible connection or impact on the family may not be easy. It is difficult to watch loved ones in pain, so relief is welcome when there is the introduction of medicine that eases that burden. However, when dependency, misuse, or addiction becomes an additional factor, things can change. Mood swings, hostility, and conflict might seem to be more prevalent. Blaming others and taking limited responsibility (for fear of losing access to the drug) may present itself. Connectedness, time together, priorities, become compromised. Spouses and family members begin to doubt themselves and feel increasingly hopeless about the changes taking place. The partner may feel ashamed, afraid, and may experience an overwhelming sense of failure. They are protective of their loved one as they remain concerned about the physical pain and may even blame themselves for not being able to help them. Secrets, pretending, and how to hide the problems at home can become the primary distraction and impact prompting the family overall to withdraw from others.

Medication Disposal

Ventura County is actively engaged and committed to preventing prescription drug misuse and abuse. Reducing prescription drug access to teenagers is an effective method of prevention. VCBH Alcohol and Drug Programs, in collaboration with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office, established countywide Pharmaceutical Drop-Off Locations that allows residents to safely dispose of unused, unwanted, or expired Rx medication via secure, confidential disposal bins.

Since 2009, over 40,000 pounds of Rx drugs have been collected and destroyed by the Ventura County Rx Abuse & Heroin Workgroup partners in the Ventura County Sheriff's Office

Source: Ventura County Sheriff's Office



Scope of the Problem

According to data from the National Center for Health Statistics, 42,249 deaths involving opioids were recorded in 2016 nationwide – 66% of all drug overdose deaths for that year. Included in this number are opioid analgesics, along with heroin and illicit synthetic opioids.

Opioid deaths now outpace deaths from breast cancer by over a

thousand. Much of the increase was driven by the rise in illicit synthetic opioids like fentanyl and tramadol. Provisional data for 2017 shows a 16% increase in nationwide deaths involving opioids.

If an airliner crashed every week, would you notice?
Would you care?



The same number of people are dying each week from prescription painkiller overdoses.

In one year
in Ventura County...



In one year
in Ventura County...



In one year
in Ventura County...



Finding Resources

Discuss your pain management with your primary care physician. Communicate clearly your interest in alternatives to medications with the potential for addiction. If you are concerned about the current use for yourself or a family member you can also seek assistance through the County's Employee Assistance Program at 805/654-4327 or obtain additional resources through Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) Alcohol and Drug Programs at 805/981-9200 and by visiting VenturaCountyResponds.org.

For more information on local efforts to inform and educate about the opioid crisis plus access to resources go to: VenturaCountyResponds.org.



Diversity and Inclusion Corner

Resources for Learning!

Resource Library

We have a new [Resource Library](#) available so you can learn more about developing diversity and inclusion. Resources include articles, books, short videos and TED Talks.

Sharing Good Ideas!

We want to hear from you! Do you have a good Diversity and Inclusion idea to be implemented in the County of Ventura? The Diversity and Inclusion Task Force is interested in hearing ideas from you...

Please go to: <http://myvcweb/index.php/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-and-inclusion-task-force> to get information on how to share your ideas with us.

For questions contact: training.administration@ventura.org



Move Forward

Online Developing Cultural Competency and Inclusion Class

Increase your awareness of what goes into making diverse work teams thrive. Acquire key communication tools for turning tension-filled misunderstandings into positive outcomes.

You may access the training [HERE](#) or via **Media Partners** at:

<http://v1.oblearn.com/countyofventura/employees/>



COMING SOON



LinkedIn Learning

WITH **Lynda.com**® CONTENT

Attracting and retaining talent is a top priority for the County. An organization is only as strong as the collective talent of the people who work there. Because of this, a key part of recruiting and retaining great people is providing real learning opportunities to them, which facilitates their career growth.

The County of Ventura is a Learning Organization as depicted in our values and strategic plan. This fiscal year, employees will get a new benefit for their own learning, growth and development. Workforce members will have 24/7 access to over 9000 online courses in business, leadership, finance, IT, and soft skills to achieve personal and professional goals. Other highlights include:

- Classes that range from micro lessons to longer lessons
- Classes in Hard Skills: Excel, Access, Lean Six, HTML Essentials, Microsoft Software, Office 365, and statistical classes

- Classes in Soft Skills: Time Management, Project Management, Communication, Leadership, Networking and Collaboration, How to Have Difficult Conversations
- No travel time to instructor-led classes
- Creation of learning pathways and playlists to gain new skills

Empowering employees with career growth opportunities and the ability to learn new skills in an inspiring county culture can keep them happy and engaged. Engaged employees help build the County's positive culture and are a great resource for attracting even more top talent.

