Psychological Safety at Work

Most of us don’t like experiencing rejection. As a result, many employees hold back, don’t risk, and even suppress profitable ideas if they fear negative reactions for bringing them forth. To encourage risk taking, promote a “psychologically safe” workplace. Don’t just agree that it’s a good idea. Make it a tradition of your work group or team to encourage and invite vulnerability. Practice acceptance, and tolerate the new and unusual to eliminate fear that one’s image, status, or career will suffer from taking a risk. Here’s your motivation: Imagine Thomas Edison as your coworker. It is said he tested his idea 1,000 times before he invented the functional light bulb. How long would he have lasted with you?

Alone for the Holidays?

Alone for the holidays? Many people are fine being alone for the holidays. But if loneliness is an ongoing issue, don’t accept it as “your fate” or something you “need to get used to.” Research on loneliness indicates it’s a health hazard, like lack of exercise, and more dangerous than obesity. It can lead to depression, damage the circulatory system, and shorten lifespan. Tips: Do not reason your way out of feeling lonely. Don’t fill the void with just time using social media. Instead, take action to engage with others. Need a plan to get going, or do you have a loved one who needs help? Talk to a professional counselor or contact UAlbany EAP to start to develop a plan to plug into leading a fuller life.

2018 EAP Wellness Calendars

We are just a month away from the new year. Prepare for 2018 by ordering your EAP wellness calendar! This colorful calendar offers an array of tips for your health and well-being that will help you throughout the new year and beyond. To request a copy be sent to you via campus mail, call the EAP Office at 518-442-5483 or click on the “Special Promotions” icon on the EAP website’s home page. One calendar available per employee while the supply lasts.
In the Workplace...

Learn to Be More Attentive

The ability to focus (or be attentive) is a powerful skill. It’s a key to high productivity, but can also be a difficult skill to master. It requires fighting distractions which are always “here and now.” To better overcome distraction and loss of focus, practice these attention strategies:

1) Know your beginning and end point with a manageable size of work. Laboring without an end point increases vulnerability to distraction which preys on fatigue and boredom.

2) Create a pull strategy. Have a positive and compelling reason or reward at the end of your work period. This creates urgency, a force for action that thwarts distraction.

3) Have a secret place for minimal distraction—a library cubicle or at least someplace absent the pings and clicks of a smart phone.

4) Find meaning in your work. Know the importance of your job. It can motivate and inspire you to stay focused on what you are doing, even though it is difficult.

Don’t Let Campus Parking Prevent You From Using Your EAP Benefit

Attention UAlbany and Research Foundation employees who are not in need of purchasing a faculty/staff parking decal because their work location is not on the Uptown and/or Downtown campuses: Here are some options for free transportation and free parking on campus to be able to use your EAP benefit.

- When registering for an EAP program, mention that you need to access visitor parking on campus. EAP will be able to sponsor parking at the Collins Circle visitor lot. At least a two-day notice is needed to secure this visitor parking option.

- Use your UAlbany ID to ride one of the CDTA buses for FREE to get to campus. [http://www.albany.edu/pmts/mass_transit.php](http://www.albany.edu/pmts/mass_transit.php)

- Use your UAlbany ID to ride one of the campus shuttles.

Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no help at all.

~ Dale Carnegie
All in the Family...

Are Post-Holiday Budget Challenges Coming?

The holidays are here. Will you soon start budgeting to pay the bills? Don’t panic in January, quarrel, or point a finger. Plan a family budget meeting now. Resources exist to help you. Investigate ones that give you ideas on how to save money in hidden places. Whether it is taking your own coffee to work instead of stopping for a latte, or cutting the cable channel extras no one uses, you can save a load of cash that’s slipping through your fingers right now. Hint: Commit to a written plan so you actually follow through.

Addicted to Indoor Tanning?

Besides giving you a tan, ultraviolet light causes your body to release endorphins so you feel great afterwards. But here’s the rub: Research revealed that one out of five women studied showed signs of addiction to tanning and a depression cycle that prompts their return to it. And the younger a person starts, the more aggressive this cycle. The study focused on women, but men are not immune. Despite the warnings issued by dermatology societies against using tanning beds due to the risk of melanoma, 10 million people in the U.S. and over a million people in Canada still use them. Tanning beds produce far more ultraviolet radiation than natural sunlight. New laws have been put in place regarding age and parental consent to use indoor tanning. New York state law requires parental permission or consent to be given in person at a salon for those age 17 until their 18th birthday. On January 1, 2018, Alberta, Canada will make it illegal for those under 18 years old to use tanning salons.

