Are You Zoomed Out Yet?

Since so many of us have gone “remote” due to the pandemic, Zoom meetings and webinars have become our go-to form of communication and connection. This type of technology is a gift which contributes to us being able to keep operations running. After so many weeks of ongoing changes and wondering how things will unfold as we continue to move through the COVID-19 experience, it seems a little Zoom exhaustion is setting in for some individuals. Have you reached that point yet?

If you are looking to enhance your Zoom meeting experiences, check out the Ideas.Ted.com article titled The Secret to Making Your Zoom Meetings More Meaningful for You and Your Coworkers. Organizational psychologist Adam Grant, who has the TED podcast Worklife, discusses “loneliness at work — but specifically at virtual meetings and how those could be reimagined as ways to connect rather than feel disconnected.”

Another good resource to gain helpful ways “to keep calm and Zoom on” comes from the article in Mindful titled Zoom Exhaustion is Real. Here Are Six Ways to Find Balance and Stay Connected by Steven Hickman, PsyD, Executive Director of the Center for Mindful Self-Compassion. Hickman outlines how “there is a different quality to our attention when we are online” and provides some useful considerations to make when participating in virtual meetings. Here's hoping these two articles will help you handle Zoom fatigue!

Virtual Fitness Classes Available

Do you miss going to your Zumba or yoga class? Ever wanted to attend a Campus Recreation fitness class but just weren’t able to do so? Now you can! Thanks to Zoom, Campus Recreation has set up several virtual classes for you to take advantage of. Check out what’s being offered and use this opportunity to move and support your health and stress management. To see the virtual group exercise class schedule, click here.

Over the years, EAP has coordinated chair yoga classes with professionally certified Kripalu yoga instructor, Judi England. Judi has produced a 30 minute chair yoga session to boost energy. You can access her YouTube video here. The stretches and movement you’ll experience can easily be used throughout your day as you work remotely.

Your body may let you know you need a break and to move before your mind does. So pay attention to those signs and find something physical to do. You’ll be happy that you did.
How to Manage Your Finances During COVID 19

Presented by:
Consumer Credit Counseling of Rochester/Rethinking Debt

In this session, we will talk about steps to create an emergency budget, review highlights of the CARES act, discuss benefits you can take advantage of, and explain the ways Consumer Credit Counseling of Rochester/Rethinking Debt can help you stay financially healthy now and in the future.

https://www.rethinkingdebt.org/

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2020

There is no need to sign up. To join in one of these sessions, simply click this link at either

11:30 AM or 1:30 PM

https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/9932877791
ID Number 993 287 7791
Dial in 1-470-869-2200

For questions, contact:
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu 518.442.5483
COVID-19: Reducing Fear and Anxiety

Uncertainty about what’s going to happen with COVID-19 and its impact on everyone can have you feeling anxious and fearful. Whether you are concerned about your job or an elderly family member, getting food and supplies, or even getting sick yourself, you have an important goal: combat this stress and stay calm. Here are several suggestions on how to do that.

* Practice self-care. Focus on what you can control. Get more sleep, read a new book, have a warm bath, or take a walk somewhere quiet. Whatever you do, now is the time to prioritize your well-being.
* Limit social media use. Set limits on how often you use social media, especially if you’re at home where it’s tempting to check in more often. Don’t let a constant stream of tweets, status updates, and conflicting opinions overwhelm you.
* Read only reliable news sources. Stay informed by reading only reliable sources, such as government websites, the WHO, and the CDC. Other news sources may be less accurate, and they may cause feelings of panic and concern.
* Talk it out. Acknowledge any stress or anxiety you’re feeling right now and ask others how they’re coping. Talk to family and friends, and make sure you check in with how your kids are feeling.
* Reach out to co-workers. Now is the time for co-workers to come together. Focus on maintaining positive morale at work. And if you’re working remotely, set up regular check-ins to keep connected.

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

Working Remotely: Take steps for your health and well-being while working remotely by viewing this EAP presentation titled "Managing the Stress of Social Distancing and Working".

