

English articles

It's useful to read articles in English, even if you don't understand every word - it will help you increase your vocabulary and keep up to date with things happening in English-speaking countries!

*This page will be updated on **Mondays**. The first article is aimed at a B1 and upwards level and the second article is aimed at a B2 and upwards level*

Articles of the week



Stressed? Sick? Swiss town lets doctors prescribe free museum visits as art therapy for patients



By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

NEUCHÂTEL, Switzerland (AP) — The world's woes got you down? Feeling burnout at work? Need a

little something extra to fight illness or prep for surgery? The Swiss town of Neuchâtel is offering its residents a novel medical option: Expose yourself to art and get a doctor's note to do it for free.

Under a new two-year pilot project, local and regional authorities are covering the costs of “museum prescriptions” issued by doctors who believe their patients could benefit from visits to any of the town's four museums as part of their treatment.

The project is based on a 2019 World Health Organization report that found the arts can boost mental health, reduce the impact of trauma and lower the risk of cognitive decline, frailty and “premature mortality,” among other upsides.

Art can help relax the mind — as a sort of preventative medicine — and visits to museums require getting up and out of the house with physical activity like walking and standing for long periods.

Neuchatel council member Julie Courcier Delafontaine said the COVID crisis also played a role in the program's genesis. “With the closure of cultural sites (during coronavirus lockdowns), people realized just how much we need them to feel better.”

She said so far some 500 prescriptions have been distributed to doctors around town and the program costs “very little.” Ten thousand Swiss francs (about \$11,300) have been budgeted for it.

If successful, local officials could expand the program to other artistic activities like theater or dance, Courcier Delafontaine said. The Swiss national health care system doesn't cover “culture as a means of therapy,” but she hopes it might one day, if the results are positive enough.

Marianne de Reynier Nevsky, the cultural mediation manager in the town of 46,000 who helped devise the program, said it built on a similar idea rolled out at the Fine Arts Museum in Montreal, Canada, in 2019.

She said many types of patients could benefit.

“It could be a person with depression, a person who has trouble walking, a person with a chronic illness,” she said near a display of a feather headdress from Papua New Guinea at the Ethnographic Museum of Neuchatel, a converted former villa that overlooks Lake Neuchâtel.

Part of the idea is to get recalcitrant patients out of the house and walking more.

Dr. Marc-Olivier Sauvain, head of surgery at the Neuchatel Hospital Network, said he had already prescribed museum visits to two patients to help them get in better shape before a planned operation.

He said a wider rollout is planned once a control group is set up. For his practice, the focus will be on patients who admit that they've lost the habit of going out. He wants them to get moving.

“It's wishful thinking to think that telling them to go walk or go for a stroll to improve their fitness level before surgery” will work, Sauvain said on a video call Saturday, wearing blue scrubs. “I think that these patients will fully benefit from museum prescriptions. We'll give them a chance to get physical and intellectual exercise.”

“And as a doctor, it's really nice to prescribe museum visits rather than medicines or tests that patients don't enjoy,” he added. “To tell them 'It's a medical order that instructs you to go visit one of our nice city museums.'”

Some museum-goers see the upsides too.

"I think it's a great idea," said Carla Fragniere Filliger, a poet and retired teacher, during a visit to the ethnography museum. "There should be prescriptions for all the museums in the world!"

In the rapidly shifting world of work, many employees are unclear what's expected of them



By CATHY BUSSEWITZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — When Nikelle Inman started a new job coaching first-generation college students, she looked forward to meeting with them one-on-one to talk about how to surmount obstacles and find resources to succeed.

Instead, she and her fellow success coaches at a community college in North Carolina spent a year mired in paperwork, tasked with reviewing applications from aspiring undergraduates. They never did get to meet with students.

"Admissions work kind of took over what we were supposed to do," Inman, 34, said. "I felt disengaged with the position, more so because I just didn't feel valued."

It's disorienting when a job turns out to be completely different than advertised or morphs into something we didn't expect. But more U.S. workers have reported feeling disconnected from their organization's purpose and unclear on how to meet expectations since the coronavirus pandemic changed the way we work, according to a new Gallup analysis.

Just under half of U.S. employees who participated in a Gallup survey in November "strongly agreed" that they know what is expected of them at work, which is one of the factors the polling firm uses to measure employee engagement. In January 2020, the figure stood at 56%.

