

# Member Assistance Program Newsletter

Spring 2009

## “The Time To Relax Is When You Don’t Have Time For It”

By: Eric Chrismer

-Sydney J. Harris



**The signs of being overstressed tend to be more mental than physical. If you’re feeling chronically overwhelmed ask yourself if these seem familiar:**

- Frustration and powerlessness
- Hopelessness
- Being drained of emotional energy
- Detachment, withdrawal, isolation
- Feeling trapped
- Irritability
- Sadness
- Cynicism

Does it seem to anyone else that stress and everyday life seem to have recently redoubled their efforts toward inconveniencing the rest of us? Well, it might be that things aren’t as bad as they seem, and in fact, it might be that you’re contributing to your own stress without even knowing it. Everyone knows that it’s not healthy to steer clear of all adversity, and not all stressors can be avoided, but you may be surprised by the amount of stressful situations which can be eliminated in everyone’s life, by adhering to two simple rules: Change the stress, or change how you react to it.

More specifically, you have to be able to change the scenario by changing the stressor or by avoiding it as much as possible. You need to take inventory of your stressors and be able to say NO to items that lie outside of your limitations of comfort, be it added responsibilities, being around difficult people, or putting yourself in places or situations which make you uncomfortable. If you don’t like being around your brother-in-law, purchasing a house next door to him would do little to decrease your stress and should be avoided. Similarly, if

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# The Time To Relax Is When You Don't Have Time For It

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you're a person that doesn't like to be in a crowd, you're probably going to appreciate watching a ballgame on TV much more than trying to get to your seat at the ballpark. Here, not only have you avoided the stressor but you've also changed the situation without changing the desired outcome.

Along with being able to change the stressors and your reactions to them, you need to be able to change your reactions to the stressors through acceptance and adaptation. A few ways to do this is to express your feelings—talk to your spouse about your concerns with living next to his/her brother. Compromise with those who stand in your way—if you're willing to give a little, others will be more willing to do so as well. Manage your time more effectively—don't schedule all of your meetings on the day your big project's due, and find a dance class that is on a different day than youth hockey practice. Remember to have a sense of humor—being able to laugh in the face of adversity is a rare and wonderful talent which also helps a person to think more clearly, plus you'll probably be able to whittle the crisis down if you can take a measurement of how big it really is. Exercise not only helps the body to run more efficiently, but also helps to clear the mind for better thinking. Learn from your past mistakes—be sure to focus on the present, don't dwell, and always remember to breathe. Finally, don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. You can get help by either getting someone to make the load a little easier at work, or at home, or by calling your Member Assistance Program. Talking is an incredible way to ease stress, and you can do that by calling us at (888) 298-2559 to set up an appointment, or talking to a counselor over the phone, 24/7. The first step toward easing your stress begins with you. ■

## Twenty Steps To Simplify Your Life

1. Do one thing at a time.
2. Don't rely on your memory. Write it down.
3. Be prepared to wait. Take a book with you to appointments.
4. Stop procrastinating.
5. Plan ahead.
6. Don't accept things that don't work properly.
7. Allow extra time to get to work/appointments.
8. Set up contingency plans.
9. Wake up fifteen minutes earlier. More time=Less Stress.
10. Stand up and stretch if you sit for long periods.
11. Start a journal.
12. Take a hot bath.
13. Make time for yourself.
14. Do stressful things early in the day.
15. Learn to delegate responsibility.
16. Don't forget to take a lunch break.
17. Do something for somebody else.
18. Sleep.
19. Breathe.
20. Talk it out.

