Quit With the Great American Smokeout

Forty-six million Americans still smoke. In Canada, it’s 5 million people. Any day is a good day to quit, but the Great American Smokeout on Thursday, November 20 may be when you finally do it. On that day, attempt not to use tobacco for 24 hours; then keep it going into day two and so forth. Watch out for the three most common relapse triggers:

- strong negative emotions from nicotine withdrawal,
- hanging out with smokers while attempting to quit, and
- drinking alcohol.

If you don’t smoke, adopt a smoker for the day to show your support! Here are some suggestions to assist your co-worker (or a loved one or friend) during the Great American Smokeout:

- Offer to take your co-worker who smokes to lunch.
- Provide goody bags filled with sugar-free gum, straws, and other items to hold or chew.
- Offer to take a walk during breaks when your co-worker would be smoking.
- Agree to give up a favorite snack or something near and dear to your heart to show support.

CLICK HERE for the American Cancer Society’s Guide to Quitting Smoking.

EAP Wellness Calendars Still Available!

Another year is winding down. That means it’s time to start handing out the annual EAP wellness calendars! This colorful calendar offers an array of tips for your health and well-being that will help you throughout 2015 and beyond. To request a copy be sent to you via campus mail, call the EAP Office at 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.

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

Common complaints among teams include only a few doing the work and people coming late to meetings, but dozens of other problems also undermine teams. Consider whether any of these saboteurs of teamwork affect your productivity.

1) Not showing commitment when the going gets tough.
2) Not saying what you’re thinking and feeling.
3) Not following the adage, “listen first to understand, and speak to be understood.”
4) Not performing as promised.
5) Letting others make decisions.
6) Not starting your meeting with a quick discussion of “What do we want to accomplish in this meeting?”
7) Failure to establish a ritual or convention that encourages any member to immediately point out discussions or digressions that are off task.

Want to learn more about enhancing your team’s productivity and cohesiveness? Resources are available through the EAP Lending Library. Book titles on this topic include:

- *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*
- *Go Team! Take Your Team to the Next Level*
- *Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team*
- *Quick Team-building Activities*

Contact the EAP Office at 442-5483 or bseckerson@albany.edu to make arrangements to stop by to browse, or you may request materials be sent to you via campus mail. To discover what other materials are available, go to: [http://www.albany.edu/eap/eap_library.htm](http://www.albany.edu/eap/eap_library.htm)

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“Individual commitment to a group effort — that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.”

~Vince Lombardi

Motivational Professional Football Coach

(1930-1970)
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 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.

"A mind that is stretched by new experience can never go back to old dimensions."

~Oliver Wendell Holmes (1841-1935)  
Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court
All in the Family...

Relationship Stress and Aging Parents

Eldercare resource agencies and websites offer information on adult day care, assisted living, transportation, and more. Harder to find is help on coping with fear, anger, and grief from a changing relationship with your elderly parent. If it is difficult to accept an elderly parent’s forgetfulness, dependency, frailty, depression, and inability to perform small tasks, you may benefit from short-term counseling. The parent’s admission to a nursing home can add dramatically to this “acceptance stress.” Frustration, denial, and guilt can lead to a lack of empathy for an elderly person’s diminishing capacity, or you can find yourself short on patience for your parent’s limitations. Aging parents are a reminder that the vibrant health and wellness part of our lives is finite.

For resources and local area agencies on aging that can lead you to a support group for coping during this emotional period, contact UAlbany EAP.

See page 10 for an EAP Lunchtime Wellness Program on elder care.

Subtler Signs of Teen Drug Use

Rolling papers, Visine®, and the smell of pot on clothes—they’re signs of probable marijuana use, but subtler signs and symptoms also exist. These include:

- increased willingness to do errands in the evening (as a reason to meet friends and smoke pot),
- unqualified requests for more money/allowance,
- sudden allegiance to friends you don’t know, and
- discarded seeds in pants pockets or a trash can.

The following behavioral symptoms may also point to depression, but also potential marijuana use:

- sudden rejection of family activities once valued and enjoyed,
- having low energy,
- demonstrating apathy about poor grades in school, and
- experiencing loss of ambition, goals, or interests, accompanied by isolation in the bedroom.

