

Employee Assistance Program Newsletter

Spring 2008

About the Series:

Managing the Stress of Modern Living

You can find all the articles from this series in the Newsletter section of the EAP web site at www.FirstChoiceEAP.com. As a courtesy the articles and the newsletter edition are listed below:

- **Fall 2006:**
Change Your Stress, Change Your Life
- **Spring 2006:**
Work/Life Resources You Can Count On
- **Winter 2005:**
The EAP: A Very Good Call
- **Fall 2005:**
Bumper Sticker Wisdom
- **Winter 2004:**
The Gifts That Keep On Giving
- **Fall 2004:**
Communicating Effectively: Assertiveness
- **Winter 2003:**
Year Round Stress Reduction Strategies
- **Fall 2003:**
The Healthy Advantages of Reaching Goals



When Too Much Isn't Enough

A Series: Managing the Stress of Modern Living

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 Director of EAP Services



The quest to “keep up with the Joneses” can be a major source of stress in our lives and times. Often without realizing it, people in a consumption-minded world find themselves compulsively striving for more – more stuff, more status, more mobility, more wealth, more in general and “the more the better.”

The American Academy of Family Physicians reported in a recent year that as many as two-thirds of all patient visits were related to underlying psychological or emotional stress (rather than a primary medical condition).

Experts define the phenomenon of too much not being enough as Affluenza, a contagious social virus that stems from the relentless pursuit of more. It's no coincidence that personal debt is increasing and that waistlines are expanding even as time spent with loved ones or in restful sleep is on the decrease.

Given the fast pace of our lives and what for many people is a hard-to-resist, gravity-like attraction to what's exciting and new, it becomes all too easy to forget that happiness is as much about wanting what you already have as it is about always having what you want.

The good news is that many people and families are beginning to rediscover that

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When Too Much Isn't Enough

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(when it comes to tools for managing stress and enhancing quality of life) less really can be more.

Learn more about Affluenza on the Public Broadcasting Service website at <http://www.pbs.org/kcts/affluenza>

Psychologist Abraham Maslow emphasized in his hierarchy of human needs, the indisputable importance of getting our basic needs met and living toward meaningful goals. Beyond our basic needs, aspirations and fulfillments, however, a lifestyle of compulsive striving for more and faster and bigger and better can eventually lead to dissatisfaction and boredom (undermining emotional, spiritual, physical, family and financial health and well being).

First Choice Health EAP reminds you that simplifying your life can be a positive way to enhance quality of life and boost your resilience to the corrosive effects of stress. With more than 3000 counseling professionals and potent Work Life resources and services, the EAP can help you identify and achieve goals for positive change, personal growth, problem solving and effective living.

You can contact Team EAP at First Choice Health twenty-four hours a day at (800) 777-4114. ■

Relationships That Work

Good relationships with a spouse or partner, family members, friends, or coworkers are a source of comfort and satisfaction. These connections also provide the support needed to deal with life's opportunities and challenges. Even the best relationships can benefit from a tune-up or ongoing maintenance to keep things running smoothly.



The EAP can help by providing you information, expertise and tools to keep your relationships on track. In the Work Life Resources section at www.FirstChoiceEap.com you'll find articles such as *10 Little Things That Can Make a Big Difference in Your Marriage*, *Reviving Your Relationship*, and *Keeping Conflicts Constructive*. You can even take the online Relationship Satisfaction assessment or do assessment your skills in the area of Conflict Management. Team EAP puts tools at your fingertips to help you foster great relationships.

Building strong relationships is a simple and powerful way to enhance your personal well-being and effectiveness. If you have questions, a counselor is always available for consultation, ideas and support. Contact us at (800) 777-4114. ■



Healthy Goals for Healthy Kids

Preschoolers

- I will clean up my toys.
- I will brush my teeth twice a day.
- I will wash my hands after going to the bathroom and before eating.
- I won't tease animals—even friendly ones. I will avoid being bitten by keeping my fingers and face away from their mouths.

