How to Be an “Outside the Box” Problem Solver

A solution to a seemingly impossible problem at work may appear by thinking “outside the box.” This is a learned skill anyone can master, not a mysterious attribute of brilliant minds and cutting-edge companies. To be an outside the box problem solver, master these three principles.

**Principle #1: Free the Brain.** This means stop thinking about the problem and get some breathing room by participating in a completely unrelated activity—fishing, jogging, showering, or walking on the beach. This detachment frees your brain from the stress being created to find a solution.

**Principle #2: Eliminate Roadblocks.** You won’t find solutions with inhibitions, your ego, close-mindedness, fears, and negativity getting in your way. Let loose, and give yourself permission to “get sloppy” and “get messy”—allow discovery to take place without restrictions and prohibitions.

**Principle #3: Be a “Resource and Inputs” Hound.** Reading books, studying solutions to similar problems, thinking backward, drawing the problem on paper, and brainstorming with others—all these tactics supply you with informational “inputs” that can speed the way to your solution.

Stand Up for Productivity

Here’s a new twist on more productive business meetings—don’t sit down. A recent study found that people get more done in meetings if they avoid sitting in chairs. The study found that when people stood up for meetings, they got more excited about the creative process, became more collaborative, and were less likely to “protect turf” or withhold ideas. Even small changes that allowed people to stand rather than sit throughout the day were found to be beneficial in terms of both productivity and fitness. Try removing the chairs and experiment with this productivity enhancement discovery.

Source: www.wustl.edu (Search bar: “Stand Up Meetings”)

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

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

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

**Brenda Seckerson**  
EAP Coordinator  
442-5483  
bseckerson@albany.edu

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

“Take chances, make mistakes. That's how you grow. Pain nourishes your courage. You have to fail in order to practice being brave.”

~Mary Tyler Moore  
American Actress (1936 - )
How to Use EAP in the Workplace

Aren't sure how EAP can be of help?

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

For Faculty and Staff in a Supervisory Role

EAP’s goal is to help maintain workplace productivity by assisting employees when personal and/or professional issues may be adversely affecting job performance. As a supervisor, you know that there are times when an employee’s productivity is being impacted due to personal or professional concerns. Making a referral to EAP may be called for to give the employee an opportunity to address concerns outside your realm as a supervisor.

Topics include:

- An overview of EAP and its services
- How to identify and manage performance issues
- When to make a referral to EAP

Join us as we discuss UAlbany’s EAP and explore how supervisors can utilize the program more effectively in the workplace.

Thursday, September 4
10:00 - 11:30 am
University Hall (UNH)
Room 306
Deadline to Register
September 2

TO REGISTER
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu
CALL 442-5483
OR REGISTER ONLINE
HTTP://WWW.ALBANY.EDU/EAP/EVENT_SIGN-UP.HTM

THE WORLD WITHIN REACH
Overcoming the Emotional Impact of Physical Illness

When you’re diagnosed with a serious medical condition, both emotional effects and physical symptoms will contribute to your distress. The emotional part can be the more difficult. It’s normal to have negative feelings about your diagnosis, including anger, fear, depression, and guilt. Working through these feelings will help you better manage your condition and possibly improve your prognosis. Indeed, studies have shown that managing difficult feelings and emotions can develop hope, something critical in overcoming a serious condition.

Talk about your anger with the people you love. Anger can mask other feelings, like fear. Talking with the patient, loving listeners will help you find solutions to what’s troubling you the most. Overcome fear by learning all you can about your condition, the treatment options, and ways to cope with it. And don’t try to soldier through depression. Seek support from a professional counselor, talk to your doctor about medication, and consider the idea of a support group. Hundreds of support groups exist for almost every medical condition. Even online forums can provide you with a surprising level of support if you can’t locate a specific type of group nearby. The right one can be the most powerful coping strategy of all.

