Tips to Resist Stress Right Now

Can you believe it’s August? We still have a few more weeks of being in the “summer mode” here at UAlbany. We will, however, start to feel the pace pick up as we are fast approaching the start of the fall semester and a new academic year. No matter what time of the year it is, finding ways to address stress in the moment is always a good thing for our health and well-being. Here are some helpful and handy tips from the New York State Office of Mental Health to incorporate into your day to help resist stress right now.

♦ Create small goals. What can you get done today?
♦ Don’t run from problems. Facing fears decreases stress and builds inner strength.
♦ Keep things in perspective.
♦ Maintain hope. Thinking positive thoughts helps to create positive situations.
♦ Ask for help. Letting someone help you strengthens your own resilience.
♦ Write down what you are grateful for and review it when you are feeling down.
♦ Stay physically active. Exercise releases hormones in the brain and makes you feel better.
♦ Breathe slowly and deeply for a few minutes. Deep breathing can increase your energy level and helps turn off racing thoughts.

"Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look once in awhile, you could miss it."
~ Ferris Bueller

Please note that messages sent using the noemail@albany.edu email address on the “Questions & Comments” section on the EAP website will not be answered by EAP as there is no return email address provided. Should you wish to contact EAP confidentially, please call EAP Coordinator Brenda Seckerson at 442-5483.
Dealing with Workplace Negativity

Troubled Workplace

It’s hard to enjoy your job if coworkers constantly complain or are openly hostile to each other. Negativity and infighting drain workplace energy and can lead to employee turnover. Productivity suffers and the downward spiral can increase the risk of violence and financial loss. You don’t have to be a victim of workplace negativity.

Possible Sources of Unrest

What causes workplace negativity? Is it rumors and misinformation or just bad communication? Is it a lack of leadership, or is it too much work and not enough money? Worry about retirement, a lack of challenge, or other turmoil can all contribute to negativity. However, sometimes negativity can be caused by one or two employees who decide to engage in conflict at work. Sort through the sources of discontent and explore your options.

What You Can Do

If troublesome rumors persist, suggest a meeting with management to clarify the issues. “Hey, let’s sit down with management and see if all of these rumors are true.” Get the issues on the table and give management an opportunity to clarify rumors and misconceptions. Explain what’s happening. Management can work with you so unsettling rumors and stress stop.

Worker to Worker

Sometimes the problem is between coworkers. Personal conflicts developed outside of work creep into the workplace. Coworkers may be asked to take sides. If this happens to you—resist. Suggest an end to the problem and diffuse the situation. “You’ve been complaining about Marie taking long smoke breaks for two months. Why don’t you talk either to Marie or to the manager?” Use management resources to intervene with warring coworkers. Always report the potential for violence immediately.

Rules for Meetings

These ground rules can help prevent negativity:
1. Be polite and professional. Don’t lose credibility with angry outbursts.
2. Repeat issues for clarification. “What I hear you say is that the company is considering some restructuring. What form will it take?”
3. Focus on issues, not personalities. Say, “We have a company policy on smoking on the job, yet it doesn’t seem to be applied consistently to all employees.” This is better than targeting one person in front of his or her peers for resisting such a policy. Another option is discussing the issue in private.

Finding Resolution

When you find yourself embroiled in an unpleasant environment at work, you may be tempted to throw in the towel and leave. However, chances are, you may just run into this problem again in your next job. Bringing coworkers together to find solutions is possible and brings everyone closer. Take responsibility for creating a positive work environment that fosters camaraderie and career satisfaction. You’ll develop valuable negotiation skills that can add to your desirability as a worker now and in your career later on.

What EAP Can Do

If you tend to be an optimistic employee, workplace negativity can still affect you in ways that you may not like. Negativity is contagious, and long-term exposure to it can take a toll on anyone’s positive attitude. If you reciprocate workplace negativity with others, gossip, or exchange negative comments about your employer with coworkers, it’s time to call EAP. Take advantage of the confidential Information, Assessment, and Referral Service to help you stop the downward slide in your morale and that of a coworker. bseckerson@albany.edu 442-5483
Preparing for the “Wake-Up” Call to Go Back to School

Transitioning from the Freedom of Summer to the School Schedule

Parents...How do you prepare your child or teen to go back to school, especially when it comes to adjusting the sleep schedule? Summer months can provide a little loosening of the nightly “off-to-bed” routine. Transitioning between the days of sleeping in and staying up late to the sound of revelry to “rise and shine” to get up for school can be a challenging one. The best plan is to begin a few weeks before school starts to ease back into the school year bedtime schedules. Doing things to promote good sleep hygiene, for adults as well as children and teens, is vital to health and well-being.

