Managing Stress: Cortisol and You

Knowledge of the physical responses to stress can help you intervene sooner. They include headaches, sleep disturbances, cuts that do not heal well, eyelid twitching, fatigue, catching colds easily, craving sweets, diarrhea, constipation, abdominal cramps, weight gain, feelings of panic, undefined fears, sudden feelings of sadness, and forgetfulness.

**Cortisol**—the natural stress response/fat storage hormone—is the culprit in chronic stress. It is emitted by adrenal glands that sit atop your kidneys.

You can reduce cortisol release with sleep and exercise. Black tea, massage, laughter, and even chewing gum can have a reduction effect as well. Talk to your doctor about physical symptoms that linger for any reason, because there may be other causes.

If you are finding the your stress level is impacting you personally and/or professionally, contact UAlbany EAP to discuss your concerns and to gain information and resources to assist you in addressing what could be causing the stress. **A confidential conversation** to explore the root of the stress and to discover some options to relieve and manage it can be life-altering.

Being overly stressed is a sign that a change needs to be made. We all need some support sometimes to figure out a way to see ourselves through making healthy changes. Take advantage of your EAP benefit as a resource.

Why Men Don’t Seek Help

Help-seeking behavior is less often observed in men than in women. Research points to perceived vulnerability, fear, and denial as the reasons for this. Other barriers include men’s stronger belief in immunity and immortality and their difficulty relinquishing control. Some men view seeking help as unacceptable. Men are also less interested in preventive health care.

**June is Male Health Awareness Month.** If the above sounds like you, consider arranging that top-to-bottom physical you have been putting off, or that appointment to get the “bump” looked at by your doctor. And remember, your mental health is part of the package, too. Consider contacting EAP and/or getting a referral for a counselor to address this aspect of your health and well-being.

Source: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed (Search “9934383”)
In the Workplace...

Reducing Aggression in Email Communication

Avoid email blunders that can accidentally send the wrong message, communicate aggression, or demonstrate emotions you do not intend to send by steering clear of these “digital don’ts.”

⇒ Unless explained clearly, do not use “ASAP.” It reads like a barked order.
⇒ Do not use “reply all” unless the topic concerns all recipients.
⇒ Do not use all uppercase letters—this is perceived as SHOUTING.
⇒ Do not use chat and texting acronyms. “LOL” is an example that most people understand, but there are hundreds of other mind-teasing examples. See a list at www.netlingo.com/acronyms.php.
⇒ Do not send an email when you are upset; send it to yourself first. After you calm down and then read it, you will likely change it.

Once an email is “out there,” it’s out of our control. Being mindful of tips like these can help us to compose messages that we won’t regret after pushing send!

Coping with Change: Avoid the Big Picture

“It’s important to see the big picture!” This common saying applies to understanding many types of problems, but not necessarily to coping with change. When you are suddenly faced with stressful change, focusing on the “big picture” can feed your anxiety and fear. To cope better, whether with workplace or personal change, break change into realistic action steps, possible decisions, and potential solutions to specific difficulties you imagine will arise. Committing these things to paper allows you to see a personal plan to manage change come into view. Get a friend to help you brainstorm ideas and solutions. The support will help you feel in control even faster. Panic and dread of change come not only from the stress of forced alterations to our lives but also from trying to grasp the magnitude of the event. To reduce this distress, break change into manageable, actionable steps.