Kids, 5- to 12-years-old

- I will drink milk and water, and limit soda and fruit drinks.
- I will apply sunscreen before I go outdoors. I will try to stay in the shade whenever possible and wear a hat and sunglasses, especially when I'm playing sports.
- I will try to find a sport (like basketball or soccer) or an activity (like playing tag, jumping rope, dancing or riding my bike) that I like and do it at least three times a week!
- I will always wear a helmet when bicycling.
- I will wear my seat belt every time I get in a car. I'll sit in the back seat and use a booster seat until I am tall enough to use a lap/shoulder seat belt.
- I'll be nice to other kids. I'll be friendly to kids who need friends—like someone who is shy, or is new to my school.
- I'll never give out personal information such as my name, home address, school name or telephone number on the Internet. Also, I'll never send a picture of myself to someone I chat with on the computer without my parent's permission.

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Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying (sometimes referred to as online social cruelty or electronic bullying) can involve sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images. It can also take the form of posting sensitive, private information about another person or pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.

Socially, late childhood and early adolescence are often already awkward and difficult periods of life. Traditional bullying increases the complication for young people (to learn more about bullying in schools and the effects on kids, see the article in the **Winter 2004 EAP Newsletter**).

The online world magnifies the challenges as children and adolescents (and sometimes even adults) cyber bully others via:

- e-mails
- instant messaging
- text or digital imaging messages sent on cell phones
- web pages
- web logs (blogs)
- chat rooms or discussion groups

Cyberbullying can occur any time of the day or night. Cyberbullying messages and images can be distributed quickly to a very wide audience. The cyberbully can be anonymous, which makes it difficult - sometimes impossible - to trace them.

First Choice Health EAP offers the following tips:

- Keep your home computer(s) in easily viewable places, such as a family room or kitchen.
- Talk regularly with your child about online activities he or she is involved in.
- Talk specifically about cyberbullying; encourage your child to tell you immediately if he or she is the target of cyberbullying, cyberstalking, or other troublesome online behavior.
- Encourage your child to tell you if he or she is aware of others who may be the victims of such behavior.
- Explain that cyberbullying is harmful and unacceptable behavior. Outline your expectations for responsible online behavior and make it clear that there will be consequences for inappropriate behavior.
- Concerns for your child's safety may sometimes override privacy concerns. Tell your child that you may review his or her online communications if you think there is reason for concern.
- Consider parental control filtering software and/or tracking programs, but don't rely solely on these tools.

If you have questions or would like access to resources immediately, contact the EAP at (800) 777-4114 or online at www.FirstChoiceEap.com ■

Employee Assistance Program



Contact us 24/7 (800) 777-4114

www.FirstChoiceEAP.com



Online Work Life Resources

Our self-serve menu of learning tools, information and state-of-the-art resources on topics and stages from infancy to adolescence to adulthood to senior living is available 24/7 at:

www.FirstChoiceEAP.com

At the Work/Life Resources button enter the following:

Username: firstchoice
Password: health2005

One Union Square
600 University Street Suite 1400
Seattle, WA 98101
www.fchn.com

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Welcome New Groups!

Belshaw Brothers

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound

Big Ideas Direct

Catholic Credit Union

DiMartino Associates

Ecopia Investments

Educational Service District #113

Ener-G Foods Inc

King County Director's Association

Mark Reed Hospital

Mason Fire District No. 4

McGranahan Architects

NEA Alaska

Noble Horse Gallery

Pan Pacific Dentistry

RadiantCare Radiation Oncology

Raven Electric

SDS Realty

Seattle Metropolitan Credit Union

Sherman Optical

Southpark Tire Factory

The Dixon Group

Transformer, LLC

Union Avenue Pediatrics



Financial Tools

Did you overdo it during the holiday season? For many people the holidays lead to weight gain and changes in our day-to-day routine or well being. Now is always a great time to get back on track with healthy eating and a recommitment to healthy living. How is your financial health?

Shopping for gifts, throwing parties and vacation travel can mean overspending or losing sight of financial goals. As a

reminder, the **Fall 2007** EAP Newsletter featured an article on the negative effects of overspending and compulsive shopping (at the EAP site click on Newsletters).

Let us help with information and tools to get your financial house in order. In the **Work Life Resources** section at www.FirstChoiceEap.com you can read one of our featured articles such as *Being an Informed Consumer*, *Financial Check-Up* or *Understanding Your Credit Report*. **You'll even find free software to help with your 2007 taxes!** ■