Stay tuned for launch information to start your 2019 year off right!

DEFERRED COMPENSATION

401(K) Shared Savings
& Section 457 Plans



NATIONAL RETIREMENT SECURITY WEEK

OCTOBER 21-27,
2018

Celebrate NRSW by
utilizing the retirement
planning resources
available to you

National Retirement Security Week (NRSW) is a national effort to raise public awareness about the importance of saving for retirement. NRSW encourages employees to participate in their employer sponsored retirement plans in order to have a financially secure retirement.

Research shows only 2/3 of Americans are saving for retirement or are saving at a level not adequate enough to provide financial security in retirement. Make sure you are on track! NRSW is a great opportunity to check-in on your personal financial situation and make the changes needed to help you reach your retirement goals.

Schedule a 1:1 consultation with our onsite Fidelity Retirement Planner, Andrew Kremer, CFP, to answer any questions you might have and to help create a retirement plan unique to you. Book your appointment [online](#) or by calling 800.642.7131.

Visit NetBenefits.com/ventura and:

- Check your current contribution level and consider an increase.
- Find out whether you are contributing enough to earn the County's matching contribution. **Be sure you are not leaving money on the table.**
- Review your asset allocation to see if your paycheck contributions are being deposited to an investment that matches your savings goals and the amount of risk you are willing to take to reach those goals.
- Make sure your beneficiary designation is up to date and make any needed changes.
- Boost your financial IQ with online education and planning tools.

The County of Ventura is a strong supporter of NRSW and to celebrate, the Deferred Compensation Program along with the County Executive Office Human Resources/Benefits and other County agencies, will be hosting the:

3rd Annual Employee Health & Wealth Fair

(formerly the Health and Financial Wellness Fair)



Thursday, October 25, 2018 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Outdoor Courtyard, Government Center

Additional information on this event is available in the announcement on the following page.

You're Invited to Attend ...

... a **4-Part Retirement Workshop** series dedicated to helping you create a retirement plan, maximize your retirement savings, discover strategies for claiming Social Security and determine the components of your estate plan. You will be provided with strategies and tips to help manage your financial future with confidence. Attend all the workshops or just one or two of interest to you.

