

# Physician Assistance Program Newsletter

Fall 2009

## Appreciating the Moment

### Defining Mindfulness

Everybody's dance card seems to be full at every waking hour and it happens almost every day. Whether it's working or volunteering, helping with your children's homework, or making time for a workout. With a busy life comes a feeling of pressure, stress and not being able to focus. We rush through our daily routines without paying attention; we may eat or overeat without noticing, or listen to family/friends without really listening. What's a resolution to all this? - Mindfulness.

Mindfulness is partially the act of being able to focus and pay attention to what's going on in the present and being able to accomplish this without any distractions or contemplation of the past or future. It's also a way to appreciate the moment at a given time. More scientific research has proven that mindfulness helps increase the enjoyment of life and also one's emotional and physical well-being. Mindfulness can also help relieve stress and anxiety and help reduce such conditions as high blood pressure, chronic pain and sleep disorders. Those

that are able to practice mindfulness have been able to take the focus off of success and self-esteem and are more open and attentive of their connections with colleagues, friends and family.



An easy and common way to practice mindfulness is through meditation. Taking 15-20 minutes out of your day for some quiet time to focus on your breathing will help take away those distractions that you may have. It's hard to not let your mind wander and if this happens, help re-direct it back to the calm and peaceful focus during your quiet time. It's hard not to focus on a particular sense, thought or feeling but practice makes perfect.

### Day-to-Day Mindfulness

- Take time to slow down as you move through daily activities/events.
- Try to do one thing at a time.
- Bring full attention to the current activity & experience it.
- Find a task that you do anxiously or without thinking & devote your full awareness to the feelings & thoughts you're experiencing.
- Before going to bed and when waking up – take deep, mindful breaths. Help bring the focus to the present.
- And if the moment is hectic or overwhelming – stop to observe your feelings and emotions and how they affect your body and your health. ■

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## Check out your PAP Website

Have you checked out your PAP website recently? First Choice Health's Physician Assistance Program (PAP) enjoys a reputation for advanced customer service and satisfaction, especially among physicians and hospital Medical Staff members who utilize our services.

Take a moment and visit your PAP website at [www.FirstChoiceDoc.com](http://www.FirstChoiceDoc.com) and learn more about what your PAP program has to offer:

- Online Conference: Not to be substituted for face-to-face counseling, this benefit is available to schedule a brief online chat with a Licensed Mental Health Provider to discuss concerns or Work/Life problems.
- Practice Support: This tool offers HIPAA/Liability Information, HR Trainings/Links and forms that can be downloaded and customized for your practice needs.
- Work Life Resources: Enter in Username: **firstchoice** and Password: **health2005** to access articles, resources and information from topics ranging from Health Tools to Career Development and even a Pet Sitter Locator!

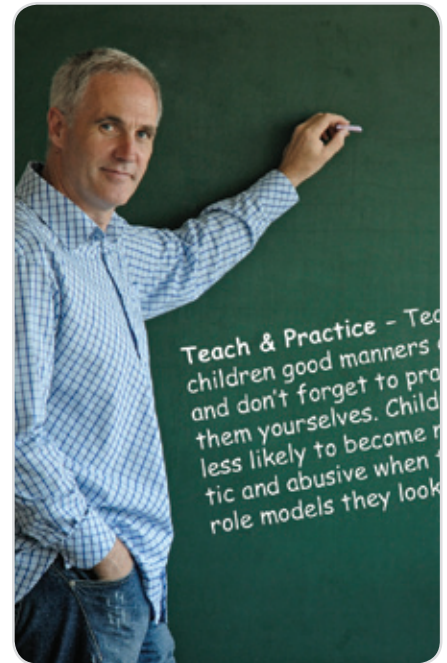
The PAP is a cost-free, convenient and confidential service intended to keep you and your family emotionally healthy. ■

## The Science & Art of the Power Nap

According to results reported in a press release from the National Institute of Mental Health, research done at Harvard University strongly suggests that periods of sleep (including lunchtime or afternoon "cat naps") revitalize the brain's ability to process, sort and absorb information. It appears that even brief periods of sleep make people more effective learners and therefore, more effective professionals.



Middle of the day periods of sleep may help people, especially early risers, compensate for the benefits lost as a result of interrupting or missing later stages of sleep. Just as defragmenting a hard drive improves a computer's ability to quickly sort, store and retrieve data, the daytime "power nap" seems to help increase a person's ability to retain and integrate information and also develop new skills. ■



Teach & Practice - Teach children good manners early on and don't forget to practice them yourselves. Children are less likely to become narcissistic and abusive when they have role models they look up to.