Manage Stress to Protect Your Memory

Many factors may contribute to memory loss as we age, but researchers continue to make news by understanding the harm and impact of cortisol, a stress hormone. It’s critical to our “fight or flight” survival but damaging to the brain, with chronic exposure resulting from relentless and acute stress. The following interventions reduce cortisol:

- reducing caffeine;
- drinking water to stay hydrated;
- reducing processed foods, white bread, candy, cakes, and non-whole-wheat pasta;
- drinking black tea; and
- eating more fish.

Additionally, meditation has been shown to reduce cortisol levels. Source: [http://www.uiowa.edu/](http://www.uiowa.edu/) (Search bar: “Stress Hormone”)

Be sure to check out what books, CDs, and DVDS are available in the EAP Lending Library on the topic of stress management. 442-5483 bseckerson@albany.edu

Disclaimer: Material presented in this newsletter is intended for educational or informational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your qualified health professional.
August Wellness Tips

Live Tobacco-Free

Leave Tobacco Behind...

Quitting tobacco is one of the most important steps you can take for your health. Tobacco doesn’t just cause lung cancer. It also contributes to other lung diseases such as emphysema and asthma, puts you at higher risk for stroke and heart disease, and is associated with several other cancers.

Quitting tobacco will also increase many pleasures in life. You’ll be able to smell fresh air and perfume, taste subtle flavors, save money, and play with your children without being winded. What are you waiting for?

Ready to quit?
Shortly before your quit day arrives, take these steps to get prepared:

⇒ Write a list of the reasons you want to quit.
⇒ Practice going without tobacco for as long as you can.
⇒ Clean your clothes, home, and car to get rid of the smoky smell.
⇒ Visit the dentist to get your teeth cleaned.
⇒ Stock up on low-calorie snacks such as baby carrots.
⇒ Make plans to keep yourself busy during the first few days of quitting.
⇒ Start thinking of yourself as a former tobacco user.


To receive a copy of this brochure containing other helpful information and tips to help you quit, contact the EAP Office. bseckerson@albany.edu 442-5483

Healthy Recipe...

Make a great plate and infuse your food with fresh herbs.

Check out this recipe for a summer salad with mint: http://www.personalbest.com/extras/BUDWC/Images/CC4August14h.jpg
Heroin and Opioid Abuse on the Rise

Heroin and opioid drug abuse has become a national epidemic. The persistent abuse of these drugs is growing at an alarming rate, especially among college age individuals.

So what signs should you be aware of if you think someone you know may have an addiction to heroin or other opioid drugs?

- Negative changes in school or work performance
- Lack of or marked changes in personal care and hygiene
- Acting recklessly or engaging in dangerous behaviors
- Withdrawing from friends and family members or becoming secretive
- No longer engaging in activities the person once found enjoyable
- Needle marks on arms or legs
- Consistently sniffing through nose and/or persistent runny nose
- Slow in their movements and speech
- Heroin or drug paraphernalia

Mixing-drugs, like heroin and other opioid drugs with alcohol, exacerbates its physiological effect, is extremely dangerous, and even fatal. Here’s a list of signs someone may be experiencing an overdose:

- Slow, difficult and shallow breathing
- Pinpoint pupil size
- Weak pulse rate and very low blood pressure
- Extremely dry mouth and muscle spasms
- Markedly slow movements, disorientation, and even delirium

If you witness any of these signs, dial 911 and get that person help immediately!

New York State’s “911 Good Samaritan Law” provides protections from charge and prosecution for drug and alcohol possession by the victim AND for those who seek help for the victim. Many police officers in New York State are currently trained in the administration of and possess the life-saving heroin and opioid reversal drug Naloxone.

More information regarding the dangers of heroin and opioid abuse can be located on the University at Albany Police Department’s website: [http://police.albany.edu/](http://police.albany.edu/)

Reference: NYS Penal Law: S 220.78 Witness or victim of drug or alcohol overdose, September 18, 2011.

