

Member Assistance Program Newsletter

Volume 6; Issue 3

“If I have seen farther than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants.”

- Sir Isaac Newton

By Eric Chrismer



Newton made the above statement in an effort to give credit to the team of scientific minds that preceded him. He knew that teamwork is what makes an idea (or a business) thrive, and today, it's what keeps a department working smoothly and effectively. Teams can be fragile organisms, because what makes them great is the same thing that makes them delicate; they're created from diversity, ranging broadly in views and techniques. Teams make incredible thoughts, products, and customer services come to life, but in extreme cases, they can deteriorate to the point of resentment of having to even share a room. In an organization or business setting, what causes such turmoil and emotion between its members is simple *Give & Take*.

Understanding that team members are

going to have different priorities, *Give & Take* is increasingly difficult when more people become a part of the team. Nobody has a problem with giving their two cents, but for your ideas to be accepted by others, they need to meet the criteria of what the team is able to agree upon. The more team players there are, or the longer a team's been together, the fewer ideas that get through the criteria. Anybody that's chosen to be part of a team will tell you how frustrating it can be, but it's a process that's necessary to make the best product or service available, and the key to success in this area is to do your research, know what you're saying, but also to know yourself and your limitations.

Team members who feel threatened but aren't aware of it become rigid. Their input is restricted or cut off, which

means that their effectiveness is limited, and they're not as much assistance to the team as they might think. The other side of that coin is the person who jumps outside of his/her own box and lands in someone else's, stepping on their toes.

Continued on page 2

What's In Your Newsletter?

Page 1

“If I have seen farther than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants.”

Page 2

Thankful for What We Have | Biannual Newsletters | Ready for Green?

Page 3

MAP Services - What happens after I've made the phone call? | Online Work Life Resources

Page 4

New Groups | We want to hear from you.

...Standing upon the shoulders of giants.”

Continued from page 1

This person is unaware of their own limits, which threatens others and forces *them* to become rigid. Both types are restricting themselves or those around them because they just don't realize what they're doing. We've all been one of these people at some point, the important thing to realize is whether you're still that person, and how to adjust. It's been said, *none of us are as smart as all of us*, so find your limitations, or lack thereof, and do your part to help piece the team back together.

As you will frequently hear from the MAP, good communication is the key to everything, and a great way to get started in recreating a team. You need to **communicate positively and constructively**, you need to **make your points quickly and thoroughly**, you must **talk, listen, question**, and above all **be respectful and helpful** in all areas. To know what you're up against, there are symptoms that a person is communicating poorly, and signs that you'll want to be wary of which promote a team's demise. To improve the team, these issues should be confronted, and you will have the opportunity to practice doing so using the above criteria. What you'll want to watch for is the acceptance of opinions as facts, rushing to accomplish the task at hand, an absence of trust among team members, a fear of conflict, a lack of commitment or accountability, and inattention to the outcome of your work, which is usually a key that someone is putting their own ego or career development ahead of the team. ■

Thankful for What We Have

For a lot of people, we've just passed through the time of year when we look inside ourselves, remembering where we came from, and which people and events changed our lives and contributed to how we turned out. In the wake of the holiday season, First Choice Health's MAP asks people to consider that there's a lot to celebrate in life, plenty to be thankful for, and numerous friends and family members that we need to credit for helping us become the people that we are today. There's no reason to stop counting our blessings simply because the holidays are in our past once again, so take a few moments throughout the year and inventory what it is that you're grateful to have in your life.

Remember your family, without whom you would not be who you are today. Your friends, who inevitably became your family. The things in life that came to you easily and the things that you struggled to achieve; important lessons were learned from both. Consider that you are one of the fortunate; employed in this struggling economy, which affords you the things in life that many are struggling to earn or keep, such as a home, a vehicle, an education, or food on the table. And what about the thing that most people take for granted in this country? What about your freedom? Regardless of your political convictions, take a moment to recognize the men and women in the armed forces, who have followed difficult orders and given everything of themselves, and be thankful for the day when they can safely return home. ■

Member Assistance Program



Balance in Life.

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 page enter the following:

Username: firstchoice
Password: health2005

MAP Services – What happens after I've made the call?

Approximately 1 in 5 Americans will seek counseling sometime in their life but only a fraction of those people will ever attend their sessions. It takes a lot to make the call to the MAP in the first place, and in reality we understand that it takes even more to attend the sessions. So in an effort to dismiss your concerns of what's to be expected, we'd like to offer some insight on how your counseling experience should go.