Top Three Productivity Thieves

You’ve been at it for hours, but when you take stock at day’s end, you didn’t get as much done as you hoped. What’s going on? Perhaps you’ve fallen victim to one of these stealthy productivity thieves.

Distractions — It takes the human mind an estimated 25 minutes to refocus on its original task after being interrupted. To stay focused, turn off your email alert, put your mobile device out of reach, and let coworkers know when you’re not available. Set a timer and address only the task at hand until it buzzes.

Perfectionism — Avoid re-doing projects once you’ve finished them. Set yourself a firm deadline for completing a task, and give it your best until then. Accept that finished doesn’t necessarily mean perfect. Free yourself to move on to the next job.

Poor communication — It’s a leading cause of errors and wasted time. Use the right medium to deliver your message. When in doubt, pick up the phone or video chat. Ask questions, and make sure all parties understand everything before moving on.

Source: Personal Best, a registered trademark of Ebix. (May 2020) TP Top Performance.
Four Ways to Ease Into Change

By choice or necessity, change challenges us almost daily. It often produces feelings that may affect your health. Here are some practical steps to make the transition easier and less stressful.

- **Address your fears.** List your real concerns with the change and focus on those. Maybe the situation is not as significant or intimidating as you first imagined.
- **Study the details.** Assess the short- and long-term effects. A better understanding of what’s ahead will raise your sense of control.
- **Believe in yourself.** When you feel overwhelmed or uncertain about the future, recall your successes to restore your confidence. Get advice. Talk about the change with someone you trust to help you sort out your feelings and develop a plan.

The more difficult changes we face involve our job, finances, family, health, and relationships. Any change, big, or small, can upset your routine. Even positive changes, such as a promotion or a vacation, can bring on stress and anxiety. But you can handle it. You’ve been changing your whole life. Start with a positive outlook.

- Be willing to explore and accept new challenges.
- Look for the advantages with every change.
- Have confidence in your personal strengths and accomplishments.

Many people are rocked by change because they lack direction or self-knowledge. Change is easier and often beneficial when you have set plans for your personal and professional future. Use your goals to guide you and move you forward despite the unexpected detours.


Grief and Loss During a Pandemic

For those who have lost a loved one, friend, colleague, or neighbor to the Coronavirus, we realize that they must be experiencing such grief. Our hearts go out to them as we offer our condolences. We can’t even imagine what they must be feeling and going through. This type of grief is profound.

During this pandemic, it’s important to recognize that on a grand scale all of us, in one form or another, are experiencing grief and loss. The loss of life being the greatest, of course. We’ve lost our normal way of life, our routines, and our in-person connection with family, friends, and coworkers. We may have lost income and financial solvency. Spring rituals, celebrations, rites of passage like graduations, moving-up ceremonies, and commencements are forgone or are being revised to be held “virtually.” It is important to stop and reflect on the sense of loss that we are living through and be gentle with ourselves and each other. Grief can trigger an array of emotions like sadness, anger, frustration, anxiety, and depression just to name a few. It can impact our health as well. Grief counselor, educator, and author Dr. Alan Wolfelt’s article titled *The Pandemic of Grief* describes how this pandemic has prompted the feelings of loss for so many of us. Take a moment to read this insightful article to heighten your awareness so that you can take better care of yourself and understand what others might be experiencing along with you. We really are all in this together.
Use EAP for Acute Stress

EAP Coordinators do more than help employees solve problems. They also possess good listening and empathy skills and provide emotional support that offers relief from the anguish an employee may be feeling caused by a life crisis, difficult time, or even grim personal circumstances. Don’t dismiss asking UAlbany EAP Coordinator Brenda Seckerson for help, even if you believe that “EAP can do nothing to help me in this situation.” Don’t live in fear, lose sleep, become physically ill, or experience a constant sense of foreboding doom by “going it alone.” Instead, partner with the EAP for support that can help you through a difficult period.

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.

NOTE: While no in-person appointments are available due to the current COVID-19 related concerns, virtual appointments for confidential Information, Assessment and Referral Services with EAP are still available by phone and email.

Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
518-442-5483
bseckerson@albany.edu
EAP Website: http://www.albany.edu/eap

If you are experiencing domestic violence...NYS launched a new texting program and confidential service to help New Yorkers experiencing domestic violence. There has been a rise in domestic violence reports during this pandemic. Abuse victims are often closely watched by their abuser, making these tools needed. We want you to know that you are not alone and you do not have to stay in a dangerous situation.

Text 844-997-2121 or visit www.opdv.ny.gov to confidentially chat with a professional at any time of day or night.

**New York State Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline:
1-800-942-6906 https://opdv.ny.gov/help/you-are-not-alone.html
Additional Resources to Help You and Your Family Through the COVID-19 Experience

To keep you updated with helpful resources, below you will find some additional links to the list that was provided in the April EAP ENews. Links to helpful resources can be found below and continues on the next 2 pages. This list includes links that were previously provided in the April EAP ENews as well as new resources.

Financial Well-Being:

- Consumer Finance Information: Protecting your Finances During the Coronavirus Pandemic: [https://www.consumerfinance.gov/coronavirus/](https://www.consumerfinance.gov/coronavirus/)
- SEFCU Financial Relief Programs: [https://www.sefcu.com/financial-relief-programs](https://www.sefcu.com/financial-relief-programs)

Stress Management and Mental Health:

- Free meditation and mindfulness resource for all New York State residents provided by Headspace: [www.headspace.com/ny](http://www.headspace.com/ny)
- This Pandemic of Grief by Center for Loss | Mar 18, 2020 | Article by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.
- How to Regulate Your Stir-Crazy Emotions: Findings and recommendations from a survey of people on lockdown by Marc Brackett, Ph.D. April 7, 2020: [https://elemental.medium.com/how-to-regulate-your-stir-crazy-emotions-de432d6410ad](https://elemental.medium.com/how-to-regulate-your-stir-crazy-emotions-de432d6410ad)
- Covid-19: Fear Zone, Learning Zone, Growth Zone | Check Your Mental Zone Now
- Coronavirus Anxiety Workbook: A Tool to Help You Build Resilience During Difficult Times - This resource provide tips, tools, strategies, and food-for-thought about how to address any anxiety you might be experiencing during these uncertain times.
- New York State Office of Addiction Services and Support: [https://oasas.ny.gov/](https://oasas.ny.gov/)

**NOTE:** If you have trouble with a link, please copy the resource name and do a search.
Resources to Help You and Your Family Through the COVID-19 Experience from April EAP ENews

Working From Home:

- “8 Tips for Staying Productive While Working From Home” by Kelsey Libert
- “5 Tips for Staying Productive and Mentally Healthy While You’re Working From Home,” by Time

Stress Management:

- Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) [https://www.albany.edu/eap/images/SAMHSA_Coping_With_Stress_Infectious_Disease_Outbreak.pdf](https://www.albany.edu/eap/images/SAMHSA_Coping_With_Stress_Infectious_Disease_Outbreak.pdf)
- The Ohio State University has a campaign called JustBreathe which focuses on breathing techniques. This web page guides you in syncing your breathing for relaxation and stress reduction. [https://yp4h.osu.edu/justbreathe](https://yp4h.osu.edu/justbreathe)
- Dr. Andrew Weil’s website has breathing techniques that can help to increase a sense of calm. [https://www.drweil.com/health-wellness/body-mind-spirit/stress-anxiety/breathing-three-exercises/](https://www.drweil.com/health-wellness/body-mind-spirit/stress-anxiety/breathing-three-exercises/)
- Oprah Winfrey and Deepak Chopra ‘s 21 Day Meditation Challenge: Finding Hope in Uncertain Times - Free
- Wellness Council of America (WELCOA): HOW COVID-19 IS IMPACTING THE WORKPLACE - Resources for employees and employers during this time. [https://www.welcoa.org/covid/](https://www.welcoa.org/covid/)
- DeStressMonday.org: DeStress Monday is an initiative of The Monday Campaigns, a nonprofit public health initiative associated with Columbia, Johns Hopkins and Syracuse Universities. It helps people put a positive start on each week, while reducing stress throughout the week. DeStress Monday provides helpful, evidence-based stress reduction tools and resources distributed through our website, social media and our weekly newsletters. These assets are made available for individual use as well as for companies, hospitals and schools at no charge. [https://www.destressmonday.org/](https://www.destressmonday.org/)
- YMCAs have posted on YouTube video fitness classes to do from the comfort of your home. [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOGt_lpceP_xQhhCMCrut_A](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOGt_lpceP_xQhhCMCrut_A)

