DEFINING WELLNESS

Unbelievably we are headed into the last few weeks before the Fall 2012 Semester begins. The pace will certainly begin to pick up on campus and in our daily lives. It makes sense to pause now to reflect upon how we are doing in terms of addressing our wellness concerns and goals.

Perhaps the first place for each of us to start is to determine how we define wellness. Do we look at our well-being from a holistic perspective? As we’ve come to realize through the years, “wellness” is about more than our physical health.

Through its Wellness Initiative, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) outlines Eight Dimensions of Wellness to support its efforts to promote wellness for people with mental and substance use disorders. This model is one that we can ALL benefit from when considering our wellness needs. Here is a brief snapshot of each dimension.

**Physical**: Recognizing the need for physical activity, a healthy diet, and sleep.

**Emotional**: Coping effectively with life and creating satisfying relationships.

**Social**: Developing a sense of connection, belonging, and a well-developed support system.

**Occupational**: Personal satisfaction and enrichment derived from one’s work.

**Intellectual**: Recognizing creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and skills.

**Financial**: Satisfaction with current and future financial situations.

**Environmental**: Good health by occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support well-being.

**Spiritual**: Expanding our sense of purpose and meaning of life.

To explore another way of approaching wellness, check out the Six Dimensions of Wellness on the National Wellness Institute’s (NWI) website. Both SAMSHA and NWI offer helpful information that can assist us in determining which dimension(s) currently need our attention. If you find that you need additional resources to support your wellness efforts, contact EAP.

To obtain more information on SAMHSA’s Wellness Initiative and the Eight Dimensions of Wellness, a downloadable brochure is available.
So far in this series we’ve discussed the two primary reasons we might find someone to be difficult: **conflicting expectations** and/or **unclear boundaries**. We’ve spent time reflecting on and assessing some of our own issues and triggers when it comes to working with someone who we deem to be difficult. Additionally, we’ve briefly examined the ten types of challenging personalities we might come across. The intent of the last part of this three-part series is to pass along a few online resources that can provide employees with some tips on how to approach and address this workplace situation.

Before making any decisions regarding speaking to someone about their challenging behaviors, read the attached online resources. If after thoughtful reading, you feel unsafe having a conversation with the individual, discuss other options with your supervisor or with Human Resources, such as having a neutral third party in the room, or maybe not having the conversation at all. In a very small percentage of cases, a conversation could escalate a situation, so take precautions. Listen to your thoughts and how your body is reacting, and trust what you hear and feel. Never allow yourself to be forced into a situation where you don’t feel safe. Thankfully, workplace conflicts almost never precipitate violence, however, one needs to be mindful of any potentially hostile situation. EAP is available to consult with you as you determine your next step.

First and foremost before speaking with the person, give yourself time to reflect and to become clear within yourself about what is going on for you in regard to the situation. Provide yourself enough time to do this but not so much that you let the situation eat away at you and cause a great deal of stress. **Remember, early intervention is always the best way to proceed.** Additionally, choose to speak to the person directly and do not spend a lot of time and energy talking to co-workers about the situation. Don’t hesitate to contact EAP to discuss the situation. Speaking with the EAP Coordinator can help you formulate how you want to proceed.

What follows are a few online resources to explore for tips and techniques on how to approach the conversation with the difficult person.

**Please note:** These links are being provided as educational resources only. It is not the intention of EAP to advertise or promote any particular company or website but instead to provide researched materials for professional development purposes. Here’s to your continued efforts to learn how to better communicate and relate to your co-workers and supervisors!

- **How to Resolve Conflict at Work**
- **Conflict Management and Constructive Confrontation**
- **Constructive Conversation**
- **10 Tips for Dealing With Difficult People at Work**

Request any of the following EAP brochures be sent to you or make an appointment to stop by the EAP Office (MSC # 200) to pick them up.
- “Don’t Take It Personally”
- “The Way You Say It”
- “Work It Out”

**Books available in the EAP Lending Library:**
- **Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes are High**
- **Difficult People: Working Effectively with Prickly Bosses, Coworkers, and Clients**
- **Difficult People at Work: How to Cope, How to Win**
- **Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most**
- **Perfect Phrases for Conflict Resolution**
The environment that we live and work in each day plays a significant role in our mental and physical health. I am always looking for new ways to create a healthy workspace and came across this infographic called “Wellness at Work: Anatomy of a Healthy Workplace” (found on http://blog.intuit.com). When the fall months start to approach, I evaluate my workspace surroundings and try to make it a healthy place. In addition to the items listed in the infographic, here are two simple concepts that you can practice on your own to make your workspace and space healthy. **NOTE:** For a clearer view of the infographic, expand the view to 200% or click on the link above.

**Instant Recess** – This can be done by anybody at any time in any attire. A 10-minute Instant Recess program features moves such as lifting your arms and kicking your legs back to elevate your heart rate. You can do some simple movements and **stretches** to music or find a free guided exercise video on the internet. Ten minutes of vigorous exercise can contribute greatly to your health (improved mood and energy as well as feeling more relaxed and sharper). It can also increase productivity and decrease workplace injuries.