Date and Topic of Retirement Workshop Sessions

October 3 ~

Making the Most of Your Retirement Savings

October 10 ~

Fundamentals of Retirement Income Planning

October 30 ~

Make the Most of Social Security

November 6 ~

Preserving Your Savings for Future Generations



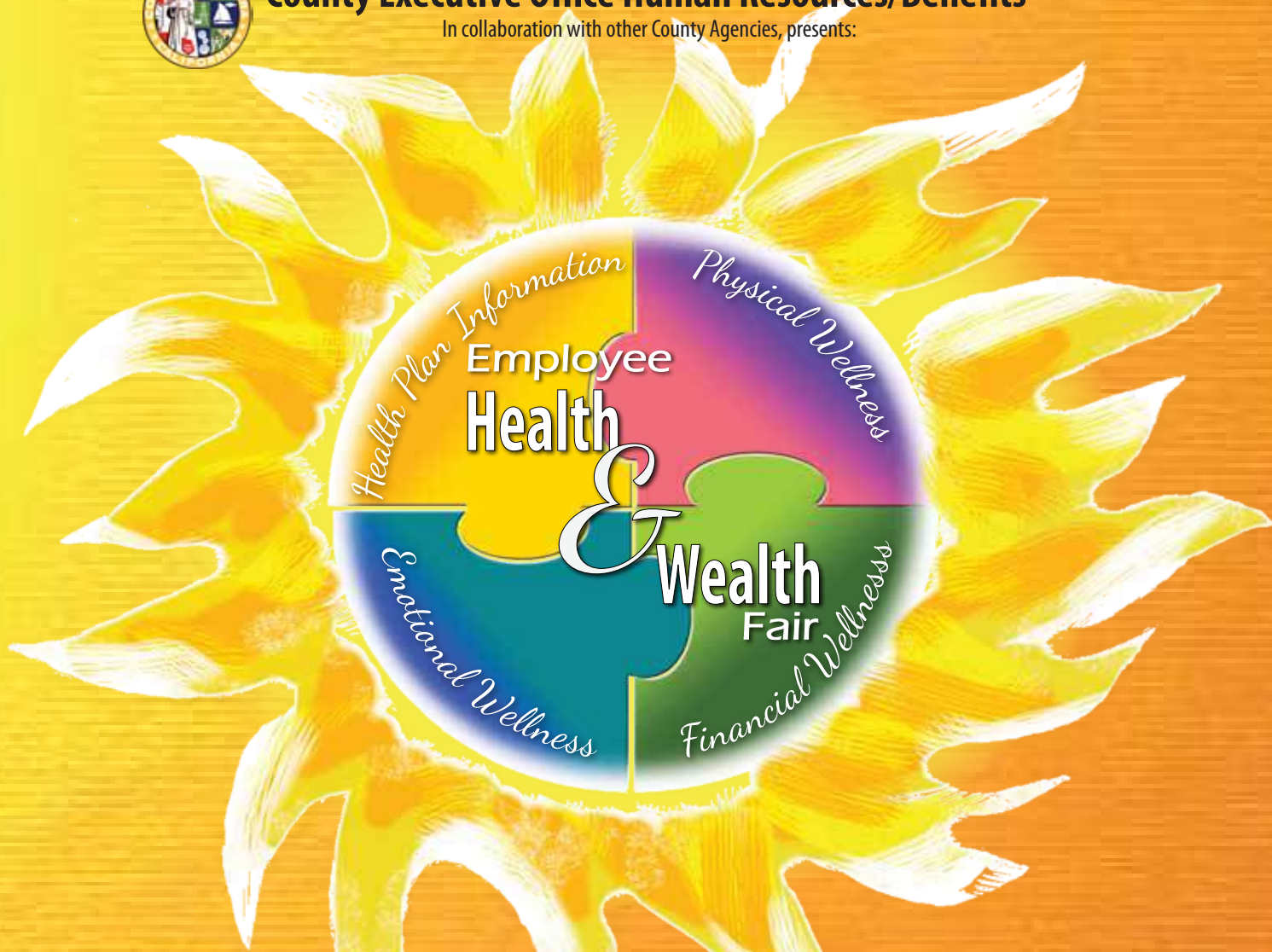
Workshops will be held at the Government Center, Hall of Administration from noon - 1:00 p.m.

[Click here](#) for more information and to reserve your spot today! Spouses and partners are welcome to attend.



County Executive Office Human Resources/Benefits

In collaboration with other County Agencies, presents:



Thursday, 10/25/18, 10^{am}-1^{pm}

Government Center--scenic walkway between HOA & HOJ

Changes on the Horizon...

This fair is an excellent opportunity to learn more about resources and services available to County Employees!

Speak in-person with representatives from County Benefits and health plan providers, including our new outside FSA Administrator.

Financial Wellness:

- ▶ Ventura County Deferred Comp Program
- ▶ Ventura County Credit Union
- ▶ Fidelity ▶ VCERA
- ▶ VCAAA- Living Within Your Means
- ▶ Affinity Trusts- Estate Planning
- ▶ emPower (energy-savings for home owners)
- ▶ VC Community Development Corporation
- ▶ Coastal Housing Partnership

Physical Wellness:

- ▶ VC-WELL
- ▶ Ventura County Health Care Agency
 - ~Mobile Medical Clinic--Flu Shots
 - ~Come Meet the Specialists-
 - "Ask a Doc" booths
- ▶ VCAAA-Fall Prevention
- ▶ Health-Club-Discount Partners

Emotional Wellness:

- ▶ Employee Assistance Program
- ▶ Ventura County Health Care Agency
 - ~Ventura County Animal Services
 - ~Behavioral Health
 - ~Alcohol & Drug Prevention (ADP)
 - ~Wellness Everyday
- ▶ Library Services
- ▶ Employee Training and Development
- ▶ Work/Life

Awesome Prizes, Free Giveaways and More!
Don't miss out on this fun and informative event!

"Let's Play Ball!"



The Wellness Program (VC-WELL) is starting something new...