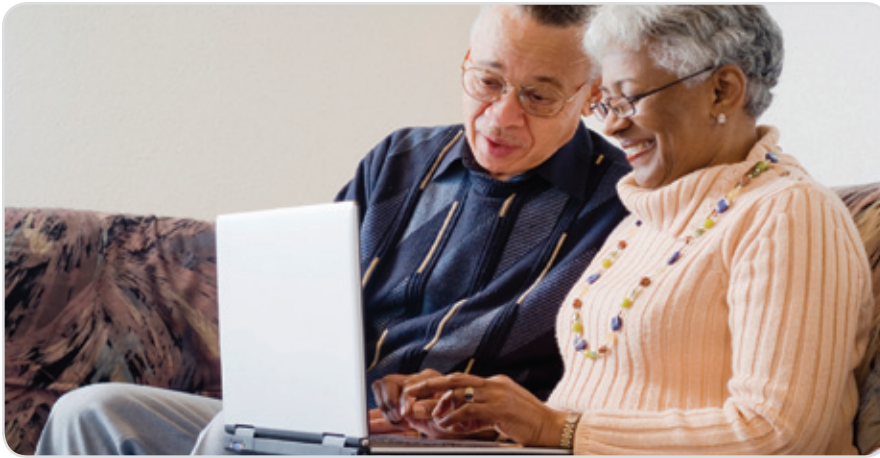
## Convenience In A Stressful Time

Since the early beginnings of the First Choice Health MAP an Online Conferencing Tool has been available for the convenience of the employees we serve. As time's moved forward, technology has changed rapidly and numerous improvements have been made on this front. We're now proud to announce that our new state of the art Online Conferencing Tool is active and even more well-suited to assist you when needed.



Now, instead of having to find time to both travel to and attend a counseling appointment, you're able to consult with a licensed clinician from the comfort of your office, from your PC or laptop, or even while you're away on vacation. The technology allows you to retain your confidentiality, just as with any other process of the MAP, but allows you to focus on the situation at hand rather than trying to schedule around your life, or even worse, deciding that you just don't have time to help yourself.

To learn more about this process, simply go to [www.FirstChoiceEAP.com](http://www.FirstChoiceEAP.com), click on the Online Conference button then click again to Schedule an Appointment. Take some time to browse other aspects of the website while you're there, you just might find some assistance that you didn't even know you needed. ■



## 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](mailto: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. This issue's question: Why Does My Employer Offer this benefit?



The purpose of this benefit is to be a resource to both the employees and employers of organizations that have contracted with First Choice Health's MAP. The resource is meant to enhance the on-the-job success and wellbeing of every employee. It stands to reason that

recruiting, hiring, and training new employees would be a major undertaking and an equally large expense for an organization. It's also reasonable to believe that every employer wants to do what they can to fill their empty positions and do that with happy and healthy employees alleviating the need to fill them again. Healthy Employees equals Healthy Organizations. Your employer knows that this tends to keep the organization running more efficiently, both financially and productively. In addition, medical research has shown that identifying and responding effectively to conditions and concerns, like depression, will greatly improve an employee's overall quality of life as well as contentment at work and at home. So it's important to recognize that your employer has taken the opportunity to offer professional, convenient and confidential services for all of its employees, and has been able to do that at absolutely no charge to you. Give us a call to learn more about the wealth of benefits that are available to you through First Choice Health's MAP. Our toll-free number is (888) 298-2559.

If you're interested in learning more about how well you deal with the cutting effects of stress, anxiety, and depression, be sure to visit the Screening Tools section of our website, at [www.FirstChoiceEAP.com](http://www.FirstChoiceEAP.com). ■

### Member Assistance Program



## Balance in Life.

[www.FirstChoiceEAP.com](http://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.FirstChoiceMAP.com](http://www.FirstChoiceMAP.com)

At the Work Life Resources page enter the following:

**Username:** firstchoice  
**Password:** health2005

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

## MAP Newsletter Spring 2009

### Welcome New Groups!

Airbiquity

Bainbridge Island Metro

Caring Places Management

Central Whidbey Island Fire & Rescue

Clarisonic

Colville Indian Housing Authority

Dwyer Pemberton & Coulson

Evergreen Fire & Security/Avalon Contracting

Homestreet Bank

JAMCO America

Kennewick Public Hospital District

Little Creek Casino

Magic Hat Brewery

Mantis Technology

Odessa Memorial Healthcare

Pebble Partnership

Precision Machine Works

Tacoma Public Library - City of Tacoma

Tri-Cities Chaplaincy

### What People Are Saying:

“I believe the MAP to be instrumental in my road to dealing with my life @ home & work. I have recommended them and feel they provide a service that is invaluable.”

“I made my call to MAP when I was seemingly at the end of my rope. The voice on the other end of the phone was calm and upbeat—I felt so good that I called. I was matched up with a perfect counselor, and I am so happy the MAP was there for me.”

“I called and an appointment was made the same week. My counselor is wonderful. Thank you so much for the help and caring.”

“The process was personal and painless, and my counselor was caring and effective.”

“It’s comforting to know help is available.”

“I got excellent service from E.A.P. (follow up calls also.) The person I spoke to was very courteous. I would definitely use MAP again.” ■