NOTE: If you have trouble with a link, please copy the resource name and do a search.
Resources to Help You and Your Family Through COVID-19 Experience (con’t)

Resources/Activities for Children and Parents/Caregivers:

- Child care and information for families: **Brightside Up**, local child care resource and referral agency, is available to assist you with child care issues that arise due to the COVID 19 crisis. Contact them online at [www.brightsideup.org](http://www.brightsideup.org) or by calling one of their Family Educators at 518-426-7181. [https://mailchi.mp/brightsideup/covid19?mc_cid=480585beb5&mc_eid=193439068f](https://mailchi.mp/brightsideup/covid19?mc_cid=480585beb5&mc_eid=193439068f)
- New York State Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies by County: [https://www.albany.edu/eap/images/NYS_Child_Care_Resource_and_Referral_Agencies(1).pdf](https://www.albany.edu/eap/images/NYS_Child_Care_Resource_and_Referral_Agencies(1).pdf)
- Parent Teacher Association (PTA): Coronavirus Family Resources [https://www.pta.org/home/family-resources/coronavirus-information](https://www.pta.org/home/family-resources/coronavirus-information)
- Scholastic Inc. [https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/coronavirus.html](https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/coronavirus.html)
- Cincinnati Zoo "Home Safari Facebook Live" [http://cincinnatizoo.org/home-safari-resources/](http://cincinnatizoo.org/home-safari-resources/)
- Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History Virtual Tour (And check out other national museums' virtual tours!) [https://naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/virtual-tour](https://naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/virtual-tour)
- US National Park Service/Virtual Tours and Great Photos and History [https://www.nps.gov/index.htm](https://www.nps.gov/index.htm)

Health Insurance Quick Links

Should you or a family member need access to your health insurance benefits related to COVID-19, here are the quick links that outline the coverage and assistance you can get from your plan.

**NYSHIP Empire Plan:** [https://www.empireblue.com/nys/](https://www.empireblue.com/nys/)


**MVP:** [https://www.mvphealthcare.com/covid19](https://www.mvphealthcare.com/covid19) 1-833-693-7669

**Empire Blue Cross:** [https://www.empireblue.com/coronavirus/individual-and-family/](https://www.empireblue.com/coronavirus/individual-and-family/)
All in the Family...

Does Relationship Addiction Affect You?

Is your romantic relationship characterized by possessiveness, jealousy, manipulation, and feeling terrified of abandonment? These states are common among those who struggle with “relationship addiction.” Relationship addiction (or love addiction) is not classified as a mental disorder, but many affected by it believe it should be. The dominant pattern is addictive clinging along with severe relationship conflict. Taking over a partner’s responsibilities, focusing on the partner’s “true potential” rather than abusive behaviors, or molding yourself to be the person your partner wants are also common. Escaping relationship addiction is possible with counseling. Change will be a rewarding journey of hard work, but it won’t be about “fixing the relationship.” It will be about learning more about how you respond to relationships, discovering the real you, and finding the healthy relationship you really want. To find a counselor who can offer you support to meet your goals for change, contact EAP Coordinator Brenda Seckerson for referrals.