If you are concerned about your teen, contact UAlbany EAP to make an appointment for a confidential information, assessment, and referral session. If you would like UAlbany EAP to send you any of the following booklets, please contact EAP Coordinator, Brenda Seckerson at 442-5483 or bseckerson@albany.edu.

⇒ Marijuana Facts for Teens
⇒ Marijuana: Facts Parents Need to Know
⇒ Navigating the Teen Years: A Parent’s Handbook for Raising Healthy Teens
Gratitude...All Year Round!

When we think about our Thanksgiving holiday, we naturally focus our attention on family and friends first, and then we remind ourselves of all we have to be grateful for. But how often do you actually think about how grateful you are throughout the rest of the year? If you’re like most people, you’re likely to respond with, “Not all that much, really.”

After reading an article by Marelisa Fabrega entitled, “How Gratitude Can Change Your Life,” I began to think about the impact of gratitude on a day-to-day basis and how putting it into action in our life really can turn around a “take it for granted” attitude that so many of us live with. The following are a few excerpts from her article I found inspiring, starting with her definition of gratitude:

**Gratitude** means thankfulness, counting your blessings, noticing simple pleasures, and acknowledging everything that you receive. It means learning to live your life as if everything were a miracle, and being aware on a continuous basis of how much you’ve been given. Gratitude shifts your focus from what your life lacks to the abundance that is already present. In addition, behavioral and psychological research has shown the surprising life improvements that can stem from the practice of gratitude. Giving thanks makes people happier and more resilient, it strengthens relationships, it improves health, and it reduces stress.

**Research Shows Gratitude Heightens Quality of Life**

Two psychologists, Michael McCollough of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, and Robert Emmons of the University of California at Davis, wrote an article about an experiment they conducted on gratitude and its impact on well-being. The study split several hundred people into three different groups and all of the participants were asked to keep daily diaries. The first group kept a diary of the events that occurred during the day without being told specifically to write about either good or bad things; the second group was told to record their unpleasant experiences; and the last group was instructed to make a daily list of things for which they were grateful.

The results of the study indicated that daily gratitude exercises resulted in higher reported levels of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, optimism, and energy. In addition, those in the gratitude group experienced less depression and stress, were more likely to help others, exercised more regularly, and made greater progress toward achieving personal goals.

Dr. Emmons also wrote a book based on research involving thousands of people conducted by a number of different researchers around the world. One of the things these studies show is that practicing gratitude can increase happiness levels by around 25%. This is significant, among other things, because just as there’s a certain weight that feels natural to your body and which your body strives to maintain, your basic level of happiness is set at a predetermined point. If something bad happens to you during the day, your happiness can drop momentarily, but then it returns to its natural set-point. Likewise, if something positive happens to you, your level of happiness rises, and then it returns once again to your “happiness set-point.” A practice of gratitude raises your “happiness set-point” so you can remain at a higher level of happiness regardless of outside circumstances.

In addition, Dr. Emmons’ research shows that those who practice gratitude tend to be more creative, bounce back more quickly from adversity, have a stronger immune system, and have stronger social relationships than those who don’t practice gratitude. He further points out that “To say we feel grateful is not to say that everything in our lives is necessarily great. It just means we are aware of our blessings.”

*Continued on next page...*
Gratitude...All Year Round! (con’t)

Notice and Appreciate Each Day’s Gifts

People tend to take for granted the good that is already present in their lives. There’s a gratitude exercise that instructs that you should imagine losing some of the things that you take for granted, such as your home, your ability to see or hear, your ability to walk, or anything that currently gives you comfort. Then imagine getting each of these things back, one by one, and consider how grateful you would be for each and every one. In addition, you need to start finding joy in the small things instead of holding out for big achievements—such as getting the promotion, having a comfortable nest egg saved up, getting married, having the baby, and so on—before allowing yourself to feel gratitude and joy.

Another way to use giving thanks to appreciate life more fully is to use gratitude to help you put things in their proper perspective. When things don’t go your way, remember that every difficulty carries within it the seeds of an equal or greater benefit. In the face of adversity ask yourself: “What’s good about this?”, “What can I learn from this?”, and “How can I benefit from this?”

There are Many Ways to Practice Gratitude

A common method to develop the practice of gratitude is to keep a gratitude journal, a concept that was made famous by Sarah Ban Breathnach’s book, Simple Abundance Journal of Gratitude. This exercise basically consists of writing down every day a list of three to ten things for which you are grateful; you can do this first thing in the morning or before going to bed at night.

