

Technology: Time Saver or Stress Inducer ?

By: Stacie Chapman, LCPC

She checks her Blackberry one last time before hopping on the train to commute home. He is frantically talking on one phone while reading his emails on another. The family sits in the living room after dinner yet everyone is quietly lost in their own technology heaven for the night. Sound familiar? These three descriptions paint an all too familiar picture of the increased drive to stay connected 24/7.



So is our increased dependence on technology helping or hurting? It really depends on who you talk to. Some researchers say that the brains of Internet users become better at finding information. People who play video games on a regular basis have sharper visual skills. Technology has freed people from having to be in the office and allows us to work wherever and whenever we want. So where's the downside in all of that? For starters, there is an increased pressure on employees to check their email even when they aren't at work. 49% of people surveyed for the Pew Internet and American Life Project reported that they find it harder to disconnect from work when they are at home (on the weekends and even on vacation). 49% of respondents also expressed feeling more stress on the job due to being so easily reached by bosses and co-workers.

How do we disconnect when we've already set a precedent for being so available? Try setting aside some time to be "technology free." Whether it is an hour every night or a whole day on the weekends, think about having a dedicated time in your schedule when you aren't going to check email, answer phone calls or play online. If your co-workers know that you are available outside of work, set a limit with them and let them know your plan to be offline. If you've been missing activities with friends and family, this might be a great opportunity to add some time back in to your schedule.

If you're having trouble disconnecting from your gadgets, your Employee Assistance Program is here to help. To schedule, a free confidential appointment, please call 703-692-8917

For more information about the study mentioned in this article, please go to <http://pewinternet.org/>

What is the EAP?

The Employee Assistance Program's (EAP) mission is to ensure the well-being of employees by assisting them in resolving issues that may be adversely impacting work or home. The EAP provides one-on-one problem assessment, short-term counseling, referrals to community resources, and crisis intervention.

In addition to working with you on an individual basis, we conduct a variety of educational workshops and classes. We are frequently asked to speak at employee orientation sessions and offer monthly supervisor training classes.

Visit the EAP website:

<http://dilorenzo.narmc.amedd.army.mil/Pages/eappers.aspx>

(Click on the EAP/PERS tab on the left)

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Getting Organized - A Stress Management Tool

By: Jennifer Shotlander, LCSW

Disorganization can create feelings of chaos, loss of control, frustration, and stress. Disorganization also leads to both physical and mental clutter, which drains us of time (such as when we are searching for lost items) and of money (such as when we have to replace lost items or pay fines on misplaced or mishandled bills). To successfully get organized, we must make internal mental changes as well as develop good habits and routines. Organization takes time and effort, but can result in an easier and happier life.



Organization starts with an evaluation of our priorities and goals. What do you need to do? What do you want to do? What are your top 3 priorities? At the end of 2012, what do you want to look back on and feel good about accomplishing? Lastly, let your values and goals guide your choices in determining how you spend our time.

A significant source of stress stems from feeling overwhelmed. Getting organized is a good way to regain a feeling of control and reduce stress. However, organization can only take us so far. We must also set limits and maintain a positive attitude. Below are tips for creating a realistic and positive mindset:

- Review what you have accomplished at the end of the day (rather than what you have not accomplished). This is cathartic and will help you sleep better.
- Be realistic about what you can accomplish in a day.
- Do not beat yourself up when you do not achieve your goals. Instead, start writing tomorrow's to-do-list for a fresh start the next day.
- Develop an affirmation to remind yourself of your ideal attitude, such as "I am happy and satisfied with what I have already accomplished today." Repeat to yourself several times a day.

Finally, we need to develop productive habits and routines that create an organized lifestyle. To start getting organized, consider implementing one of the below strategies for 2-4 weeks. If you are not seeing improvement after a few weeks, then try a different one.

- **Organize your time**
 - Plan each day. Write a daily to-do list, putting the most important tasks at the top. Maintain a calendar of future tasks to minimize conflicts and last-minute rushes.
 - Prioritize to spend your time on the most important tasks. Time-consuming but relatively unimportant tasks can consume a lot of your day.
 - Be ready to say no to non-essential tasks.
 - Delegate whenever possible.
 - Break large tasks into smaller, more manageable tasks.
 - Take breaks as needed.
 - Limit distractions.

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Upcoming Workshops - PERS

January 2012

<p>18 Tame Your Temper 9:00 - 11:00 am PLC2 Conference Rm. B9</p>	<p>19 Enhancing Communication 9:30 - 11:30 am Upton Conference Rm. (#219) DTHC, Pentagon</p>	<p>31 Is it Depression or Just the Blues? 12:00 - 1:00 pm Upton Conference Rm. (#219) DTHC, Pentagon</p>
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February 2012

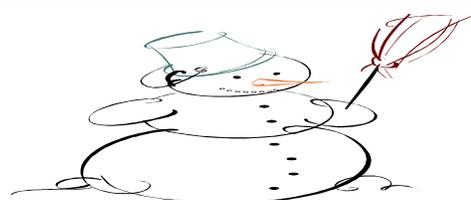
<p>2 Supervisory Training (for Supervisors and Managers of civilian Personnel) 9:30 - 11:30 am Upton Conference Rm. (#219) DTHC, Pentagon</p>	<p>7 Stop Worrying: An Overview of Anxiety and Excessive Worry 12:00 - 1:00 pm Upton Conference Rm. (#219) DTHC, Pentagon</p>	<p>9 Emotional Intelligence 9:30 - 11:30 am Upton Conference Rm. (#219) DTHC, Pentagon</p>
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<p>16 Balancing Work & Family 9:30 - 11:30 am Upton Conference Rm. (#219) DTHC, Pentagon</p>	<p>21 Depression in Women 12:00 - 1:00 pm Upton Conference Rm. (#219) DTHC, Pentagon</p>	<p>22 Childhood Anxiety & Depression 12:00 - 1:00 pm Upton Conference Rm. (#219) DTHC, Pentagon</p>
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	<p>29 Depression in Men 12:00 - 1:00 pm Upton Conference Rm. (#219) DTHC, Pentagon</p>	
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March 2012