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

Signs an Alcohol Use Assessment is Needed

Not all early-stage signs and symptoms of alcoholism are distressful or problematic to the drinker. Some may be erroneously viewed as evidence to self and others that “everything is fine.” Consider arranging an interview/assessment with a professional counselor if any of the following are part of your experience:

- You feel fortunate that you can drink more than your friends and “not feel drunk.” This is explained by growing nervous system adaptation to alcohol.
- You believe you can drive a vehicle safely, even after moderately heavy drinking. (Note: You can’t.)
- Despite drinking the same amount as your friends, you rarely suffer hangovers or ill effects.
- Your friends drink as much and as frequently as you do, which convinces you that your drinking is normal.
- You are sure alcoholism is not an issue because there are many symptoms you do not experience that you believe would be evident. This is based upon your life and family experience with others who had alcohol disorders, while other symptoms are ignored.

Contact UAlbany EAP Coordinator Brenda Seckerson for confidential information, assessment, and referrals if you are concerned about your use of alcohol or that of a loved one’s. 518-442-5483 bseckerson@albany.edu

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

“An empty lantern provides no light. Self care is the fuel that allows your light to shine brightly.” ~ Unknown
Exercise: Get More Outdoors

Why exercise with Mother Nature? It’s hard to argue with the many health benefits you can gain from regular exercise. With our need to physically distance ourselves and gym closures, there is a need to find alternative ways to exercise. Moving activities outdoors offers some special benefits over indoor exercise, especially on beautiful sunny days. Let exercising in natural surroundings broaden your horizons.

⇒ Just open the door. You’ll find countless routes and settings in your neighborhood, often quicker than if you were traveling to a gym.
⇒ Forget boredom. You can choose a changing environment, especially if you live near a park, shoreline, or designated bike path — much more fun than working out on a machine.
⇒ Burn more calories. Headwinds make your muscles work harder to overcome the resistance against your body, especially when jogging or biking.
⇒ Make exercise family time outside. Take your kids routinely to a playground, go biking or hiking, and break a sweat. These are good steps in raising confident kids who grow to appreciate fitness.
⇒ Boost your mood. There is research suggesting that exercise outside can benefit mental well-being more than the same type of exercise inside. One study found outdoor exercisers scored higher on measures of energy, enthusiasm, and self-esteem and lower on tension, depression, and fatigue.

Reminder: Know your outdoor environment—finding a setting that’s safe and meets your exercise needs. Consider traffic, weather, and air conditions before heading out.

Dear Food Diary

One of the latest jokes going around is that since we are sequestered in our homes that many of us will gain weight called “the COVID 19” - a take on the “Freshman 15” which refers to that first year in college away from home. So what is a good strategy to avoid packing on some pounds while hibernating? According to a Kaiser Permanente study, people who kept a daily food journal lost twice as much weight in six months as those who didn’t. A food diary can highlight the following for you.

Why you eat — You might reach for food because you are upset, lonely, tired, bored, or anxious. You might also eat more when you are at a restaurant or with certain people.

How much you eat — Eating is often mindless, especially if you eat while watching TV, working, conversing, or doing other activities. A food diary will help you keep track.

How long you eat for — Once you start tracking your eating, you will notice if you are eating too quickly, which can lead you to consume more calories before you feel full.

How what you’re eating differs from what you think — You might believe you eat enough vegetables and fruit, or that you don’t eat many sweets.

Your food diary shows you where you need to improve and what you’re doing well. To start a food diary, record in an app (or write down) what you eat and drink, how much, the time, where you are, whether you are alone or with someone, what you are doing while you eat, and your mood. Over time, you can use your diary to improve your eating habits and even share it with your health care provider.
According to Mentalhealth.gov, mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Over the course of your life, if you experience mental health problems, your thinking, mood, and behavior could be affected. Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including the following.

- Biological factors, such as genes or brain chemistry
- Life experiences, such as trauma or abuse
- Family history of mental health problems
- Mental health problems are common, but help is available. People with mental health problems can get better and many recover completely.

