Adjusting Your Approach

Unrealistic expectations for the holidays can lead to stress

Perhaps it’s an understatement to say that our lives are busy. As we approach the end of the year when many of us celebrate various holidays, our busyness can intensify and so can our stress levels. But does this really have to be the case?

Unrealistic expectations which can be placed upon us or that we place on ourselves can be the cause of additional stress during this time of year. Elizabeth Lesser, the co-founder of the Omega Institute which is the largest life-long learning center in the U.S. which focuses on health, wellness, spirituality, creativity, and social change, offers three truths about understanding and relinquishing our unrealistic expectations to help us beat the blues. In her article titled “Dealing With Stress, Unrealistic Expectations, and Depression This Holiday Season” she identifies these truths as:

- There is no such thing as a normal holiday.
- The holidays are about joy but also about struggle.
- It’s never too late to have a happy holiday.

Lesser offers some specific tips to help people during the holiday season. They are:

Be realistic. Whether you have too much to do and not enough time or whether you experience not enough family, fun, and friendship during this time of year, fighting against the reality of your life at this moment will only make you feel more blue. Instead, be kind to yourself, laugh at yourself from time to time, seek support, and vow to make changes during a less stressful time of the year.

Work with what you have. As our lives change, traditions will change as well. Instead of trying to reproduce the exact same old-fashioned holidays of your past, infuse new life into your way of doing things.

Grieve. If a friend or family member has recently died, practice the lost art of grieving. Allow yourself to cry, remember, and heal.

Help others. Do this not because you should but because it is the best antidote to self-pity and seasonal sadness.

Be financially responsible. Don’t close your eyes the next time you use your credit card. Buck the excessive gift-giving ritual and practice simplicity, creativity, and basic human kindness.

Take care of your body. Eat well, drink lots of water, exercise, and then be merry.

Seek help if you need it. These tips are for those who occasionally feel holiday stress and sadness. If you have a period of more than two weeks where you have ongoing depression, bouts of crying, issues with sleep, and thoughts of death or suicide, seek professional mental health care. Reach out to UAlbany EAP for support and referrals.

As you move through this time of year, keep Lesser’s tips in mind. For her additional insight and tips, check out the full article: http://www.bestofyoutoday.com/work-and-family/dealing-stress-unrealistic-expectations-and-depression-holiday-season.

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.
Last month in Part I we discussed the importance of dealing with emotions as the first step towards mediating conflict. We also reviewed active listening and paraphrasing skills which are both essential to this process. To continue on with our exploration of the informal mediation of conflict, here is additional information to consider as provided by Sarah Rudgers-Tysz, Executive Director of Mediation Matters.

Reflecting and reframing are key tools a mediator can use to help the parties look at the issues with a positive, problem solving perspective. A mediator’s ability to listen to the parties in a way that conveys that the mediator is truly hearing not only the words being used but the emotion and intent behind what is being said is powerful to the process. Listening effectively builds trust and rapport and encourages more of an open dialogue.

Reflecting is repeating back what you have heard in your own words. It helps you to make sure that you have heard the party correctly. This serves several purposes. You confirm that you understand and show that you have listened to them. Additionally, when the other party (not the speaking party) hears it from you it might have a greater impact. Reflection is not carrying the speaker’s message to the other party. It is giving it back to the speaker directly.

It is: “So, you’re telling me that . . .” “Let me see if I heard you right . . .” It is NOT: “So, Jane did you hear that Joe said...”

Reframing is a way to restate what you hear in a manner that shows that you understand the feeling behind the provocative statement. This validates the emotions while helping to deliver it in a way that allows the other non-speaking person to hear it as well. In essence this process takes out loaded phrases. Parties know how to push one another’s buttons and often use language to do that. When this happens, they do not hear each other effectively. Reframing helps to capture the core points and emotions in a way that the non-speaking party might be able to hear it, too.

Statement: “The jerk is never on time for anything”.
Reframe: “It sounds like you are really irritated when Jeff is late.”
Statement: “She yells all the time. I can’t work with her!”
Reframe: “It sounds like you really don’t like it when Janice raises her voice and that it makes it impossible to work with her.”

These techniques are most effective when they capture the full range of what is being said and match the intensity of the comment. If you edit too much and soften the emotions, the speaking party could feel demeaned and dismissed. Often an effective reflection will evoke an immediate confirmation response: “Yes, that’s it!” However, even if the mediator misses the mark but the attempt was made, the response usually fills in the gap: “Well, that’s not all of it...” or “I’m not just mad, I’m furious!”

Although the preceding information pertains to mediation, keep these techniques in mind for everyday encounters with people who, for whatever reason, may come across as confrontational. Responding thoughtfully and professionally rather than reacting defensively requires patience and understanding. However, this approach will likely result in a more positive outcome. You may also want to share these techniques if a friend solicits your advice about a conflict.