Conclusion

Once you become oriented toward looking for things to be grateful for, you will find that you begin to appreciate simple pleasures and things that you previously took for granted. Gratitude should not be just a reaction to getting what you want, but an all-the-time gratitude, the kind where you notice the little things and where you constantly look for the good even in unpleasant situations. Today, start bringing gratitude to your experiences, instead of waiting for a positive experience in order to feel grateful; in this way, you’ll be on your way toward becoming a master of gratitude.

If you’re interested in reading Marelisa Fabrega’s full Changeblog article, including more ways to practice gratitude, you can access it from http://www.thecamblog.com/gratitude/. She gives you a lot to think about....all year round!

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.
Let Go of Money Mismanagement Denial

Using denial to cope with money troubles is a common roadblock to help. Denial is about hoping that a solution will appear even without a plan to make it happen. If this sounds like you, avoid drifting where this torrent of stress may lead.

Your first step may not be financial counseling, but rather short-term mental health counseling to deal with fear of change, fear of living on a no-frills budget, and fear of conflict as you petition your spouse to join the cause (and the lack of communication skills to do it). After this prep work, allow the mental health counselor to guide you to suitable resources for financial counseling. Mental health counseling often makes sense when a personal problem has lingered for a lengthy period and has been managed by denial and avoidance. Counseling also helps increase the likelihood that you will stick with the plan later if it gets tough.

For confidential referrals to mental health counselors who take your health insurance plan, contact EAP Coordinator Brenda Seckerson. bseckerson@albany.edu 442-5483

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

Saving Money With A NYS Flex Spending Account

**Dependent Care Advantage Account and Health Care Spending Account**

Do you have dependent care expenses? The **Dependent Care Advantage Account** (DCAAccount) provides eligible employees the opportunity to pay for childcare, elder care, or disabled dependent care expenses on a pre-tax basis. You may set aside up to $5,000 of pre-tax salary annually to be reimbursed for dependent care expenses that you incur so you and your spouse, if married, can work or attend school. Employees with dependent children under the age of 13, handicapped children of any age, disabled spouses, or other adult relatives needing care may be interested in participating in this program. You may use this program for elder care expenses for adult relatives living in your home, even if you cannot claim them as dependents for income tax purposes. Additionally, there is an Employer Contribution for those who qualify.

The **Health Care Spending Account** (HCSAccount) allows eligible State employees to set aside from $100 to $2,500 annually in pre-tax salary to pay for health-related expenses that are not reimbursed by health insurance. Medically necessary health, dental, prescription, vision, and hearing expenses for eligible enrollees and their dependents may be reimbursed.

**Enrollment:** The 2015 open enrollment period for the Flex Spending Account (FSA) begins October 6, 2014, and continues through midnight on November 7, 2014. [http://www.albany.edu/hr/assets/fsa-enrollment-information.pdf](http://www.albany.edu/hr/assets/fsa-enrollment-information.pdf)

**Flex Spending Account Hotline:** 1-800-358-7202

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**Enrollment deadline is November 7th!**
The Promises of Recovery From Addiction

The express elevator ride to the bottom for alcohol and drug addicts is well-known, but what happens when they recover? Health benefits accrue, of course, but there are many add-ons. The most powerful benefits result from reorienting one’s thinking from blaming others for one’s problems to taking personal responsibility for thoughts and actions. This elimination of the “my problems are caused by others” approach to life relieves guilt, anger, and depression. Relationships become healed, and new ones are forged. This phenomenon also creates energy, and from it flow feelings of hope and excitement about life. But there’s more.

Addicts learn to be “teachable.” And this means becoming more open to new ideas and information. After committing to recovery, many addicts find a sense of purpose by helping others get clean and sober, and they begin seeing the tragedy of their past as an experience they can share to help others. Addicts do relapse, which virtually all treatment professionals accept as part of the process on the road to long-term sobriety. However, those who have fully committed to recovery have fewer relapses and if they do fall off the wagon, they bounce back more quickly. A recovery program is why many addicts get better not just well.