### Early Warning Signs

Not sure if you or someone you know is living with mental health problems? Experiencing one or more of the following feelings or behaviors can be an early warning sign of a problem:

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people and usual activities
- Having low or no energy
- Feeling numb or like nothing matters
- Having unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared
- Yelling or fighting with family and friends
- Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Having persistent thoughts and memories you can’t get out of your head
- Hearing voices or believing things that are not true
- Thinking of harming yourself or others
- Inability to perform daily tasks like taking care of your kids or getting to work or school

Source: [https://mhanys.org/explore/understanding-mental-health/](https://mhanys.org/explore/understanding-mental-health/)

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**COVID-19 Support:** New York State Office of Mental Health: If you are overwhelmed, the NYS COVID-19 Emotional Support Line is staffed by specially trained volunteers who can help. **1-844-863-9314**

[https://omh.ny.gov/](https://omh.ny.gov/)

**Positive mental health allows people to:**

- Realize their full potential
- Cope with the stresses of life
- Work productively
- Make meaningful contributions to their communities

**Ways to maintain positive mental health include:**

- Getting professional help if you need it
- Connecting with others
- Staying positive
- Getting physically active
- Helping others
- Getting enough sleep
- Developing coping skills

Contact EAP Coordinator Brenda Seckerson for confidential support if you are concerned about your mental health or that of a loved one’s. Help is available! 518-442-5483  bseckerson@albany.edu
Tax Season Update—New Deadline of July 15

The following notice is placed on the UnitedWay website in regards to the free tax preparation that has annually been available.

In accordance with the Executive Order issued by New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo, the CA$H Coalition of the Greater Capital Region is suspending in-person tax preparation services at all VITA sites until further notice.

The IRS and New York State have extended the tax filing deadlines to July 15. With the additional time to file, we will make every effort to accommodate our clients who depend on this service. Please contact your local VITA site or call 2-1-1 after April 6th for more updates.

http://www.cashgreatercapitalregion.org/

Additional Tax Preparation Resources:

- People and families who use a Simple Form may be eligible to use this free service: www.MyFreeTaxes.com
- Or, go to the NYS Tax & Finance website to see if you qualify for a FREE tax return this year: https://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/efile/default.htm
- Questions about preparing your taxes? Connect with the IRS Taxpayer Advocate Service at www.irs.gov/advocate.

“$A budget is telling your money where to go instead of wondering where it went.”
~ Dave Ramsey

2019 Flex Spending Deadline Extended to May 31, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the deadline for employees to submit 2019 claims for the Health Care Spending Account (HCSA) and Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAA) has been extended to May 31, 2020. The deadline was previously extended to April 30, 2020. Employees who are enrolled in either benefit now have until May 31 to submit claims for health care or dependent care services provided during the 2019 calendar year. Employees can download claim forms and find instructions for submitting claims on the Flex Spending website at goer.ny.gov/FSA.

The recently enacted CARES Act made several changes to the rules concerning eligible HCSA expenses. Specifically:

- Effective January 1, 2020, the requirement that OTC drugs and medicines must have a written prescription in order to be reimbursed is eliminated. OTC drugs and medicines may now be reimbursed by the HCSA without a prescription from a doctor.
- Effective January 1, 2020, menstrual care products are now considered qualified medical expenses and are therefore eligible for reimbursement by the HCSA.
- For questions, contact WageWorks Customer service at (800) 358-7202.
Laughter can be a healthy distraction, taking your mind off of your worries. It has also been linked to disease prevention, pain relief, and certainly stress relief. Scientists have found that laughter releases endorphins in the brain that may help control pain. Research shows that stress-related hormones decrease during episodes of laughter, protecting the blood vessels. These studies seem to support that laughter plays a key role in wellness.

Here are some ways to shape up your sense of humor.

- Find humor in the silly and absurd goings-on in daily life.
- Look at the world through the eyes of children. The simplest things make them laugh.
- Flip through your high school yearbook and think how far you have come.
- Enjoy comedies like joke books, sitcoms, funny movies, and cartoons.
- Surround yourself with cheerful and funny people who like to laugh and who make you laugh. Laughter is contagious.
- Play simple board games. Forget competition; relax and be silly together.
- Remind yourself that having fun is a healthy activity that everyone deserves. Get reacquainted with the child in you.

