

# Mental Health Matters

Counseling and  
Psychological  
Services (CAPS)

Spring 2008

## Review Our *People Skills*: Getting along even better with others in the workplace

*People Skills* can be thought of as six specific skills. Let's take a brief look at each one.

1. *Build other's self-esteem* – remember the basics:
  - Making eye contact
  - Addressing by their names
  - Ask for opinions, and/or feedback
  - Compliment their work
  - Express appreciation
  - Hand-written notes for a job well done
  - Acknowledge milestones – promotion, anniversary etc.
  - Express concerns about difficult life transitions – illness, deaths, accidents etc.
  - Introduce family members to acquaintances when meeting in public
  - Take responsibilities for own choices and actions, and expect others to do the same
2. Show empathy – recognizing emotions in others and expressing them. Empathy is the capacity to put oneself in another person's shoes and put forth the effort to understand their view and feeling about situations. It facilitates a sense of connection and validation.
3. Encourage cooperation – emphasize job functions Vs. job titles
  - Equal treatment of team members
  - Direct and open communication
  - Welcome ideas and participation
  - Follow up on ideas, requests, comments, even if they can not be honored
  - Check for understanding of an announcement or messages
  - Acknowledge cooperative behavior
4. Assertive communication – assertive behavior enables:
  - Personal rights without denying the rights of others
  - Open and honest exchange of thoughts and feelings
  - Constructive work environment
5. Ask productive questions and demonstrate effective listening skills
  - Productive questions often begin with 'what, when, where, how' aspects of shared responsibilities and/or projects
  - Listen with the goal to acknowledge, and understand
6. Respond productively to emotional statements
  - Use active listening skills by restating an understanding of what is heard to check for accuracy
  - Include two components of active listening – naming the feeling being conveyed, and stating the reason for the feeling

The workplace is a system of relationships. Each of us can create and maintain a positive work environment by practicing our people skills.

In this issue:

## Review for the New Year

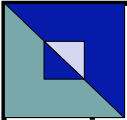
Anger: Not a four letter word

Although close relationships can aid health, accumulating evidence indicates that persistent conflict deals a blow to the body – and especially the heart. People who endure persistent relationship problems are more at risk than those reeling from an isolated blowup. Strategies to minimize feuds can help resolve conflicts with various individuals: family members, coworkers, neighbors, and others.

Conflicts in relationship can be toxic in part because of the effects of chronic stress. In addition to damaging the heart, ongoing stress can deplete the immune system – creating opportunities for colds and other maladies – and lead to depression and risky coping behaviors like excessive drinking (Sheldon Cohen, Psychologist. Carnegie Mellon University).

" ... Be the change you want to see in the world."

Mahatma Gandhi



## Review Our Work/Life Balance

### At Work

**Set manageable goals each day.** Being able to meet priorities helps us feel a sense of accomplishment and control. The latest research shows that the more control we have over our work, the less stressed we get.

**Be efficient with your time at work.** When we procrastinate, the task often grows in our minds until it seems insurmountable. When facing a big project, start by dividing it into smaller tasks. Complete the first one before moving on to the next. Give yourself small rewards upon each completion, whether it's a five minute break or a walk to the coffee shop.

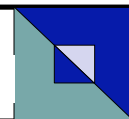
**Ask for flexibility.** Flex time and telecommuting are quickly becoming established as necessities in today's business world, and many companies are drafting work/life policies. Research shows that employees who work flexible schedules are more productive and loyal to their employers.

**Take five.** Taking a break at work isn't only acceptable, it's often encouraged by many employers. Small breaks at work—or on any project—will help clear your head, and improve your ability to deal with stress and make good decisions when you jump back into the grind.

**Tune in.** Listen to your favorite music at work to foster concentration, reduce stress and anxiety, and stimulate creativity. Studies dating back more than 30 years show the benefits of music in everyday life, including lowered blood pressure. Be sure to wear headphones on the job, and then pump up the volume—and your productivity.

**Communicate effectively.** Be honest with colleagues or your boss when you feel you're in a bind. Chances are, you're not alone. But don't just complain—suggest practical alternatives. Looking at a situation from someone else's viewpoint can also reduce your stress. In a tense situation, either rethink your strategy or stand your ground, calmly and rationally. Make allowances for other opinions, and compromise. Retreat before you lose control, and allow time for all involved to cool off. You'll be better equipped to handle the problem constructively later.

**Give yourself a break.** No one's perfect! Allow yourself to be human and just do the best you can.



## Review Our Work/Life Balance (cont')

### At Home

**Turn off your PDA.** The same technology that makes it so easy for us to do our jobs flexibly can also burn us out if we use them 24/7. By all means, make yourself available—especially if you've earned the right to "flex" your hours—but recognize the need for personal time, too.

**Divide and conquer.** Make sure responsibilities at home are evenly distributed and clearly outlined—you'll avoid confusion and problems later.

**Don't over commit.** Do you feel stressed when you just glance at your calendar? If you're overscheduled with activities, learn to say, "No." Shed the superman/superwoman urge!