EIGHT YEARS AGO it was just a friendly game of softball between two Agencies/Depts—General Services Agency and the County Executive Office. **Fast forward to 2018.** The Wellness Program recently delivered an amazing pitch for a *County Employee Softball Tournament* and NINE agencies accepted the challenge: ▶ Health Care Agency ▶ General Services Agency ▶ County Executive Office ▶ Public Works ▶ Probation ▶ Airports ▶ Assessor ▶ Resource Management Agency ▶ Dept. of Child Support Services

Come out and root for your Agency/Department during the inaugural tournament on October 13 & 14 and October 20 & 21 at [Saticoy Park!](https://www.ventura.org/saticoy-park) The tournament schedule will be posted on the Wellness website: www.ventura.org/vcwell "This could be the start of something BIG!" We hope to see the tournament grow with more Agencies/Departments joining the fun next year.



"BATTER UP!"

With seasonal changes, and less daylight hours, it's sometimes a challenge to get "on deck".

Start your morning off with a whole grain option like oats. Oats contain B vitamins like niacin, thiamin, and folate, which work together to help your body metabolize **energy!** Oats are not only energy boosting but packed with protein, full of fiber, low in fat and low in calories. Oats also slow digestion and make you feel full longer. Rolled oats and steel-cut oats are healthier than those little quick & easy oatmeal packets which are full of extra sugar.

No time to prepare breakfast? Try this recipe for Overnight Oats:

- ▶ 1/3 cup plain Greek yogurt ▶ 1/2 cup (heaping) rolled oats
- ▶ 2/3 cup unsweetened milk of choice
- ▶ 1 tbsp. chia seeds or ground flax meal
- ▶ 1/2tsp vanilla extract ▶ Pinch of salt
- ▶ 0-2 tablespoons honey or maple syrup

Whisk together all ingredients in a medium sized mixing bowl. Spoon into a jar with a tight fitting lid.

Close and refrigerate for at least 4 hours, but preferably overnight before eating.

<https://wholefully.com/8-classic-overnight-oats-recipes-you-should-try/>

Save The Date!



Employee Health & Wealth Fair ***Thursday, 10/25/18, 10am-1pm***

▶ [VC-WELL](https://www.ventura.org/vcwell)

~Health-Club-Discount Partners

▶ [VCAAA](https://www.vcaaa.org/)

~Fall Prevention

▶ [Ventura County Health Care Agency](https://www.ventura.org/health-care-agency)

~Mobile Medical Clinic - Flu Shots

~Come meet the Specialists "Ask a Doc" Booths

~Ventura County Health Care Plan

~Prevention & Education: Alcohol and Drug,

~Tobacco, Stroke, Animal Services and more!



The WorkLife Program provides resources to help you care for the most important people in your life!



Child Care



Elder Care



Lactation Accommodation



[Click here for WorkLife resources.](#)

Thinking About Buying a Home?

COASTAL HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Coastal Housing Partnership has two ways for you to become a savvy home buyer!

Attend the Home Buying Fair

Coastal Housing Partnership's **Home Buying Fair** offers potential home buyers a wealth of information and resources on their path to home ownership. Whether you are a first time home buyer, a move-up buyer or just thinking about buying a home, this fair is for you. It is designed to give attendees the tools to help navigate the home buying process and today's real estate market.



7th Annual
COASTAL HOUSING PARTNERSHIP
Home Buying Fair

- **Wednesday, October 17, 2018, 5 pm – 8 pm**
- Deckers Rotunda, 6601 Hollister Avenue, Goleta
- Taco Bar - 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm
- Admission is **FREE** for County of Ventura employees and their guests
- RVSP – www.homebuyingfairs.org

Attend a Free Home Buying Seminar

**October 23, 2018 or
December 4, 2018**

5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Government Center, Ventura

Hall of Administration, Multi-Purpose Room

For a reservation, go to: coastalhousing.org



**Want to Parent the Positive Way?
We Have Solutions!**



Parenting is a 24/7 job. Wouldn't it be nice to have parenting tools available to you on a 24/7 basis? Well, now you can!

The WorkLife Program is offering a huge enrollment discount for County employees* on the highly-acclaimed site: PositiveParentingSolutions.com

* Regular County employees who are currently participating in the County's Flexible Benefits Program

We have a special one-hour online class that we can share with you to learn more.

Email WorkLife@ventura.org for more information.

Are You Caring for an Elderly Relative?

Whether your loved one lives with you, lives across town or is out of state, caring for an elderly or sick relative can be stressful. Caregivers need to nourish their spirit and support their physical and mental health. Join us for support and resources at the **Elder Care Support Group**. Drop in as your schedule allows, no registration is required.



Wednesday, October 31 - Noon - 1:00pm

**Government Center - Hall of Administration
Caribbean Conference Room**