More good reasons to laugh:

- Increases alertness
- Stimulates the cardiovascular system by increasing oxygen flow
- Empties your lungs of stale air
- Exercises the muscles in your chest, neck, and face
- Produces an emotional high and swings a negative perspective toward the positive
- Reduces anxiety and reverses unhealthy, pent-up anger and frustration
- May boost the immune system

As the saying goes, “Laughter is the best medicine.” While humor may not cure an illness, medical professionals believe in its therapeutic benefits. So don’t hold back—surround yourself with lighthearted people often (even if it’s just virtually right now!), and explore activities and entertainment that make you laugh out loud and feel joy. Your body will thank you for it and so will your spirit!


Focus on what you can control
Identify negative thoughts
Generate alternate thoughts
Highlight adaptive behaviors
Teach someone else the same

Finding a way to stay healthy mentally, emotionally, and spiritually can be challenging during times of great change and stress. Use this F.I.G.H.T. strategy as identified by psychologist L. Kevin Chapman. https://www.aft.org/coronavirus
School of Education Announces Resource...

Activities and resources have become available through UAlbany’s School of Education that may be of interest to parents who have embarked on homeschooling.

The new RemoteED website at www.remoteED.org was created by teachers and experts for teachers, parents, and school leaders. It is now populated with over 200 resources organized by subject and grade level, and can be viewed in multiple languages. Weekly events happen Monday—Wednesday.

Community Conversations continue via social media using #RemoteED.

WellNYS Everyday May Challenge

Want a way to help you stay focused on your healthy behaviors during 2020? Participate in the WellNYS Everyday Monthly Challenges sponsored by New York State EAP. This self-paced program completed on an honor system provides you with a different challenge at the beginning of each month. Tracking your progress makes it easier to meet your goals. May’s challenge is “be physically active.” Invite a colleague or family member to join you in the monthly wellness challenge fun! In addition to the monthly challenges program, WellNYS Everyday also offers a wellness “Daily To-Do” which can be emailed to you. NOTE: You don’t have to participate in the monthly challenges to receive the Daily To-Do email. To learn more and to register to participate, go to: https://wellnys.goer.ny.gov/.
For Your Health...

Maintain Healthy Lungs to Fight COVID-19

You are at higher risk of a deadly outcome from COVID-19 if you smoke. Smoking increases your risk for acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) and adversely affects your immune system. Now is the time to stop using tobacco and to give up vaping, and whatever can deplete lung functioning. Due to the global fight against the coronavirus pandemic, society will see many changes occur. One of them is likely to be a new effort by smokers to quit, this time for good. For resources and support, visit www.nysmokefree.com or call 1-866-697-8487.

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

1 Check into tobacco-quitting methods with your health care provider’s help.
2 Seek encouragement from someone who has quit successfully.
3 Get busy with a game, organize a closet or play with the kids.
4 Remind yourself of tobacco’s bad effects on you and your loved ones.
5 Pinpoint your triggers, write them down and be ready to counteract.
6 Avoid spending time with smokers or where smoking is permitted.
7 Replace a smoke break with a walk, a trek up and down stairs, or with resistance exercises.
8 Relax more and manage stress by taking time for calming activities.
9 Keep alternatives handy (sugarless gum, hard candies or a diversion activity).
10 Breathe deeply. Focus on the fresh, clean air that’s filling your lungs.

Healthy Top Ten

Resist the Urge to Use Tobacco
Isolation Can Impact Gambling Problems

Social distancing and isolation due to COVID-19 can be especially difficult for those struggling with gambling problems. Extra time, stress and anxiety, access to gambling on the internet, and an increase in online gambling options can be a recipe for trouble. People struggling with gambling problems or those in recovery from problem gambling, may find this isolation to be especially difficult.

If you have noticed extra stress, anxiety, anger, uncontrollable urges to gamble or an increase in gambling activities, that may be a warning sign. Please know that help is available. If your loved one is struggling to control their gambling, help is available for you too.