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

The Journey

One day you finally knew what you had to do, and began, though the voices around you kept shouting their bad advice—though the whole house began to tremble and you felt the old tug at your ankles. ‘Mend my life!’ each voice cried. But you didn’t stop. You knew what you had to do, though the wind pried with its stiff fingers at the very foundations, though their melancholy was terrible. It was already late enough, and a wild night, and the road full of fallen branches and stones. But little by little, as you left their voices behind, the stars began to burn through the sheets of clouds, and there was a new voice which you slowly recognized as your own, that kept you company as you strode deeper and deeper into the world, determined to do the only thing you could do—determined to save the only life you could save.

~ Mary Oliver
Managing Your Eating Plan During the Holiday Season

Article submitted by Donna G. Duffy MS RDN CDN, UAlbany Campus Dietitian

The holiday season is much more than parties centered on food and drinks. It’s a time to partake in the traditions of the season and embrace the company of family and friends. This time of year also brings with it temptations of familiar, and often new, foods and beverages. So keeping your healthy eating plan intact is going to require a strategy. Planning ahead will help you to navigate the party season successfully. Keep in mind that successful eating plans have a calorie salary so be sure to know what yours is and make a commitment to yourself to stay within your personal budget. Start your day with a nutrient dense breakfast and pace your meals every 5 – 6 hours while awake. If you know that you are attending a feast, eat a bit less the days before and after and pump up physical activity to balance out the budget.

Here are some other helpful tips for planning a successful holiday eating plan:

- Scope it out: Grab a sparkling water with some fruit and survey the buffet table before plating up. Wait 30 minutes before hitting the buffet line. This allows you time to get comfortable so you can carefully make wise choices.

- Skip the appetizer: Choose veggies and fruit or a small handful of nuts to nibble on.

- Alternate between alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages: ‘Tis the season for cheers! Holiday drinks like eggnog are loaded with calories. Switch to seltzer or water between alcoholic drinks.

- Watch the trimming: Shave off extra calories by limiting nuts, cream cheese, gravy, butter, and whipped cream. You’ll feel less stuffed but still satisfied.

- Take the focus off food: Getting together over the holidays is more than just eating and drinking. Find ways to add some fun with family games such as charades or rent an instructional dance video followed by a dance-off.

**Bringing a dish to share? See the next page for a yummy healthy side dish.**
Ingredients:

- ½ cup farro
- Salt to taste
- ¼ cup olive oil, divided
- ½ medium red onion, chopped
- 1 large gala or granny smith apple, cored chopped
- 1 tablespoon thyme
- 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- ¾ cup chopped roasted pecan
- Pepper to taste

Instructions:

- Soak farro in cold water for 20 minutes; drain well.
- Bring 2 quarts of salted water to a boil in a medium pot. Add farro and simmer, uncovered, until tender, 30-35 minutes. Drain well then rinse under cold water for 30 seconds. Drain again, then transfer to a large bowl, cover and refrigerate.
- Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onions and cook until softened and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add apples, stir well and cook until slightly softened, 2 to 3 minutes more.
- Transfer apple mixture to bowl, with farro. Add thyme, vinegar, remaining 2 tablespoons oil, pecans, salt and pepper and toss gently to combine. Keep warm until ready.

Nutritional Info:

Yield: 8 servings
Per Serving: 260 calories (140 from fat), 16g total fat, 2g saturated fat, 0mg cholesterol, 0mg sodium, 27g carbohydrate (5g dietary fiber, 5g sugar), 6g protein

Source: http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/recipe/farro-apple-and-pecan-salad

Enjoy the sweetness of seasonal produce. Check out this cherry pecan baked pears recipe. Go to: http://www.personalbest.com/extras/BUDWC/Images/CC4November14h.jpg

Compliments of Personal Best Publications. (The same company that produces the popular EAP Wellness Calendar.)
What’s Your Money Personality?

Money, Emotions, and Communication

Have you ever thought about your personal money values and how they might impact your financial decision-making style? How often do you have conflicts over money matters and financial decisions? Join us as we learn about money personality traits, discover our “Money Color,” and how these traits influence money habits and attitudes. We’ll also discover strategies to avoid conflicts over money and how to work with a partner on making money choices that reflect compromise, negotiation, and shared goals. Attending this EAP Lunchtime Wellness Program will be a valuable asset towards supporting your financial well-being!