Source: http://cebp.aacrjournals.org [Search “tanning”]

Getting Out of the Worry Loop

Worry is similar to an autoimmune response—attacking your thoughts with negative self-talk, frightening images, and fear. It can feel impossible to fight off or flee this negative feedback loop. Relief comes with a plan. Create one that targets the “what ifs” that are keeping you in turmoil. Experiment to see if this exercise empowers you and releases worry’s grip. Write: “The problem or issue I am worried about right now is (describe the problem or threat). If this problem continues, these results may follow (list all realistic possible and adverse outcomes). To help prevent these things from happening, I will: (list action steps you will take.)

For additional support, contact UAlbany EAP for resources and referrals to help you address your concerns about being in a worry loop.
Are you finding yourself struggling 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 to you as an employee benefit.

"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones most resilient and responsive to change."  ~ Charles Darwin

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.
Heroin and Prescription Drug Abuse

As the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) states, “Addiction can happen to anyone, any family, at any time.” The OASAS website has important information regarding prevention as well as how to recognize the signs and symptoms of opioid drug abuse.

To access the OASAS resources, click here.

Call the OASAS helpline at 1-877-8-HOPENY (1-877-846-7369).

Contact UAlbany EAP for a confidential conversation if you have concerns about heroin or prescription drug abuse. Support and help is available!

bseckerson@albany.edu 518-442-5483

The Four A’s of Stress Management

Have you heard of the “Four A’s” of stress management? The often-discussed concept is a model for coping and a memory jogger for remembering four ways of managing stress depending on the circumstances you face. The words are “avoid,” “alter,” “adapt,” and “accept.”

Avoid refers to managing stress by planning or making different choices that steer you clear of stress and strain. (Example: You decide to file your tax return early to help avoid the stress of last-minute number-crunching and any feelings of panic over the deadline.)

Alter refers to acting to create change in the present regarding the stressful situation. (Example: You decide to take a different way to work to avoid a traffic jam that will stress you out despite the alternate direction being five minutes longer.)

Adapt refers to an internal decision you make to adjust the way you cope with a stressor you can’t avoid. (Example: You make a decision to look on the bright side of a problem or situation that would otherwise be more distressful.)

Accept refers to “letting go” and ending the fight against a stressor you can’t control, but finding internal ways of coping with it to minimize its harmful effects. (Example: You experience a loss or fail a test, and decide to talk it over with a friend, counselor, or advisor.)

Remember the Four A’s menu of stress management options, and see if any or all of the techniques can help alleviate some of the stress responses in your life.

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

"A diamond is just material that handled stress exceptionally well."

~Anonymous
"Less is More."

EAP Theme for 2017!

For the final month of this year’s theme, let’s explore the idea that “If we focus less on material things we can create more time to share experiences with family and friends.”

During this time of year when shopping seems to be the primary focus, what if we stopped and evaluated what’s really of value? How much more “stuff” do we really need? Is it the new iPhone X or a shared experience with the family or friends that will truly bring joy and hold fond memories?

It’s probably safe to say that as a culture we have fallen into the trap of believing that people are happier with having a tangible item that they keep rather than having an experience with others. Perhaps that is not the case! In The Atlantic article titled “Buy Experiences, Not Things” (October 7, 2014), author James Hamblin refers to psychological research done over the past decade that shows that “experiences bring people more happiness than do possessions.” Hamblin highlights the following research findings that give credence to this idea. Here are several quotes and paraphrases to consider:

- “When we can’t live in the moment, it’s best to live in anticipation of an experience.”
- “Waiting for an experience apparently elicits more happiness and excitement than waiting for a material good...By contrast, waiting for a possession is more likely fraught with impatience than anticipation.”
- Material things eventually become background and deteriorate or become obsolete over time. “It’s the fleeting-ness of experiential purchases that endear us to them. Either they’re not around long enough to become imperfect, or they are imperfect, but our memories and stories of them get sweet over time. Even a bad experience can become a good story.”
- Imagining experiential purchases seems different from thinking about a future material purchase. The hypothesis is that you can imagine all sorts of possibilities for an experience. With a material possession you pretty much know what you are going to get.