**Get support.** Chatting with friends and family can be important to your success at home—or at work—and can even improve your health. People with stronger support systems have more aggressive immune responses to illnesses than those who lack such support.

**Take advantage of IUPUI Work/Life Balance.** The program offers many valuable information and resources, which can save you precious time.

Contact: Maggie Stimming

Work/Life Balance

IUPUI Human Resources Administration  
620 Union Drive, Room 340  
Indianapolis, IN 46202

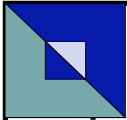
PH - 317-274-5466 – Fax - 317-274-5481

**Stay active.** Aside from its well-known physical benefits, regular exercise reduces stress, depression and anxiety, and enables people to better cope with adversity, according to researchers. It'll also boost your immune system and keep you out of the doctor's office. Make time in your schedule for the gym or to take a walk during lunch—and have some fun!

**Treat your body right.** Being in good shape physically increases your tolerance to stress and reduces sick days. Eat right, exercise and get adequate rest. Don't rely on drugs, alcohol or cigarettes to cope with stress; they'll only lead to more problems.

**Get help if you need it.** Don't let stress stand in the way of your health and happiness. If you are persistently overwhelmed, it may be time to seek help from a mental health professional. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness—taking care of yourself is a sign of strength.

(Adapted from *Mental Health America*, 2007)



## Resource from the Work/Life Balance

### Were You Raised in an Alcoholic/Dysfunctional Household?

According to the Adult Children of Alcoholics World Service Organization, Inc., many adults who were raised/influenced by caregivers who were alcoholics or in other ways dysfunctional share some similar characteristics. Adjusting and learning to live with an alcoholic, adult children of alcoholics (ACOAs) may feel isolated and overly responsible; be uneasy with people, especially authority figures; and/or perceive personal criticism as a threat. To protect themselves, ACOAs may become people pleasers, or preferring to be concerned about others rather than themselves, even though they may risk losing their own identities in the process.

**The campus Al-Anon group** is for ANYONE affected by an alcoholic; whether they are the spouse of, child of, parent of, or friend of the alcoholic. Al-Anon serves as a shared community for those affected by an alcoholic. All participants are expected to maintain high standards of confidentiality, and the group will be led by an Al-Anon member. No one from HRA Work/Life or HRA, in general, will be present. Contact Maggie Stimming at 274-5466 or [mstimmin@iupui.edu](mailto:mstimmin@iupui.edu) for further information, if needed.

**The group meets each Wednesday from 12:05 p.m. until 12:55 p.m. in the Medical Science Building (635 Barnhill Drive), Room 312A (3<sup>rd</sup> floor).**

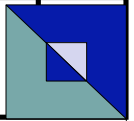
There are no dues. Staff, faculty and students are all welcome to come and may bring their lunches.

**Here are the detailed directions for getting to the room:**

*From west doors* - Enter the building and go straight ahead to the elevators. Take the elevator to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Exit the elevator and go right. Take the hallway until it comes to a "T" and go right at the "T". The classroom is down the hall on the left side

*All growth depends upon activity. There is no development physically or intellectually without effort, and effort means work.*

*Calvin Coolidge (1872 - 1933)*



Like any plant, growth of the Chinese bamboo tree requires nurturing - water, fertile soil, sunshine. In its first year, we see no visible signs of activity. Again, in the second year, there is no visible growth above the soil. The third, the fourth, still nothing. Our patience is tested and we begin to wonder if our efforts will ever be rewarded.

And finally in the fifth year - behold a miracle! We experience growth - and what growth it is - 80 feet in just six weeks!

Chinese bamboo could be an analogy to our own experience with personal growth and change. Never easy, slow to show any progress, frustrating and unrewarding at times, but worth it, if we can be patient and persistent.

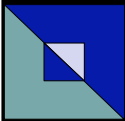
(Institute for Health and Human Potential)

## **CAPS brochures are now online!!**

<http://www.iupui.edu/~sldweb/caps/brochures.html>

### **Topics include:**

- [ADHD](#) (PDF)
- [Alcohol](#) (PDF)
- [Anger Management](#) (PDF)
- [CAPS](#) (PDF)
- [Counseling Services at IUPUI](#) (PDF)
- [Depression](#) (PDF)
- [Eating Disorders](#) (PDF)
- [First Generation College Students](#) (PDF)
- [Help for Relationship Abuse](#) (PDF)
- [Learning Disorders](#) (PDF)
- [Marijuana](#) (PDF)
- [Self-Esteem](#) (PDF)
- [Stress](#) (PDF)
- [Tips for Terrific Test Taking](#) (PDF)
- [Understanding Alcohol Poisoning](#) (PDF)



**CAPS Upcoming Events:**

**Eating Disorders Awareness**

Tuesday, February 5: 11am – 2pm

\*Watch Jagnews for specific location\*

**Anxiety Screening**

Thursday, April 10: 10am – 4pm

Campus Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

**Counseling and  
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**Web:** <http://life.iupui.edu/caps/>

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Student Life*

*Empowering student learning, inclusion and  
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