Basic Sleep Tips for School-aged Children from the National Sleep Foundation:

- Teach school-aged children about healthy sleep habits.
- Continue to emphasize the need for a regular and consistent sleep schedule and bedtime routine.
- Make your child's bedroom conducive to sleep – dark, cool and quiet.
- Keep TV and computers out of the bedroom.
- Avoid caffeine.

To gain some helpful techniques on how to facilitate the sleep schedule transition as the start of a new school year approaches, check out the article titled “5 Tips to Get Your Kids Up for School.”

http://www.webmd.com/parenting/features/get-kids-up-for-school

There are some other things to do well ahead of that first day of class. For additional ideas on how to transition from the freedom of summer to the routines of fall, check out the article titled “Back-to-School Transitions: Tips for Parents” on the National Association of School Psychologists’ website.
Sometimes an issue at home or work can have an effect on your ability to be as productive as you need to be. You don’t have to deal with it alone. Support is available through UAlbany’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The mission of UAlbany EAP is to provide services to support a healthy, productive workforce. Available to all employees is the voluntary, confidential Information, Assessment, and Referral Service provided by UAlbany EAP Coordinator, Brenda Seckerson. Take advantage of this confidential assistance available as an employee benefit.

Here are just a few of the concerns or stressors that might prompt an employee to reach out to EAP for information and support:

- Family, parenting, and relationship issues
- Work stress and conflict
- Substance abuse or dependency
- Elder Care
- Psychological Concerns (e.g., depression, anxiety)
- Legal and/or financial concerns
- Grief and loss
- Therapist referrals

Early intervention is the key! Contact 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

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

"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."

~ Charles Darwin
English Naturalist
(1809-1882)
End of Summer Drum Circle

We’ll “drum out” the summer and welcome in a new academic year at UAlbany!

Join us for an hour of FUN as we create a unique community experience. We will have a selection of drums and percussion toys available, or feel free to bring your own. Definitely bring your sense of playfulness and curiosity. No prior musical experience necessary!

In a drum circle, we help create a space safe for experimentation and creativity that makes it easy for people of all levels of experience to join together to create spontaneous musical experiences.

IN CASE OF RAIN, the drumming circle will be canceled. EAP will try to schedule another drumming event at a later date.

TO REGISTER CONTACT:
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu
call 442-5483 or register online

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

DRUMMING BENEFITS:
Self-expression * Stress Reduction * Social Interaction * Camaraderie * Community Building * Fun for Body, Mind, & Spirit.

FACILITATOR: Kate Rogers has been a hand drummer for the past 20+ years. She has been teaching hand drum techniques and facilitating group drum circles for the past decade.

Monday, August 19
5:15 - 6:00 pm
Location:
Podium West Garden
Green space between Main Library & Social Sciences Building
Registration Deadline:
Friday, August 16
Moving In the “Right” Direction
Rightsizing Your Life

Do you feel owned by your possessions, or does your stuff weigh you down? Do you want a simpler or clutter-free environment? Has the time come for your aging parents to make a life change? Overcoming decades worth of memories and possessions can cause emotional stress on families and can be daunting enough to delay relocation.

Join Holly Pajak, owner of RedesigninMind, as she shares tips to:

- **Rightsize and Redesign Your Home** - for the life you want to live now
- **Help Aging Parents Move** - to downsize and help them make a lifestyle change

**Presenter:** Holly Pajak, Owner of **Redesigninmind**

With 15+ years of experience as a professional interior designer and spatial planner, Holly assists individuals and families in what can be an extremely difficult, personal, and stressful time of their lives. **Redesigninmind** was born as an interior design and de-cluttering service that specializes in assisting seniors and their families during the transition from the family home into a smaller residence, retirement community, assisting living facility and/or nursing home.

**To Register Contact:**
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu
CALL 442-5483 OR REGISTER ONLINE

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

**Thursday, August 29**
12:00 - 1:00 pm
Room 110A
School of Public Health

Registration Deadline:
Tuesday, August 27
Estate Planning, Wills, & Trusts

Do you have your will, power of attorney, and health care proxy set up?

Estate planning isn’t just for elders! As adults, we ALL need to think about setting up these important documents. Putting them in place helps plan for the future from a legal standpoint and provides our families with an outline of our wishes. These actions can give everyone some peace of mind. Join attorney Michelle Wildgrube from the law firm of Cioffi Slezak Wildgrube P.C. as she explains what you need to know about estate planning.

“A Legally Speaking Workshop”
provided by The Legal Project*

Bring your questions!