These and other concepts that arise from current research about experiences versus material possessions are worth reflecting on. By doing this, we can determine whether to make a change in how we use our time and money. Perhaps using less of our energy to have “things” and more time spent on experiences will enrich our lives in ways we can’t even imagine. And on a side note, just think about swapping out time stressing and shopping for possessions with enjoying a trip or outing to do something pleasurable, relaxing, or enlivening. That sounds like a good deal!

Check out the full article by Hamblin to learn about the researchers exploring these ideas and find additional information to support this concept. Here’s to looking forward to great experiences to come and to having less clutter in our homes!

Go to: https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/10/buy-experiences/381132/
Your EAP Benefit

What you need to know about this negotiated benefit...

Taking time to meet with the EAP Coordinator during work hours:

♦ As you know, employees need to inform their supervisors when they take time away from the job. If you choose to inform your supervisor that you will be coming to EAP, you will not need to charge time. You do not need to inform your supervisor the reason for seeking EAP services.

♦ If you do not want your supervisor to know that you are using EAP services and wish to have your appointment during the work day, you will need to request time off and charge time.

♦ In some cases if you have informed your supervisor of your appointment with EAP, the supervisor may request confirmation of your meeting and the amount of time spent with the EAP Coordinator. If such confirmation is needed, you will sign a release form when meeting with the EAP Coordinator giving her permission to contact your supervisor to confirm the meeting took place. To maintain confidentiality, the Coordinator will NOT disclose any information about the conversation and referral information provided.

NOTE: The EAP Coordinator can accommodate appointments outside of your work hours.

Attending EAP-sponsored events:

EAP’s overarching mission is to help maintain a healthy and productive workforce.

If an EAP-sponsored lunchtime wellness program or professional development workshop would support your personal and/or professional growth and address any needs you or your family might have, you may ask your supervisor/manager for the release time you might need to attend a program. Staff release time is contingent upon operating needs. Support for employees to attend EAP lunchtime programs and workshops is greatly appreciated.

Not all places of employment offer employees a robust EAP benefit.

Take advantage of yours!
Art Break

The EAP Art Break is back! This is a great way to get energized during your work day and connect with others who are interested in the arts and learning about the UAlbany campus. Join us as Naomi Lewis provides a talk and tour of the current exhibit titled *When We Were Young: Rethinking Abstraction from the University at Albany Art Collections* (1967-present). Looking back at highlights from the earliest years of the University at Albany Art Collections, this exhibition shines a fresh light on late-Modernist abstraction as it relates to current trends in contemporary art.

To register contact:
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu
Call 518-442-5483 or register online
http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm

For more information about the exhibits, go to:
http://www.albany.edu/museum/index.shtml

University Art Museum
Wednesday, December 6
Noon—12:45 pm
Tour Guide: Naomi Lewis
Looking for Reading Ideas?  
Check the EAP Office Lending Library.

Compiled by Oscar Nunez, EAP Office Work Study Student

With the upcoming holiday breaks and cold weather upon us, it’s the perfect time to choose a book to have on hand when you are ready to sit down and take a break. See if one of these three books that are available in the EAP Lending Library might spark your interest!

Are you a person who is consciously or unconsciously disorganized? Is it hard to establish a routine or just to be on time? In *It’s Hard to Make a Difference When You Can’t Find Your Keys*, Dr. Marilyn Paul explains that through organization one can benefit spiritually, mentally, and physically. She outlines her “seven-step path” to organization and self-discovery. She explains how beneficial it is to a person when they start applying organization to their life - starting from when they get out of bed to going back to sleep at the end of the day. As you prepare for a new year to begin, perhaps it’s time to explore your sense of organization (or lack thereof) to see if you can enhance your life in 2018 and the years ahead!

In her book *13 Things Mentally Strong People Don’t Do*, clinical social worker, college psychology instructor, and psychotherapist Amy Morin writes about the many ways to help someone become their best selves by becoming mentally strong. Morin explains that you shouldn’t waste time feeling bad for yourself or give up after the first failure. These are just two out of the 13 points she outlines in her book that will help a person manage emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in ways that can lead to success. As the subtitle says, take back your power, embrace change, face your fears, and train your brain for happiness and success.