Presenter: Maria DeLucia-Evans, Community Educator for Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Albany County

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, November 6
12:00 - 1:00 pm
Room 375
Campus Center
Registration Deadline: Tuesday, November 4
Home Safe Home

Creating a Dementia-Friendly Environment

Receiving a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease or a related dementia is difficult enough, but adapting the environment, whether it be at home or in a residential care setting, to best address the needs and safety of an older person presents a major challenge. In this program you will:

♦ Learn about the changes in the body and brain brought on by Alzheimer’s disease
♦ Identify ways in which the environment can affect people with dementia
♦ Gain ideas for practical home enhancements that will help caregivers support their aging loved ones
♦ Identify potential hazards and safety concerns in the home while ensuring that independence is maintained
♦ Discover how to create a supportive environment in a long-term care setting

Presenter: Erica Salamida, Capital Region North Program Manager, Alzheimer’s Association Northeastern New York

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

12:00 - 1:00 pm
UPTOWN Campus
Friday, November 14
Standish Board Room, Science Library

To Register Contact:
**Back to Budgeting Basics**

**Budgeting.** The word conjures up a task that many of us don’t wish to do! Yet budgeting can bring us clarity, confidence, and a commitment to achieving goals and financial well-being. Join us for this presentation to gain useful tips and strategies to improve your basic budgeting skills. Designed to help you set financial goals, track monthly expenses, and create a working budget, you’ll learn how to keep your budget organized and on track. Strategies will also be shared on how to budget on a limited income. Bring your questions and your curiosity about how budgeting can help to reduce some financial stress!

**Presenter:** Maria DeLucia-Evans, Community Educator for Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Albany County

**NOTE:** A minimum of 7 participants needed to conduct this program.

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

**Tuesday,**
**November 18**
**12:00 - 1:00 pm**
**Café Conference Room**
**A Wing**

Registration Deadline:
Monday, November 17
CPR/AED Certification

Help Save Lives!

Training provided by Five Quad.

This 3.5 hour training will provide participants with a 2-year certification. Renew your certification or use this as the opportunity to finally get certified. Knowing CPR and understanding how to use the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is a valuable way to support the health and well-being of our campus community!

Supervisor’s Approval Required to Attend

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, November 13
12:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Assembly Hall, Campus Center
Colder, Shorter Days Don’t Mean Less Fun!

As the temperatures begin to drop, fun with friends and family doesn’t have to do the same. The animals may start making their way into hibernation, but that doesn’t mean we have to hibernate in these cooler months. Here are some fun, family and friend-filled activities that you can do to enjoy this NOVEMBER.

- **Test out a new recipe.** Have an old cookbook lying around your house? Pull it out, dust it off, and flip it open. There might be some new, delicious meals that you’ve never considered making until now. Find a recipe and try making a new dish once a week to open up your mind, taste buds and your oven.

- **Clean out your pantry.** As the months go on, we may have some canned food that we haven’t even considered using. Instead of forgetting about them and throwing them out, with the help of your kids/significant other/or just by yourself, create a box full of non-perishable food items and donate it to your local food pantry or food bank.

- **Spend an “offline” day with your family.** Sometimes it’s nice to unplug for a little while and enjoy our surroundings. Spend some quality time with friends and family without the use of cell phones, internet, TV, etc. There are plenty of things you can do without the use of technology such as playing games, hiking, star gazing, etc.

- **Create an “I’m Thankful” tree.** This is a great way to really get in touch with yourself as well as your kids. Draw a tree on a huge poster, and every day stick a post-it note on a branch saying what you are thankful for.

- **Visit a corn maze or a pumpkin patch!**

- **Fly a kite.** While we craved the wind on the hot summer days, now that we have a nice gust of wind, we shy away from it. Instead, grab your kite and go to a meadow and embrace the wind. Let it pick your kite up and have it soar in the sky. This is a great way to spend time with family.

After the craziness of summer and the flurry of beginning a new school year, the shorter days with less light promote the idea of slowing down. It’s time to enjoy the brisk autumn air, the smell of the leaves, the coolness of the evening, and to savor each moment with your loved ones.

For more ideas of what to do during November and the fall season, check out the resources used for this article.

http://parentingteens.about.com/od/teenculture/a/fallfunteens.htm