EAP will be sponsoring additional conflict management/mediation skills workshops next semester. If you’d like to continue to develop your skills in this area, we hope you will take advantage of the training opportunities made available. “Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved through understanding.” ~ Albert Einstein
Great American Smoke Out — November 15

Quitting smoking has never been an easy thing to do. However, more than 3 million people stop smoking every year. Many more are seriously considering quitting due to the many dangers of smoking. The American Cancer Society’s Great American Smoke Out is held each year on the third Thursday of November. The annual event is designed to prompt people to take the leap to quit smoking for one day with the hope that it will lead to many days!

Your journey to smoke-free living will help turn your life around in many positive ways. Take a look at these helpful tips that can lead you on the right path to be smoke-free.

~Article submitted by Tenasia Rampersant, EAP Office Work Study Student

$$$ Are You Ready for Retirement? $$$

Are you between the ages of 25-45?

It’s never too early to start planning for retirement! When you’re beginning an investment strategy, you don’t have to know everything about the financial markets, but you should grasp the essentials. Learn the FIVE habits of highly successful investors by attending one of the upcoming EAP Lunchtime Wellness Programs. Join presenter Garrett Eaton from TIAA-CREF and learn techniques you can use when making investment decisions.

Topics will include:
- Setting financial goals
- Realizing tax advantages
- Aiming to reduce risk with diversification
- Recognizing the pitfalls of market timing
- Understanding the impact of expenses

Program Hosts:
Jessica Healy and Dorota Rozycki, EAP Committee Members, Research Foundation Representatives

To register: Call 442-5483
Online: http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm

Tips to Prepare Yourself to Quit Smoking:
- Think about all of the reasons why you want to stop.
- Be optimistic. Decide positively that you want to stop.
- Acquire strong personal reasons to quit regarding your health and accountability to others.
- Engage in activities you can do when you feel urges during your transition phase.
- Start to condition yourself physically and mentally; i.e., exercise, get plenty of rest, and eat well.
- Plan a date that you want to stop and ask for support from family and friends.

For more tips and tools on how to quit for good, go to:
www.cancer.org (American Cancer Society)
www.nysmokefree.com (NY Smokers’ Quitline)

HELP IS ONLY A PHONE CALL AWAY!

If you are finding it difficult to be as productive as you used to be, perhaps a stressor in your life is impacting your ability to be successful at work. The Employee Assistance Program’s Information, Assessment & Referral Service might be the answer! Take advantage of this free voluntary confidential employee benefit. Support, information, and referrals are available to assist you in finding a way to address your concerns.

If you would like to schedule an appointment for an Assessment & Referral session with Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator, call 442-5483 or email bseckerson@albany.edu
Protecting Your Credit and Debit Cards

With the holiday season upon us, the online use of credit and debit cards will certainly increase. What steps do you take to keep your credit and debit cards safe from fraudulent use? Check the five tips below to see how well you are doing and what other steps you can take to be financially secure when shopping online.

Choose a credit card over a debit card. Credit cards offer more protection from identity theft. Depending on the company, liability for fraud from the unauthorized use of your credit card caps at $50 if you report the fraud within 30-60 days. If you use your debit card to purchase items online, a thief can gain access to your checking account before you might even detect there’s been a withdrawal. You might not get all of your money back and most likely it will take awhile to process the refund. So, here’s one time when using a credit card is better than a debit card. Just be sure to pay off the bill each month to avoid debt and those finance charges!

Disposable credit cards are the better choice. Better yet is use a disposable credit card which works like a gift card. You can add more money to it, cut it up once you are finished with it, and not have to connect any personal information to the card. Should someone find it, you will lose any money still on the card but most importantly your identity will be protected.

Check website security. Be sure that the website uses the HTTPS:// URL and not just HTTP://. The “S” means it is a secure site. Additionally, a secure website will show a small lock icon on the lower right corner of the web page.

Shop online at home not in public. Shopping on your home computer and not in a public place like the library, at work, or at a cyber café is the most secure. You know who uses your home computer. On a public computer you have no control about who uses it or what type of spyware or malware that might be on the computer. Be safe…shop at home. And you can even do it while wearing your pajamas! How great is that?

Avoid storing information on websites. Many shopping sites will ask you if you want to store your credit card information for future use. While it certainly is convenient to do so, you leave yourself vulnerable. Should the company have a security breach, your personal information will be on its server making you vulnerable. Take the extra time to input your information each time you shop. Be smart and be safe!