For more information about heroin, opioid, and prescription drug abuse, go to: [http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/heroin](http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/heroin)

For additional information and concerns about drug abuse, contact Brenda Seckerson, UAlbany EAP Coordinator, to access the confidential information, assessment and referral service. bseckerson@albany.edu 442-5483
Volunteering as a Family

Teach your kids the value of helping others by participating in family volunteering opportunities. It’s a great use of down time while having fun in a way you may not have considered before. Volunteering as a family is a powerful way to increase self-confidence and self-esteem in children and teens while passing on the value of community giving. Working together as a family also brings you closer together. You can find community projects for your family in a variety of places, like churches, your favorite charity, or hospitals. Consider a one-time event before you commit to an ongoing project. Look for projects that match your family’s interest level and skill. Pet lovers can volunteer at the local animal shelter. If you are handy with tools, try giving an organization like Habitat for Humanity a call. Gardeners can help keep a park or roadway looking beautiful. See expertly reviewed websites that are family friendly, made available to the public by Tufts University. You’ll find them at www.cfw.tufts.edu. Use the keyword “volunteering” to pull up a ton of opportunities and ideas.

Domestic Abuse: At Least Tell a Friend

Few people in domestic relationships take action the moment they realize they are being abused. Even if physically assaulted, victims may struggle to understand the cause and may analyze circumstances and take a wait-and-see approach. Some victims blame themselves. Others feel ashamed and convince themselves they deserved it. Years may pass before a victim reaches out.

If this sounds familiar, break the silence. At least tell a close friend. Don’t keep it a secret or exert effort to draw away suspicion that you’re in trouble and feel trapped. Experience shows that breaking this silence is the first step, which can lead you to the next step: getting help from resources standing by and ready to help, like hotlines, safe shelters, or the police—all of which could save your life.

For information on domestic violence, contact the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence website: http://www.opdv.ny.gov/ Or, call the NYS Hotline: 1-800-942-6906, for English & Español/Multi-language Accessibility.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Dial 7-1-1 Contact UAlbany EAP for confidential information, assessment, and referrals. 442-5483 bseckerson@albany.edu

Resource for Articles: Frontline—Employee Wellness, Productivity & You! Frontline newsletter is courtesy of the New York State Employee Assistance Program.
Did you know that eating a piece of chicken or a burger can help you stay hydrated? Yup, that’s right! Staying hydrated isn’t just about drinking water during the hot summer months, especially if you’re doing any physical activity. Being well hydrated is very important for your overall health and eating a piece of grilled chicken breast or a lean burger can be a good source of fluid as well as a variety of fruits, vegetables, broth-based soups, Jell-o, sports drinks, and smoothies.

Staying hydrated is critical for your heart health. According to the American Heart Association, your heart doesn’t have to work as hard when you are well hydrated. Being well hydrated helps the heart pump blood through the blood vessels to the muscles more easily. This helps with the muscles ability to remove waste more effectively so they can work more efficiently. Being dehydrated can lead to a slew of issues ranging from headaches to heat stroke. So, pay attention to the signs of being dehydrated. Better yet, don’t let your body get to the point it’s sending you messages to drink up. If you’re thirsty, you’re already dehydrated!

There are a number of factors that determine how much water a person needs which involves the climate, type of clothing worn, and length and intensity of physical activity. For people who sweat a lot during exercise, they will need to replace the fluids lost during their physical activity. For someone that isn’t sweating during rigorous physical activity, heads up! You can be headed for heat exhaustion. Not sweating during a hard physical workout can be a sign of already being dehydrated. The recommendation for hydrating before exercise is to drink 2 cups of fluids 2 hours prior to the workout.

The easiest way to monitor your hydration needs is to pay attention to the color of your urine. If it’s pale and clear, that’s a good sign you are well hydrated. If it’s dark, it’s an indication that you need to drink more fluids.

There are plenty of opportunities for you to stay well hydrated here on the UAlbany campus. All of our residence dining rooms serve quality meats, vegetables, and fruits as well as soups, stews, and smoothie options to help you reach your hydration goals.