The new survey showed that new employees, younger employees, people in white-collar industries like technology, insurance and finance, and those in hybrid work arrangements were especially likely to report that expectations for their roles weren't clear.

The findings make intuitive sense. Managers and employees have bushwhacked their way through disruptive changes since COVID-19 first upended public life five years ago. In late 2024, about one-quarter of employees with the ability to work remotely were doing so exclusively, up from around 1 in

10 in 2019, Gallup found. Another 55% were working in the office some days and remotely the rest, according to the 2024 data, up from about one-third in 2019.

More recently, layoffs at tech companies and in the government and other sectors have left organizations with fewer people to handle the load, and expectations aren't always adjusted to the new realities.

“With all the rounds of layoffs, people's scope and responsibilities are shifting constantly,” said Jeremy Guttenplan, an executive leadership trainer and coach based in New York. “You think about the ones left behind and the work is just getting piled on them.”

Here are some strategies for eliminating confusion when the scope and responsibilities of a job are ambiguous.

Establish expectations early

Spell out or make sure you understand what a new role or project entails — along with any relevant deadlines or performance markers — from the beginning so everyone agrees on what's realistic and wanted. Writing it down in a shared document can help prevent future misunderstandings.

When a successful real estate developer asked Amber Krasinski to film and produce 85 TikTok videos in three hours, she thought hard about whether she really wanted to take him on as a client. The job might be good exposure for her communications agency, IvyHill Strategies, but Krasinski knew it would be impossible to complete in so little time. She turned it down.

Krasinski regularly gives her client progress updates and tries to make a practice of asking clarifying questions before taking on new projects.

“Any time I have a conversation with a prospective client, I have that in the back of my mind,” Krasinski said. “Avoiding that people-pleasing side that says, 'You can figure it out, you can do it.' You don't want to let anybody down, but you also need to set yourself up for success.”

Seek frequent feedback

No one wants to spend all day in meetings. But more frequent check-ins with a manager or supervisor may help staff members who are unsure if they are prioritizing their time appropriately or don't know what they are supposed to be doing.

Organizations can explore different ways of building connection between employees and providing more opportunities for feedback, which can result in better understanding of workplace expectations. Brian Smith, founder and managing partner of IA Business Advisors, said his company hosts gratitude sessions for 30 minutes each week.

The first 20 minutes are led by a coach who advises attendees on issues such as how to effectively manage time or deal with challenging customers. Highlighting specific problems and strategies can help workers understand what's expected of them. At the end of the session, participants have an opportunity to share what they're grateful for.

Start the conversation

Workers don't have to wait for a supervisor to seek feedback or clarify expectations. You can suggest a quick check-in at any point, if you're unsure how to prioritize long-term goals or short-term deadlines,

"Managing upwards is going to make your life easier," said Dale Whelehan, founder of 4 Day World, a think tank that explores new models of work. "Don't assume that management has all the answers. They're probably just as lost."

However, in hierarchical organizations where questioning management may be viewed negatively, it's important to be delicate, he said.

To initiate a feedback discussion, you can ask to meet with a manager about a current project. Whelehan outlined how to approach the conversation if the meeting gets scheduled. Start by sharing what you understand your assignment to be. Then request the manager's confirmation or clarification by saying something such as, "I just want to make sure that there's alignment here," he advised.

Ask about anything else you need to clarify and close out the conversation by saying, "From what I understand from this conversation, my role is this. ... Have I understood that correctly?" Follow up with an email restating what you agreed to, Whelehan said.

Trust your instincts

With workplaces experiencing so many changes, employees can find themselves jumping from one assignment to the other, distracted by new responsibilities picked up after colleagues were laid off, or adjusting to spending more time physically in the office.

If it all feels too chaotic, take a moment to pause. Revisit your priorities. And then work on the most important task.

"If something doesn't feel right, don't just accept it," Inman said. "Whatever that avenue is, if it's staying and trying to make it better or leaving, just don't give up on what you know is right."

Have you overcome an obstacle or made a profound change in your work? Send your questions and story ideas to cbussewitz@ap.org. Follow AP's Be Well coverage, focusing on wellness, fitness, diet and mental health at <https://apnews.com/hub/be-well>.

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