Books about dealing with change that are available in the EAP Lending Library:

♦ AdaptAbility
♦ Change Anything: The New Science of Personal Success
♦ Feel the Fear…and Do It Anyway
♦ Getting Unstuck
♦ Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard
♦ What You Can Change…and What You Can’t
♦ Who Moved My Cheese?
♦ You Unstuck

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 to borrow, go to http://www.albany.edu/eap/eap_library.htm

Source for Articles: Frontline—Employee Wellness, Productivity & You! Frontline newsletter is courtesy of the New York State Employee Assistance Program.
Powdered Alcohol is Coming

Powdered alcohol may be sold in your area late this summer. The federal government approved it, but 37 states are hoping to block and prohibit its sale. Powdered alcohol is sold in pouches and flavored as cocktails. A drink pouch requires five ounces of water or other liquid to reconstitute the powder into a cocktail with the right amount of alcohol equivalent to the real thing. Experts fear that the portability, novelty, and storage advantages of powdered alcohol will attract underage youth to experiment with it and thereby abuse alcohol even more than they do now. Cocktails to be sold by the manufacturer include pink cosmopolitans, lemon drops, and margaritas, which of course may appeal to a younger crowd.

Early promotional messages on the manufacturer’s website initially suggested that one advantage of having powdered alcohol is that you can take it into a public event where alcohol is not available. These messages have since been removed following a severe public backlash. Whether powdered alcohol will lead to greater problems is unknown, but being aware of this substance can help you as a parent consider the role you will play in helping keep your child safe.

Long delays in your decision to seek couples counseling can make counseling less likely to be effective. **The reason is simple:** As time passes you adapt to and cope with unhealthy relationship patterns. Eventually, your reflexes will go on autopilot. You can change reflexes, and the methods for doing so are time-tested, but delay will require more effort, time, and cost. To make needed changes, you will experience more setbacks. This frustration means more thoughts about giving up, increasing risk for dropping out. Conflict doesn’t mean failure. Two brilliant, mentally healthy people in a relationship can have tough conflict. Couples counseling is about satisfying, enriching, and building back up a cooperative relationship. There’s psychology involved, sure, but there’s no mystery. Start honestly and avoid using couples counseling as a last-resort or as a half-hearted way to validate a decision you’ve already made to leave. You’ll then do the hard work for the big reward of making the changes needed and acquiring the relationship you desire.

Take advantage of EAP’s confidential Information, Assessment, and Referral service to access counseling referrals.

**“The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence.”**

~Denis Waitley
American Writer and Motivational Speaker (1933- )

Source for Articles: *Frontline—Employee Wellness, Productivity & You!* Frontline newsletter is courtesy of the New York State Employee Assistance Program.
Are you finding yourself grappling with any of the following?

- Family, parenting, and relationship issues
- Work stress and conflict
- Substance abuse or dependency
- Elder care
- Mental health concerns (e.g., depression, anxiety)
- Legal and/or financial concerns
- Grief and loss
- Or anything else related to work or home that is causing you undue stress and affecting your ability to be as productive as you once were?

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.

“You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.”

~ C.S. Lewis
Irish Writer and Scholar (1898 - 1963)

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

Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
442-5483
bseckerson@albany.edu
EAP Website: http://www.albany.edu/eap

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

Early intervention is the key! Contact EAP.
“Forget you, I’m going home!”

1. Are you merely trying to get through each day?
2. Do you barely make it to the end of the week and then feel completely exhausted by the time you get home?
3. Does life often feel like a merry-go-round and you just want the music to stop and get off?

If this sounds like you, perhaps your work/life balance is out of whack. If you feel that you are too busy making a living that you don’t have time to make a life, then this workshop is for you. Dr. Tom Denham will help you analyze your present situation and begin the process toward wholeness.

- Find out how to set goals with the Triple “P” and the 8 “F”.
- Learn how the 10 Strategic Action Plan steps can work for you.
- Discover the important questions that will get you to think.

You’re guaranteed to walk away with at least THREE things that you can immediately implement that will have an impact on your life. Join us for this interactive discussion that will help you get clarity on the life you really want. Isn’t now the time?

Tuesday, June 23
9:00—10:30 am
University Administration Building
(UAB) Room 433

Workshop Facilitator: Dr. Tom Denham is a career counselor, motivational speaker, and accomplished mountain climber. He is a much-sought-after speaker on career development and work/life balance. Dr. Tom has over twenty three years of experience in career services including positions at Skidmore and Union Colleges, Harvard, St. Lawrence and Boston Universities. He founded Careers In Transition LLC, a private practice in career services, which focuses on career counseling for individuals and consulting services for institutional clients in business, education and government.
Facebook Making You Depressed?