**Washing your hands at work** - We share the bathrooms at work with all of our co-workers. One small task that you can do to stay physically healthy is to have a proper hand washing technique. Here is a technique I use every time I wash my hands in the bathroom at work and any public restroom:

Add regular soap and rub your hands together, ensuring you have lathered all surfaces for at least 15 seconds. How long is 15 seconds? The length of time it takes to sing Happy Birthday. Wash the front and back of your hands, as well as between your fingers. Rinse your hands under warm running water using a rubbing motion. Wipe and dry your hands gently with a paper towel or a clean towel. Drying them vigorously can damage the skin. Turn off the tap using the paper towel so that you do not recontaminate your hands. Use the same paper towel to open the door when you leave.

**Try to practice one or two of these activities each day for a healthier you!**
The Summer Olympics games have begun and so has the state-wide 16-day *WellNYS Everyday Olympic Experience* wellness event! EAP hopes that those of you who have registered to participate are making strides in completing the list of 16 healthy behaviors!

**As a reminder, here are some ideas to help you make the process more fun and collaborative:**

- Establish a “friendly competition” within or between departments. Perhaps each team/department identifies itself as a country to play off of the idea that countries compete against each other in the Olympics!
- Invite participating co-workers to choose one healthy behavior and complete the behavior together.
- Coordinate a “salad bowl luncheon” to fulfill the “eat a variety of 5-7 fruits and vegetables” healthy behavior. See page 6 of the *July EAP E-News* for information on this idea.
- Attend the one or both of the August EAP Lunchtime Wellness Programs which are designed to help you check off TWO different healthy behaviors. (See page 6 & 7 for program details.)
Quiet Reflection
Music and Art for Relaxation

With quiet music playing in the background, employees will have the opportunity to relax during their lunchtime break while dabbling with a variety of art supplies. Make a collage. Design a greeting card for a loved one. Write a poem. Bring your journal from home and spend time making an entry. Give yourself time for quiet reflection during the middle of your day, and go back to work feeling refreshed and rejuvenated. Facilitated by EAP Coordinator Brenda Seckerson whose background includes training and experience in the use of the expressive arts. This is a DROP-IN session. Stay as long as your schedule permits.

NOTE: If participating in the Olympic Experience Challenge, attending this EAP Lunchtime Program will fulfill the healthy behavior of “spending 20 minutes in meditation/quiet reflection or writing in a journal.”

To Register Contact:
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu
CALL 442-5483
OR ONLINE:
http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm

Friday, August 3
12:00 - 1:00 pm
Room 375
Campus Center
Laughter & Play For Better Health

Research indicates that the saying “Laughter is the best medicine” has some truth to it. Brain research informs us that we need to challenge ourselves to learn new things to keep our brains sharp. Join us for some lunchtime laughter and play to enhance your health and well-being. Try your hand at juggling.* Play one of the games facilitated by EAP Committee members. And, check out the new fun fitness class called Hulafit.** Yes, hula hooping for fitness and laughs! This EAP Lunchtime Wellness Program will help to brighten your day!

*NOTE: If participating in the Olympic Experience Challenge, attending this EAP Lunchtime Program will fulfill the healthy behavior of “trying something fun that will make you laugh!”

To Register:
http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm

Friday, August 10
12:00 - 1:00 pm
Futterer Lounge
Performing Arts Center
2nd Floor

*EAP thanks Chris Collins and Penny LaRocque for sharing their juggling talents with UAlbany employees!

**Free Hulafit experience provided by Brenda McCullen. Hulafit is a low-impact fun aerobic work-out using exercise hoops.
One of your benefits as an employee of the University at Albany is access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAP’s mission is to provide services to support a healthy, productive workforce. Available to all employees is the use of the voluntary, confidential Information, Assessment, and Referral Service provided by UAlbany EAP Coordinator, Brenda Seckerson.

Is there a concern that you know you need to address but just haven’t taken the time to do so? Is there an issue at home or work that is having an effect on your ability to be as productive as you need to be? **Early intervention is the key!** You don’t need to deal with it alone. Support is available through UAlbany EAP. Whether it is family and relationship issues, work stress, interpersonal difficulties, substance abuse or dependency, aging parents, therapist referrals, legal matters and/or financial concerns, employees can take advantage of the confidential assistance available from EAP.

To schedule an appointment for an Information, Assessment & Referral session, contact

**Brenda Seckerson,**
**UAlbany EAP Coordinator**
Call 442-5483 or email [bseckerson@albany.edu](mailto:bseckerson@albany.edu)

Confidential support, information, and referrals are available to assist you in finding a way to address your concerns.

Employee Assistance Program-sponsored events and services are open to UAlbany and Research Foundation faculty, staff, family members, UAS employees, GSEU members, and retirees.

Life is 10 percent what you make it and 90 percent how you take it.

~ Irving Berlin, 1901-1989
American Composer & Lyricist
Save these dates in September!

Art Break at the University Art Museum

We’re planning the next EAP Lunchtime “Art Break” at the University Art Museum on September 6.

Join us for a tour of the 2012 Artists of the Mohawk Hudson Region Juried Exhibition!

More details to come!

Tatana Kellner
Blue Line in Washington, DC, 2011
Archival inkjet print
60 x 30 inches