## Be the Bigger Person

There's always the saying – "Treat others how you would like to be treated." Good manners can easily be forgotten when your patience is being tested. Here are some tips on how to rise above rude behavior:

- Practice Goodwill – The way to settle a situation is to give the other person a poised way to do what you would like them to do.
- Keep Composure – Control your temper. Patience is a virtue.
- 'Kill 'em With Kindness' – Don't fight rudeness by being rude in return. This is a lose/lose situation for both parties involved.
- Restrain Yourself – There's no need to be rude to a stranger if they've accidentally bumped into your shoulder walking down the street. But if it's a family/friend that is being rude towards you, remember to confront them politely and in a calm manner.
- Teach & Practice – Teach your children good manners early on and don't forget to practice them yourselves. Children are less likely to become narcissistic and abusive when they have role models they look up to. ■



## Winter Proof Your Health & Well-Being

Winter is right around the corner. Cold weather is on the way. Nightfall will arrive by 5:00pm. Just because you're not able to enjoy outdoor workout activities during the winter, that doesn't mean forgo working out during the winter months. Your health, mood and attitude will thank you for taking care of them. Here are a few tips to help you enjoy the winter months:

- The Buddy System – Find a friend or neighbor nearby and help motivate each other by working out together. The Buddy System proves to keep both moving and committed. Consider it a break from the kids.
- Try Something New/Different – Have you always looked at the class schedule at your gym but were too shy to go check it out? Here's a good opportunity. Maybe it's a chance to finally check out that yoga or step-aerobics class that you walk by every time you're at the gym.
- Think Happy Thoughts – Just because it's been raining everyday or you know the snow's coming, remember what comes after winter: Spring and Summer. Plan for that sunny vacation you've been thinking about and you'll be relaxing on the beach in no time!

Remember to take care of your health, well-being and body no matter what season it is. You'll feel revived, motivated and energetic all day long. ■

# A Guide to Multitasking

Multitasking – the ability to manage many tasks at once – has become a regular activity for most physicians. Trying to be able to manage the responsibilities of family, work, life and your practice can be overwhelming. It seems to have become a necessary survival skill for most doctors to keep up with the fast, ongoing pace of life by taking on multiple tasks all at one time. Although the technology world has advanced and has made it a little easier to stay on top of priorities with various technical devices, your ability to stay focused on detail-oriented items of your activities may be lacking.

There's only 24 hours in a day and wanting to broaden your own abilities to do more in a limited time frame can be tricky. Multitasking is not the solution or best strategy at all times when you want to accomplish everything in your personal and professional lives that require such time and attention.

Some behavioral healthcare professionals believe multitasking get in the way of our effectiveness as well as limit our sense of achievement and forward progress. It takes a lot of energy out of you when having to start, stop, then regroup and start over in a project or task if there are too many things going on.



It's hard for some people to make time to pick up a good book to enjoy. It's even harder to try to relax, rest and enjoy some down time even when surrounded by friends, colleagues or family. Thoughts of planning for your next day at work and what needs to be done can interrupt the process of getting a good night's rest.

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## PAP Newsletter Fall 2009

# Quality, Convenience & Reliability

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. If specific health or medical advice or assistance is desired, the services of a licensed healthcare professional should be sought. This information in the First Choice Health PAP Newsletter is not meant to replace the advice or expertise of your physician or healthcare provider. If you are experiencing health problems or contemplating lifestyle changes such as diet or exercise, consult your healthcare provider ahead of time to ensure your well being. ■



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## A Guide to Multitasking

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For short-term strategy and planning, multitasking can be useful to handle regular activities particularly when the tasks don't entail consistent accuracy. But for those projects that need more attention and precision, the most efficient, realistic and user-friendly approach is to focus on one thing at a time so that you're able to see the project completed successfully.

### Suggested Multitasking Strategies:

- When your undivided attention is required, delegate routine tasks to others around you.
- Try to take regular breaks and interact with others (walk outside for fresh air, visit with a coworker).
- For maximum effectiveness, go back and forth between periods of multitasking and extended blocks of time for focused activity.
- Minimize unwanted distractions both at home and work.
- Simplify – complete one task at a time when accuracy and detail is needed.
- Be committed to rest, relax and recharge your batteries when away from work.
- Remember that you have your Physician Assistance Program benefit available 24/7 to lend a hand or an ear when you find yourself dealing with time management or any other issues that your life may demand. ■