Sometimes we compare our lives with others around us to gauge how we’re doing. This is no big deal, but when you combine this with a lot of time on Facebook, you may feel depressed. That’s what researchers at the University of Houston discovered. After using Facebook, those users who spent more time online felt more symptoms of depression.

Facebook doesn’t cause depression, but comparison behavior can leave you feeling in the dumps. One survey found that nearly 70 percent of Facebook users felt somewhat depressed or depressed all the time after spending time online. Limit your exposure to all the excitement, vacationing, parties, and endless fun photos. Fill that time with more things you want to do, and recognize that online you’re seeing only one side of people’s lives.

My First or Next 5K!

New York State/SUNY employees and family members are invited to complete their First or Next 5K in 2015 between May and October. Participate in one or more 5Ks and receive a car magnet and certificate commemorating your achievement and be recognized by WellNYS Everyday.

This is...

My First 5K

I’ve never participated in a 5K, but have watched them. This year I want to walk or run a 5K, complete it and cross it off my bucket list!

My Next 5K

I’ve participated in a 5K before. I like the anticipation on the starting line and the excitement of walking or running 3.1 miles. And the best part is crossing the finish line. I want to do another one!

After you complete your First or Next 5K in 2015, go online and register your name and event.

http://www.worklife.ny.gov/wellNYSeveryday/5k.cfm

WellNYS Everyday is a Work-Life Service’s Employee Assistance Program wellness initiative dedicated to educating, engaging, and empowering New York State employees and their families, by encouraging participation in healthy behaviors.
Using Sunscreen

While driving home recently, I heard a news article on the radio about Americans’ use of sunscreen. How ironic! This was exactly what I planned to write about for the EAP June EAP e-newsletter.

Although we are outside all year long, now with summer approaching, our skin may be more exposed during this time of the year. Believe it or not, according to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it seems we are terrible protectors of our skin. The study, based on data from 2013, found that only 14 percent of men and 30 percent of women used sunscreen when in the sun for more than an hour.

Wearing sunscreen is important on the entire body. But, let’s face it! Not only does sunscreen reduce our chances of developing skin cancer, it also helps to keep us looking younger. A broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher can protect us from dangerous UVA and UVB rays.

Whether you’re on vacation at the beach, playing 18 holes on the golf course, picnicking at the park, or just taking a walk around campus, be sure to prepare in advance. Slather on some sunscreen, grab a hat, and let your body soak up only those healthy benefits of a sunshine: enhanced mood, lower blood pressure, and Vitamin D.


Article submitted by Pamela Moniz, EAP Committee Member, M/C Representative

Article Resources: http://www.ksl.com/?nid=1010&sid=34712907
http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/05/150519091129.htm?
utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+sciencedaily+%28Latest+Science+News+-+ScienceDaily%29
LYME Disease

ACCORDING TO THE CENTERS FOR DISEASES CONTROL AND PREVENTION, LYME DISEASE IS THE FASTEST GROWING VECTOR-BORNE, INFECTIOUS DISEASE IN THE UNITED STATES.

Pictured above: adult deer tick or Ixodes tick

Lyme disease is transmitted by the bite of a tick, and the disease is prevalent across the United States and throughout the world. Ticks know no borders and respect no boundaries. This disease is called “the great imitator” because its symptoms can mimic many other diseases. If you suspect you have contracted Lyme disease, please seek help immediately from a medical professional.

Lyme disease is a clinical diagnosis. The disease is caused by a spiral-shaped bacteria (spirochete) called Borrelia Burgdorferi. The Lyme spirochete can cause infection of multiple organs and produce a wide range of symptoms.

Fewer than 50% of patients with Lyme disease recall a tick bite. In some studies this number is as low as 15% in culture-proven infection with the Lyme spirochete.