Did you know that many of the foods mentioned in these articles are available right here on the UAlbany campus in any of our five quad dining rooms or campus center venues? Don’t have a meal plan? Contact the SUNYCard office today for information on how you can get one. [http://www.albany.edu/uas/sunycard_services.php](http://www.albany.edu/uas/sunycard_services.php)

**Your Voice Matters!** We want to hear from you. Please contact us with your questions and/or suggestions on how we can improve our dining offerings. [https://ualbanydining.com/people/feedback.html](https://ualbanydining.com/people/feedback.html)
The Health Center has coordinated its annual flu shot clinic for October 14. Provided by MAXIM Healthcare Services, the clinic is open to faculty and staff, too! The vaccination fee is $25.00 with some insurance being accepted. (More details to come!)

**Even healthy people need a flu vaccine.**
- Even healthy people with the flu can get sick enough to miss work or school for a significant amount of time or even be hospitalized.

**Is the flu vaccine safe?**
- Yes, the flu vaccine is safe.
- Flu vaccines have been given to hundreds of millions of people for more than 50 years and have a very good safety track record.

**The most common side effects of flu vaccines are mild.**
- The flu vaccine cannot cause flu illness.
- However, it can cause mild side effects that may be mistaken for flu such as body aches and stuffy nose or sore throat (with the nasal mist flu vaccine) *These side effects are NOT the flu.*

**Even if I get sick, won’t I recover quickly?**
- Not necessarily. Influenza can be serious, and anyone can become sick with flu and experience serious complications.
- Even if you quickly recover, those you have infected might not be so lucky.
- Some people can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms. During this time, you can still spread the virus to others. *Don’t be the one spreading flu to co-workers, students, friends, and family members.*

**Can’t I wait and get vaccinated when/if the flu hits my community?**
- It takes about two weeks for the flu vaccine to provide full protection. The sooner you get vaccinated, the more likely it is that you will be fully protected.

**Flu vaccines can’t give you the flu.**
- Even if you get the flu vaccination, there are reasons why you might still get flu or a flu-like illness.
- You may have been exposed to a non-flu virus before or after you got vaccinated.
- The flu vaccine can only prevent illnesses caused by flu viruses. It cannot protect against non-flu viruses that may cause flu-like illness.
- You might have been exposed to flu after you got vaccinated but before the vaccine took effect.
- It takes about two weeks after you receive the vaccine for your body to build protection against the flu.
- You may have been exposed to an influenza virus that was very different from the viruses included in that year’s vaccine.

**Make plans to get your vaccination this year!**
It’s a summertime EAP Art Break! This is a great way to get energized during your work day and connect with others who are interested in the arts and in learning about the UAlbany campus!

Join us as University Museum Director Janet Riker takes us on a tour of the current exhibit by artist Mary Reid Kelley: Working Objects and Videos. This exhibit “marks the first time this critically-acclaimed artist presents the finely crafted and researched costumes, objects, and drawings that are key to her inventive video process, which fuses live performance, drawing, sculpture, costume design, and digital media.”

To register, contact:
Brenda Seckerson,
EAP Coordinator
442-5483
bseckerson@albany.edu

Or, register online:
http://www.albany.edu/eap/

University Art Museum
Wednesday, August 13
12:00 - 12:45 pm
Tour Guide: Janet Riker, Museum Director
Save the Date!

Downtown Campus EAP “Meet & Greet” Tuesday, September 9

Join us for this informal “Meet and Greet” opportunity for Downtown Campus employees. Learn more about your EAP benefit. Check out an array of health and wellness materials. Light refreshments and EAP giveaways will be available, too!

12:00 pm — 1:30 pm
Draper Room 115
Stay tuned for more details!

“Hummingbird darts lightly through the world, spreading its message of joy and beauty, and teaching us to appreciate the wonder and magic of everyday existence. Hummingbird brings the gift of joy. Learn to laugh and be happy.” ~ Unknown

EAP is a joint labor/management program and is part of the NYS Employee Assistance Program - CSEA/C82/GSEU/MC/NYSCOPBA/PEF/UUP. Contact Info: 1 Airline Drive, Albany, NY 12235. 518.486.9769

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

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