Eating Healthy at Holiday Work Parties

Holiday parties can be great. They give us a chance to take a short break to reconnect with co-workers and let our hair down for a minute. However, they can also be a nightmare for anyone who is trying to eat healthy. Here are some tactics you can use to avoid the “food traps” and keep healthy during holiday work parties:

Come Prepared. If it’s a lunch time party, be sure to eat a healthy breakfast as well as a nutritious mid-morning snack, like an apple. If the party is after work, eat a protein filled lunch with a salad, followed by a nutritious mid-afternoon snack like a handful of almonds. If you prepare, you are likely to enter the party only slightly hungry making it easier to avoid overeating.

Map Out Your Meal. Look over the choices and start with the fruits, veggies, baked, and grilled items and avoid the fried, buttered, cheese or cream items. This can help you fill up on healthier items, leaving less room for high-fat food.

Use the Buddy System. When you are ready for dessert, consider splitting it with a friend. By having someone to share with, you can cut the calories and fat in half and spend a little time catching up with someone. It’s a win-win!

Adapted from the American Heart Association’s “Holiday Health Eating Guide” at http://www.heart.org
This summer’s EAP-sponsored WellNYS Everyday Olympic Experience turned out to be a great team-building experience for the Professional Development Program. This experience allowed co-workers to connect, be healthy and have some fun! Here are some comments on the experience with team photos.

“The Fighting Aardvarks

Standing left to right: Mike Noble, Eliot Cresswell, Mary Ellen Cox, Patricia Seeberger, Jodi Kerper, Diane Hodurski-Foley, June Mastan, Chris Dutkiewicz, Timothy Buddenhagen, Daniel Forgett. Sitting left to right: Michelle Ray, Catherine Klose, Kristine Loucks, and Jessica Healy.

The Office Olympic Experience was a great one for our team! We all enjoyed the activities and felt it was a good team-building experience that left a lasting impression. We were able to interact with coworkers we normally wouldn’t communicate with due to our office locations and had fun along the way. I’m sure most of us would do it again without hesitation. Even taking the group photo was fun! Contributed by, Kristine Loucks and Cathy Klose, Olympic Experience Team Captains, The Fighting Aardvarks Professional Development.

Across programs and across floors... The Olympic Medal Experience

The EAP Olympic Experience and Summer Olympics came to an end. We had a good turnout at our team competitions and all had great fun! Our EAP Olympic Medal Ceremony took place on October 5th. Across programs and across floors the “Warriors of the Woods” traveled together for this great honor to receive many a gold medal. A special thanks to Allison Sarnoff and Jill Finnegan for our handmade medals. Brennan especially loved his – and had he faced the camera, you would see the smile on his furry face. Contributed by Laurie L. Lieman, Olympic Experience Participant, Team Warriors of the Woods Professional Development Program.

The key is to keep company only with people who uplift you, whose presence calls forth your best.

~ Epictetus
Greek Philosopher (55—135)
Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.  
~William Arthur Ward  
Author (1921-1994)

EAP Brochure Racks Get a Makeover

Do you work in the UAlbany Facilities Maintenance Department? Have you checked out the new additions to the EAP brochure racks? This summer new materials were added. EAP is looking out for your health and well-being! If you would like information on a topic that is not covered by any brochure you find in the display rack, please contact the Brenda Seckerson in the EAP Office to conduct research for you. Take advantage of your EAP benefit!

Photo: Keith Kirtley, EAP Committee Co-Chair, PEF Rep.

The Giving Season...

New CSEA committee on campus doing outreach

During this time of year, many of us look for opportunities to give to those who need support. The newly created SUNY Albany CSEA Local 691 Women’s Committee has big plans to help our local community! Currently we are collecting items for the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society. Additionally, we plan to have a food drive for the local food pantries before Thanksgiving, followed by a warm clothing collection before Christmas. Keep your eyes open for details and campus drop off locations.

We invite all UAlbany employees to support our first committee projects, and we would love to get new community members (men as well as women). Let us know if you are interested! Contact Christine Barber at cbarber@albany.edu 442-3609 or Nancy Davis at ndavis@albany.edu 442-3616 for more information about the CSEA Local 691 Women’s Committee and our current community projects.

Many thanks to EAP for providing us with the opportunity to get the word out about our newly formed committee and our endeavors.

~ Article submitted by Nancy Davis

EAP Wellness Calendars Are Now Available!

Happily, EAP is continuing its annual tradition of providing employees with a FREE wellness calendar. The calendar is colorful and offers an array of tips for your health and well-being that will help you throughout the year.

To request a copy be sent to you via campus mail, call the EAP Office 442-5483 or click on the “Special Promotions” icon on the EAP website’s home page.

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

One per employee while the supply lasts.
UAlbany has a lot of great resources available to its employees. To keep you informed about the array of dining offerings and specials available on campus, EAP will be sharing information from UAS in the monthly E-News. You’ll find out “what’s cooking” and be informed of events that might be of interest. Here’s what’s on the menu, so to speak, for the month of November! 