Fewer than 50% of patients with Lyme disease recall any rash. Although the erythema migraines (EM) or “bull’s-eye” rash is considered classic, it is not the most common dermatologic manifestation of early-localized Lyme infection.

Symptoms include:

Check the New York State Department of Health’s website for a guide to protect you from ticks and Lyme disease:

http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2813/

Article submitted by UPD Deputy Chief Jennifer Fila, EAP Committee Member, M/C Representative

Article Resources:

http://www.lymedisease.org/lyme-basics/lyme-disease/symptoms/
http://www.ilads.org/
Looking for fun things to do this summer?

Warm weather prompts us to get outside and look for fun things to do with family and friends. Check these websites for ideas. Many of the resources are right here in the Capital Region!

http://www.albany.com/

http://albany.kidsoutandabout.com/content/top-20-places-take-kids-new-yorks-capital-district

http://www.roundthebend.com/capital/

http://www.nysparks.com/

http://www.localhikes.com/

Resources provided by Linda Gallagher, EAP Committee Member, UUP Representative

For Your Health & Well-being, Discover the “Live and Grow With 5-2-1-0 Program”...

Check it out!

http://www.personalbest.com/extras/BUDWC/Images/CC2June15h.jpg

Wellness tip compliments of Personal Best Publications, the same company that produces the EAP wellness calendars.

Community Resource...

Capital District Child Care Council

To access the annual summer Camp Catalog provided by the Capital District Child Care Council go to: http://www.cdccccc.org/parent_campcatalog.cfm
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
LUNCHTIME WELLNESS PROGRAM

is back this summer for UAlbany employees!

This fitness class fuses Latin dance rhythms and easy-to-follow moves to create a dynamic fitness program that provides body sculpting and toning, while giving an effective and FUN cardio workout. The music alone will get your heart pumping! Zumba’s goal is simple - “To want you to want to work out, to love to work out, and to get hooked!”

Instructor: Paula Harrington, certified Zumba instructor. Paula also teaches Zumba for NYS employees at the Corning Tower.

*TWO Summer Classes*

Tuesdays (10 weeks), June 2 – August 4  
Class fee $60.00

and

Thursdays (10 weeks), June 4 – August 6  
Class fee $60.00

12 noon – 12:45 pm

Location: PAC Lab Theatre - 2nd floor

You must register online for each class separately. Make check payable to:

Paula Harrington

Registration deadline: Monday, June 1

NOTE: If you are registering for both classes, you only need to write one check.

To Register Contact: Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator  
bseckerson@albany.edu  442-5483

Or, register online: http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm
**East Campus Meet & Greet**

We’re kicking off the summer season at UAlbany! Stop by the School of Public Health Lobby for an EAP “Meet and Greet” and receive a FREE pedometer compliments of EAP! EAP Coordinator Brenda Seckerson will be on hand to chat and to offer wellness information and other giveaways.

**Pedometer Giveaway!**

Friday, June 5
School of Public Health Lobby
12:00 - 1:00 pm
Social Success at Summer Gatherings

Does meeting new people and mingling at a summer party make you nervous? It is normal to feel nervous meeting new people, but try beating social anxiety with these tips: Before going to an event, practice positive self-talk—imagine people being happy to meet you; talk to the mirror and practice engaging. This will build a positive mind-set. This practice is no different from people rehearsing a speech six times or actors getting into their character before going on stage. It works, and others will sense your energy and engage with you. Reduced anxiety will allow the real you to come through. Also, go a bit early. There will be fewer people present, and you are less likely to feel anxiety than you may as a latecomer. Remember the words—what, how, when, who, which, and why. Use these to keep a conversation going rather than experience the awful silence as you wonder, “Now what do I say?” Some practice and preparation will set the tone for a less anxious experience and a more enjoyable time!

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

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

~ Mark Twain
American Author and Humorist (1835-1910)