Contact The Northeast Problem Gambling Resource Center at 518-801-1491.

www.NYProblemGamblingHELP.com/Northeast

Stop Food Cravings For Shift Workers: Good Tips for Everyone No Matter Your Work Schedule

It’s 3 a.m., and you can’t get comfort food out of your mind. Whether you crave chocolate, doughnuts, or salty potato chips, learning to control cravings is key to maintaining a healthy weight and feeling well. How to beat cravings:

- **Eat frequently.** Going more than five hours without eating can lead you to seek out comfort foods high in refined carbohydrates, fat (saturated and trans) and sugar. Eat small, frequent, healthy snacks that contain some protein to keep you feeling full and satisfied longer.

- **Drink water.** Drinking water will help you feel full while the craving passes. Also, dehydration can worsen food cravings.

- **Distract yourself.** Find something to do besides eating. Get up and stretch, walk, engage in a hobby, switch to a more challenging task, or call a friend.

- **Control portions.** Pack a single portion of a food you crave so you don’t eat the whole box. Or, buy a small amount of something special, and truly savor it. For example, if you crave chocolate, have a small piece instead of a large candy bar.

- **Know your triggers.** Record when you have cravings, the type of food you crave, what was happening at the time (e.g., hectic schedule) and how you felt (e.g., bored or stressed). Identifying craving patterns can help you eat better in the future.

Source: Personal Best, a registered trademark of Ebix. (May 2020) SW Shiftworker

“Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.”

~Melody Beattie
Relaxation Matters

Today’s 24-hour world can lead to too little rest and too much stress. Take time today to relax and recharge three ways:

- Imagine yourself in a peaceful, pleasant scene. Then, focus on relaxing your body in that visualization. For example, you might concentrate on how warm and heavy your legs and arms feel in the summer sunlight at the beach.

- Take a slow, deep breath and try to push the breath all the way down into your belly. Hold your breath for a moment; then let it out slowly. Try to make your exhalations longer than your inhalations.

- Starting with your feet and working your way up to your head, tighten and release each muscle group individually. Techniques such as these can counteract your body’s fight or flight response, which leads to a faster heart rate, higher blood pressure, shallow breathing, tense muscles, and a racing mind. Triggering the relaxation response slows everything down and lowers stress hormones in your body, which can help improve your overall health.

Source: Personal Best, a registered trademark of Ebix. (May 2020)
Compliments of Personal Best Publications

MAKE A GREAT PLATE.
Layers of fresh flavor are perfect for a light lunch.

**Cilantro-Lime Shrimp Wraps**

**INGREDIENTS**
- 1 lb shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 1 lime, juiced
- 2 tbsp fresh chopped cilantro, plus more for garnish
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- Large leaves of romaine or iceberg lettuce, for serving
- Tomato, diced

**DIRECTIONS**
In a large mixing bowl, combine shrimp, chili powder, lime juice, cilantro, garlic and oil. In a large skillet over medium heat, add shrimp mixture and cook until pink, about 2 minutes per side. To assemble, add shrimp and tomato to large lettuce leaf. Garnish with cilantro. Fold and enjoy.

Makes 4 Servings. Each: 142 calories • 24g protein • 4g total fat • 2g carb
0g sugar • 2g fiber • 309mg sodium • 0g saturated fat • 2g mono fat • 0.0g poly fat

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MAKE A GREAT PLATE.
This savory dish is high in protein.

**Grilled Chicken with Herbs**

**INGREDIENTS**
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tsp chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 tsp dried sage
- ¾ cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ tsp salt
- 4 butterflied skinless boneless chicken breasts (5 oz. each)

**DIRECTIONS**
In a blender or food processor, combine garlic, parsley, rosemary, sage, lemon juice, oil and salt. Place chicken in deep dish or bowl and pour blended marinade over it. Refrigerate at least 2 hours. Preheat grill to medium high heat. Grill chicken until it is fully cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F.

Makes 4 servings. Each: 169 calories • 19g protein • 9g total fat • 2g carb • 0g sugar • 0g fiber • 192mg sodium

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**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.

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

EAP is a joint labor/management program and is part of the NYS Employee Assistance Program. Contact Info: 2 Empire State Plaza, 11th Floor Albany, NY 12223 ~ 518.486.9769