This information provided by Michelle Bowen, EAP Committee Member, UAS Representative.

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**What's Cooking?**

**WHAT'S HAPPENING IN CAMPUS DINING THIS NOVEMBER?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special/Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date (&amp; Time)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kabob Salad 3.99</td>
<td>Blue Agave</td>
<td>Nov 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candy Corn Contest</td>
<td>Outtakes Store</td>
<td>Oct. 29-Nov. 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy Mix-In Smoothies</td>
<td>YoNola</td>
<td>November 2nd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sushi Making Class</td>
<td>CC Food Court</td>
<td>Nov. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>PB&amp;J Sandwich Bar</td>
<td>Suppa</td>
<td>Nov. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hot Chocolate Bar $.99</td>
<td>YoNola</td>
<td>Nov. 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dietician Speaker Series</td>
<td>Commons Deli Area</td>
<td>Nov. 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>$1 Chicken Soup</td>
<td>Suppa</td>
<td>Nov. 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheesesteak Pizza</td>
<td>Rosso Verde</td>
<td>Nov. 5 - 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Piggy Wiggy</td>
<td>Zepps</td>
<td>Nov. 12 - 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen Tours</td>
<td>Blue Agave</td>
<td>Nov. 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two for One Cookies</td>
<td>Outtakes Store</td>
<td>Nov. 28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Patroon Room Highlights**

*The Patroon Room is located on the second floor of the Campus Center.*

**Exhibition Cooking (Wednesdays - Lunch)**

UAlbany Dining Service (UADS) chefs show off their culinary skills with fresh, seasonal ingredients. Go to the UAS Facebook or Twitter page for weekly featured ingredients.**

**Local Fridays (Fridays – Lunch)**

Enjoy a delicious farm-to-table local meal freshly prepared for you every Friday. Go to the UAS Facebook or Twitter page for the weekly featured entree and sides.**

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*Other exclusive dining specials and FREE items are offered by going to the UAS Facebook and/or Twitter page.

**Like or Follow UAS today for the most current dining information, specials and contests at:

facebook.com/uasalbany

Click [here](http://www.albany.edu/uas) for online monthly menus and venue hours of operation.
Minimizing Stress this Holiday Season

Give *yourself* a gift for the holidays!

Join us for this engaging EAP Lunchtime Wellness Program and learn how **mindfulness** can be the free yet valuable gift you give yourself for the holidays. Managing stress through mindfulness will:

- Help you navigate through the many tasty temptations with less weight gain and without feeling deprived
- Help you become aware of when your stress is building and managing it quickly
- Help you through the not always “happy holiday” emotions.

Incorporating mindfulness into your everyday life is a gift that will keep on giving throughout the year!

**Friday, Nov. 16**
12:00 - 12:45 pm
Terrace Lounge
Campus Center

**Facilitator:** Lenore Flynn, RN, MA in Complementary Therapies. Trained in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction.

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

Wednesday, November 7   12 noon - 12:45

University Art Museum

Please join us for this semester’s “Art Break” with University Art Museum Director, Janet Riker. We’ll explore the current exhibit featuring two artists.

Dana Hoey: The Phantom Sex and
Rachel Foullon: Braided Sun

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

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

Registration deadline: November

Employee Assistance Program-sponsored events are open to UAlbany and Research Foundation faculty, staff, family members, UAS employees, GSEU members, and retirees.
“National Survivors of Suicide Day”

Co-Sponsored by Four Winds Hospital and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) Capital Region Chapter

Saturday, November 17, 2012
11:45 am - 2:45 pm

Each year in November, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) sponsors National Survivors of Suicide Day, which provides an opportunity for those who have lost someone to suicide (survivors) to come together for support, healing, information and empowerment. This program is free of charge. For information, call 518-581-5015, ext. 3115 http://www.fourwindshospital.com/saratoga/edeventssar.html

NOVEMBER IS
National Family Caregivers Month

Caregiver Connection Telephone Seminars

Convenient Conference Call

“A Sampling of Local Caregiving Resources”

Thursday, November 11
7pm-8pm

Sampling Menu:
Al’z Café
Caregiver Respite from CCCSS
Umbrella of the Capital District
Housing & Adult Day Directories
Health Insurance Information Counseling & Assistance

Contact Senior Services of Albany to get on the interest list for future Seminars if you cannot participate on this conference call.

Advance Registration Required
518-694-3511
tpettinger@SeniorServicesofAlbany.com

Supported by grants from The Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region and The United Way of the Greater Capital Region.

National Suicide Prevention LIFELINE
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/

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Fall 2012

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EAP is a joint labor/management program and is part of the NYS Employee Assistance Program - CSEA / GSEU / MC / NYSCOPBA / PEF / UUP. Contact Info: 55 Elk Street, Albany, NY 12210. 518.486.9769

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