Once you've made the call to First Choice Health's MAP, we'll do all the legwork in finding the right provider (counselor) for your issue. You'll need to answer a series of simple questions regarding your needs, preferences, and schedule flexibility. Then, you simply have to try and relax while you wait for a call from the provider's office to schedule your first appointment. (More information is available on making the call to your MAP services and can be found online at www.fchn.com/MAP/Newsletter.aspx in the Fall 2004, and Summer 2007 Newsletters).



A provider that is chosen because of their ability to meet your final criteria will then contact you within 24 business hours to schedule an appointment for your first session. All that's left is to attend the appointment, which really isn't any different than going to see a new doctor. Providers all work a little differently, but generally they ask that you arrive a little early for your first session to fill out some confidential paperwork. A few will have office staff who can walk you through it, where an

independent provider may simply have a clipboard waiting for you on a desk, with directions on what needs to be completed before your appointment begins. There will be time for questions at the beginning of your appointment so there's no need to feel pressure if you're not quite done.

When the time arrives, your provider will invite you into their office to begin, and will get down to business fairly quickly. They will introduce themselves, go over the paperwork that you've just completed, describe their philosophy as it pertains to your issues, and begin to ask questions about what's happening in your life that precipitated your calling First Choice Health's MAP. Before you know it, your first session will come to a conclusion and your provider will either attempt to set up a second appointment if they feel it's necessary, or will ask that you consider another appointment and request that you call at another time to schedule. We don't expect that most issues will be resolved in one session, but we hope that you walk out of the office relieved and with the belief that your first step has been a good one.

If you're interested in setting up an appointment, or if you simply have more detailed questions regarding the MAP process, please feel free to contact us at our toll-free number, (888) 298-2559. ■

Ready for Green?

Along with saving the planet, here are some ideas that the average person can do to save some money too. Simply by using a ceiling fan rather than an air conditioner, using a clothes line instead of a clothes dryer, fluorescent bulbs vs. regular, and hibernating your computer rather than leaving it running all day, a family can save \$820 per year, just for starters. Other suggestions include minor maintenance plans that easily make a difference, such as wrapping your hot water heater to save up to three quarters of its heating costs. Taking showers instead of baths, changing your furnace filters at least quarterly, putting a lid on things you cook stovetop, defrosting your refrigerator regularly, and keeping it three-quarters full if possible. Turn off lights when leaving a room, upgrade to a LCD computer monitor, and unplug your electronics when not in use (a power strip can even simplify this for you). ■

Biannual Newsletters

The First Choice MAP Newsletter will be produced biannually in 2009, with the first issue being printed in the Spring quarter and the second in the Fall. Our Newsletter is and always has been produced by our own staff, and after a great deal of discussion we felt the biannually production will assist us in maintaining the superior quality of articles and resources. Previously written newsletters will be available online, and of course, there will be no change in the world-class service that you've come to expect from your MAP. ■

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

MAP Newsletter Volume 6; Issue 3

Welcome New Groups!

Aiphone	Landover Corporation	Sarangsoft, Corp.
Algas, SDI	LifeMed Alaska	The Natural Cuisine Coach
Atlantic Street Center	Makoto Sugiuchi, DDS	Transpo Group
Comprehensive Mental Health	Marine Float	Treasure Valley Paramedics
Gotime Corporation	Mechatronics	Walla Walla Public Schools
Grange Insurance	Mobius Industries	Wood Windows
Imaginetics	Reign Capital Management	
Kathy Case, Inc.	South King Fire & Rescue	

We would like to hear from you.

If you have questions about procedural matters within the MAP, or if you have comments on previous articles or suggestions that you believe may be applicable for First Choice Health's MAP to research, we would love to hear your remarks. Please, send your email to feedback@FirstChoiceEAP.com, and write "Newsletter feedback" in the subject line. We may be able to answer your questions in an upcoming newsletter, or write an article based upon your requests

and suggestions. The first question we've chosen is a fun way to start this segment. You asked, "Do you ever receive off-the-wall requests?"

Recently, a late call came in on our customer service line, requesting immediate assistance. Not expecting to answer a question about clothing and apparel, the CSR answered the phone call. The caller, a young man who would shortly be attending his first play with a new girlfriend, was not accustomed to tying a tie, and was dumbfounded by the sheer thought of it. Having nowhere else to turn, he called the MAP in hopes of a simple solution to his problem. Our

CSR patiently explained the step-by-step process for tying a half-Winsor knot, without the aid of a mirror or a tie. Just try it yourself, if you're thinking it might be simple to explain how long each end is supposed to be when starting, or how to wrap the "big" end of a tie around the little end. It took four attempts to get the directions and the tie just right, but eventually the young man on the other end of the phone was pleased with the results. The rest of us just listened across cubicle walls, with admiration.

We receive many "different" requests for service at the MAP, but this one was perhaps one of the most unusual. ■