“Thank you, Dr. Pillemer, for gathering all this wisdom in one book before it is lost. I can’t imagine anyone whose life will not be enriched by this book” - Rabbi Harold Kushner said to author Karl Pillemer’s about his book *30 Lessons for Living Tried and True Advice from the Wisest Americans*. If you are someone who seeks knowledge and appreciates getting advice about life, then this book will offer you that and so much more. Based on years of interviewing aged people who are willing to share their knowledge and experience with the world, Dr. Pillemer shares 30 lessons that aim to teach how to get more out of life, be happier, and have fewer regrets.

Visit the [Library page](#) on the EAP website for a full list of topics, books, and DVDs/CDs that the EAP Lending Library has available. Contact EAP if you would like to borrow any materials.  
[bseckerson@albany.edu](mailto:bseckerson@albany.edu)
Free Tai-Chi Class on Campus

Have you been interested in trying Tai-Chi? Or, maybe you’ve taken Tai-Chi in the past and would like the opportunity to enjoy the experience again? UAlbany Confucius Institute is offering a FREE Tai-chi class on Mondays and Wednesdays on the Uptown campus which will run through December 6.

**Instructor:** Vera Childers - A Master of Tai-chi who has been teaching Tai-chi for 27 years.

**Schedule:**
- 12/4/2017 Mon. 4:00 PM 5:00 PM Studio West, Campus Center
- 12/6/2017 Wed. 3:45 PM 4:45 PM BB007, Massry Center for Business

If you have any questions about the Tai-chi class, contact Youqin Huang. [http://www.albany.edu/gp/huang.php](http://www.albany.edu/gp/huang.php)

Special thanks to the following for sponsorship and donations for EAP’s Stress Less Month in November:
TIPS TO MAKE
Sleep a Priority
DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

1. Introduce a regular wake and bedtime routine, seven days a week
   This will help your body anticipate sleep, and help you fall asleep naturally. If bedtimes are hard to plan – because your schedule is full of social activities – aim for similar wake up times.

2. Put the day to rest
   If you have thoughts on your mind, write them down before you get into bed and keep a pencil and paper by your bed. Tell yourself that these thoughts are committed to paper, so you don’t need to keep thinking about them.

3. Go easy on the eggnog
   Alcohol might help relax you in the short term, but once you get to sleep, it prevents you from sinking into deep, restorative sleep, so you wake up feeling sluggish rather than refreshed.

4. Reserve the bed for sleeping
   Don’t take work into the bedroom, and, ideally, keep screens out. If you wake up and really can’t get back to sleep, get out of bed. Only return when your eyelids are heavy and you feel sleepy.

Happy Holidays from The Sleepio Team.

Information compliments of Virgin Pulse.
Healthy holiday habits will add up this season!

Swap out alcoholic drinks for lower calorie options like water infused with fruit and volunteer to bring a healthy dish to all events. Opt for one cheat meal a week vs. overindulging at every gathering. That way you have something to look forward to and avoid all that holiday guilt. Encourage everyone to join you for a walk after eating to talk and enjoy the scenery while getting in some steps, too!

Information compliments of Virgin Pulse.
Bidding 2017 Farewell...

As we say good-bye to 2017, the EAP Committee, EAP Ambassadors, and I would like to thank you for your participation at the various EAP-sponsored events this year. In our continued effort to meet EAP’s mission of supporting UAlbany employees’ health and productivity, we explored a variety of wellness topics through our programs and via the monthly EAP ENews. We appreciate your positive feedback and support of our efforts to enhance the campus community’s sense of well-being in the workplace.

Here’s wishing you and your family a safe, joyful holiday season. We look forward to continuing to serve you in 2018!

EAP Coordinator:
Brenda Seckerson

EAP Ambassadors:
Linda Gallagher
Olivia Pettit
Brendon Phillips
Susan Whiteman
Marlene Williams

EAP Committee Members:
Marcia Catrambone
Kimberly Comproski
Inieka Cooper
Angela Fletcher
Toni Gaspary
Shari Lombardoni
Merissa Mabee
Melanie Pettit
Nick Simons
Mary Zeno
Joanne Bocchino (recording secretary)

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