Tuesday, September 17
12:00 - 1:00 pm
Room 375
Campus Center

Registration Deadline:
Monday, September 16

*The Legal Project is a private, not-for-profit organization that was founded by the Capital District Women’s Bar Association in 1995. It provides a variety of free and low cost legal services to the working poor, victims of domestic violence and other underserved individuals in the Capital District. http://www.legalproject.org/

To Register Contact:
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bseckerson@albany.edu
call 442-5483 or register online

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

It’s not just for elders!!

Uptown Campus
The “designated driver” can be a lifesaver. This person is supposed to be the one in your group who elects NOT to drink. Unfortunately, many people aren’t following this safety principle. Instead, they are asking the person in the group who appears least affected by alcohol to do the driving. Have you done this? Researchers at the University of Florida found that 35 percent of designated drivers drank alcohol, and most had blood alcohol levels high enough to impair their driving. Picking the person to drive who appears least affected by alcohol is a faulty recruitment strategy. Some people may have a high blood alcohol level but not appear drunk—even if they drank more than their peers—due to nervous system tolerance to alcohol. Relying on a friend to do the driving because he or she appears to be unaffected by alcohol could put a person behind the wheel who has the highest blood alcohol level in your group! If you find yourself in this situation, the safest bet is to take a cab.

Article Resource: Frontline—Employee Wellness, Productivity & You! Frontline newsletter is courtesy of the New York State Employee Assistance Program.

Mixing Alcohol and Drugs

Even if you don’t watch the TV program Glee, most likely you are aware of the show and heard the recent news that one of its actors, Cory Monteith, died as a result of combining alcohol and heroin. Combining alcohol with ANY type of drug, be it a prescription, over-the-counter, or an illicit drug like heroin, cocaine, etc., can lead to adverse health effects and even death in some cases.

Although some people think they feel “happier” as a result of having a few drinks, alcohol is actually a depressant that slows down the nervous system. Heroin, along with prescription pain-relievers like OxyContin/Oxycodone, codeine, and Vicodin, are narcotics. Narcotic drugs are opiates derived from the opium poppy plant. Other drugs that fall into this category are barbiturates, benzodiazepines, and morphine. Like alcohol, narcotics depress the nervous system. Combing the two causes a person to experience a “double-dose” of depressants. According to thegooddrugsguide.com, “When alcohol and narcotics are taken together, the result is intense sedation and a slowing down of breathing. Breathing can slow down enough to cause death if the mix of alcohol and narcotics is very strong.”

There is growing concern regarding the increased use of prescription narcotics/painkillers. On July 2, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced that “Deaths from prescription painkiller overdoses among women have increased more than 400% since 1999, compared to 265% among men.” It is imperative to know the health effects of combining alcohol and drugs. Talk to your doctor about any drug(s) you are taking and what the potential health effects are should you combine the drug(s) with alcohol. If you or a loved one has developed a dependency on drugs and/or alcohol, contact EAP for confidential support and referrals.

Additional resource: http://www.alcoholic.org/research/mixing-alcohol-and-drugs/
Powerful Worker Attributes

Power up your reputation by acquiring prized employee attributes. Some are rarely mentioned in performance reviews or even found in writing. Examine the following valued attributes:

1) Viewing uncertainty as an exciting challenge;
2) Asking effective questions that develop better ideas;
3) Not being rattled when things are unclear and uncertain;
4) Seeking alternatives when roadblocks appear;
5) Knowing how to be constructively self-critical;
6) Being more likely to over communicate than under communicate; and
7) Taking initiative—being a “plus 1” worker.

Do you see any new attributes for you to acquire or improve upon?

Save the date!

Tuesday, October 29

EAP’s First Financial Wellness Fair

We’re calling it our “Money-Wise and Financially Fit” fair. EAP has invited an array of providers who can offer information and resources designed to support your financial well-being. Also woven into the day’s event will be three, 20-minute seminars. Circle the date on your calendar, and stay tuned for further details!

A Note About Fall Semester Wellness Programs...

Highlighting our first financial wellness fair, financial well-being will be an overarching theme for the fall semester EAP Lunchtime Wellness Programs. Employees will have the opportunity to explore the topics of money and emotions, estate planning, right-sizing your home or that of your elder parents’ home, and funeral planning. EAP hopes you’ll take advantage of the programs being made available to support UAlbany employees.

UAlbany EAP E-News
August 2013

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The New York State Employee Assistance Program is a joint labor/management program and a negotiated benefit. EAP Coordinators are a confidential and neutral resource for employees. The use of EAP is on a voluntary basis.

EAP website: http://www.albany.edu/eap