<p>1 Supervisory Training (for Supervisors and Managers of civilian Personnel) 9:30 - 11:30 am Upton Conference Rm. (#219) DTHC, Pentagon</p>	<p>6 Depression in the Elderly 12:00 - 1:00 pm Upton Conference Rm. (#219) DTHC, Pentagon</p>	<p>15 Coping with Change 9:30 - 11:30 am Upton Conference Rm. (#219) DTHC, Pentagon</p>
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	<p>16 The Mind-Body Connection: Your Toolbox for Anxiety Management 12:00 - 1:00 pm Upton Conference Rm. (#219) DTHC, Pentagon</p>	
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For additional information or to register, call 703-692-8917 or email PERS@amedd.army.mil

Avoiding Favoritism in Family Life

By: Nicole Daniels, LCMFT

Did you wonder if your parents favored another sibling? Do you think that your sibling knew they were the favorite and joyfully reaped the benefits? Whether it's the favored employee, our favorite niece or nephew, or even when our own children pick a favorite parent, these matters tend to make us feel un easy.

Favoritism may not be socially acceptable, but it is undeniable in some families. The "unfavored" child's feelings of not being loved usually follow him or her into adulthood and can sometimes appear as anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. This could, in some cases, explain why we may have challenges when working with or supervising certain co-workers and why family gatherings can be so challenging. However, our best option is to focus on avoiding the destructive trap of favoritism and learn how to cope if it rears its ugly head.



How Favoritism Affects Us – There are a number of ways that favoritism can have a negative effect on the favored child. One might think that the favored child will advance further than their siblings but the favored child will suffer too. The favored child may:

- Feel more important than others and need to be the priority in most circumstances.
- Have unhealthy expectations and dreams. He may expect everything to be handed to him and will not learn to work through obstacles that block his goals.
- Not have success in relationships whether personal or professional because they lack empathy and compassion. They will not value the importance of team work and unity.
- Carry the burden of guilt into adulthood regarding the treatment of his siblings.
- Fold under the pressure living-up to a standard of "greatness" from childhood that is not realistic in adulthood. Other adults may think of him or her as an equal and cannot see the imagined "greatness."

How to Avoid Favoritism - Admitting to your children that you have a favorite is probably the worst thing to do to eliminate favoritism. Listed below are some suggestions for avoiding favoritism:

- Accepting that your children may have feelings about favoritism, whether it's happening or not, is the first step on the road to change. Sometimes our children's feelings and reactions can be a good barometer!
- Make sure that you value special traits of each child especially if they are not like your own traits.
- Don't indulge one child unless it is a special occasion like a birthday or award for school performance.
- Don't compare children. They are special in their own right.
- Discipline all of your children fairly. Do not spare one while disciplining the others harshly.

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- **Clearing the clutter**
 - Examine what you have and where you keep it. Throw out, sell or donate what you don't use.
 - Find a place for every item. Things that have no "home" tend to create clutter on counters, tables, and floors.
 - Hold off on container shopping until after you have started to de-clutter and have a better understanding of what you need.
 - One in, one out. "Anytime you get something new, get rid of something like it that is old"
- **Create a filing system**
 - Create a file for important documents such as insurance policies, Social Security cards and the like.
 - Develop a finance file for unpaid bills, bank statements and income tax papers.
 - Store home-maintenance papers (warranties, receipts, manuals) in one place.
- **Create a schedule or routine**
 - Create consistent, regular schedule for who will do which household chores and when they should be accomplished.
 - Set aside certain days and times for paying bills.
- **Write it down**
 - Try keeping ongoing lists of books to read, movies to see, restaurants to try, gifts to buy, errands, etc...
 - Keep an updated address/phone book in one place.
 - Keep a list of your accomplishments each day (this can include listening to a friend who was sad, making a family member laugh, etc...).

References:

<http://women.webmd.com/home-health-and-safety-9/10-ways-to-cut-clutter-in-your-home>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/time-management/WL00048>

http://www.ehow.com/how_3810_organized.html#ixzz1h06tcL1d

<http://stress.about.com/od/stressmanagementtools/a/organized.htm>

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- Watch the words you use when you discipline your children. Do not shame and guilt them. Focus on punishing the behavior not the child's character.
- Parenting does not come with a guide so start by evaluating yourself in the role of parent. Find support or take a parenting class if you find that you are weak in some areas. Be the best parent possible.

Kluger, J. (2011, October 3). Playing Favorites. *TIME*, 178, 44-50.

Libby, E.W. (2011). When Favoritism Becomes Abuse: Favoritism isn't always abusive but when it is... *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-favorite-child/201104/when-favoritism-becomes-abuse> on Oct 26, 2011.

http://www.ehow.com/how_4498944_avoid-showing-favoritism-among-children.html

