July 2014

Summer Issue

Perspectives

Pentagon Employee Referral Service (PERS)
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
Thoth Solutions, Inc.

Summer Daze?

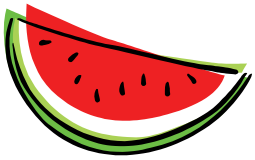
Keep kids minds sharp & ready for school

Andre Peri, PhD

Summer should be a time for fun and relaxation. It is important that kids have a chance to unwind and be carefree after what may have been a grueling school year of academics and extracurricular activities. However stressful the school year may have been, letting the kids veg out for the entire summer can have adverse consequences on their academics upon return to school. In fact, research has consistently found that, on average, children score about one month lower on achievement tests when they returned to school as compared to their scores prior to the start of the summer. This effect is particularly strong for mathematics and spelling, and to a lesser extent, reading (Fairchild, 2012).

Ways to combat summer daze:

- Enroll them in an summer learning program such as the Summer Programs for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) in the Washington DC Metropolitan Area (http://www.dc-first.org/get-involved/summer-stem-programs) Also check out http://www.studenteducationprograms.com/Maryland-Virginia-DC.html
- Enroll them in an organized activity, even if it is a summer sports league or a camp with minimal formal academic components. Studies have found that teens who participate in any organized activity over the summer have better well-being, higher academic scores (math and reading), lower acting out behaviors, and lower Body Mass Index scores the following school year compared to teens left to care for themselves at their home over the summer.
- Purchase academic workbooks (especially math) that are on their grade level, and require your children to complete at least a page once a week to maintain their academic skills.



- Encourage leisure reading among your children, reward them for reading and identify books in topics of interests to them.
- Use summer vacations as opportunities for learning. For example, ask them to create a sample budget for the trip, calculate travel time based on speed and distance, create an itinerary, researching (i.e., Wikipedia) about the historical sites (or even Disneyworld) that you are visiting or ask them to write a report about the trip afterwards (i.e., what was your favorite/less favorite part? What one thing did you learn that you didn't know before…etc.).

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EAP Services Highlights:

- *Assist Federal civilian employees in resolving issues adversely impacting work or home.*
- *Provide one-on-one assessment, short-term counseling, referrals to community resources and crisis intervention.*
- *Conduct a variety of educational workshops and classes (e.g., employee orientation, supervisor training).*
- *Website: http://www.dthc.capmed.mil/EAP/SitePages/Home.aspx*

Balancing Work & Family

Teresa Ross, PsyD

Fun in the sun with the family!

It's summertime! Are you satisfied with how you balance time between work and family? If you answered "no", you are not alone. Everyone must allocate 24 hours a day to the activities of daily living. Your success in balancing your responsibilities with doing things you enjoy can directly affect your quality of life, and how you manage stress. Achieving balance with work and family is not an automatic process, but involves your commitment to a constant process of juggling work and family responsibilities, and managing changes in needs over time. The following steps will support your efforts to gain control over the balancing process and decrease your frustration in your pursuit to balance work and family:

- **Identify family goals.** Although family needs are always changing, decide what is important at this stage in your family's life. Write it down along with practical action steps that will allow you to align your day to day choices with your family goals. Include a date to meet the goals.

- **Commit to your values.** It is often difficult to decide between a family and work activity, but sticking to your values may make tough decisions easier.

- **Organize Your Work.** Work place distractions, procrastination, and poor prioritizing often lead to longer work hours. Improve your organization, delegation, and time-management skills to obtain more time for family life. Learn how to put work down at the end of the day, if there are no urgent deadlines, and let go of workplace worries.

Balancing work and family has payoffs for children, home relationships, and everyone's future happiness. The key to success involves stepping back and occasionally analyzing how things are going, and then deciding if changes are required. Recognizing this can help you keep balance in mind. The results will be enjoying your life more and being in harmony with the things you value most.

Despite these suggestions, improving balance of work and family may be a lot easier said than done, and flexibility will be important as there may be moments when balance is not attainable due to priorities. Do you need further assistance with balancing work and family?

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Mindfulness

Eileen Long-Farias, LPC

"Wherever you go, there you are". This phrase captures the essence of Mindfulness. Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention to the present. According to Jon Kabat-Zinn, mindfulness is "bringing our fullness of attention into anything. You step fully into the moment. There is a sense of completeness, of enoughness. These are the moments of our lives when we feel most at home."

In many ways, incorporating the practice of mindfulness into our lives can be an antidote to the stress inducing, technology driven, frenzied pace at which so many of us live. While practicing mindfulness is simple, it's not always easy to be consistent. It's the consistency with which we practice it that allows it to become a part of our day to day life and state of mind.

> **"Wherever you go, there you are." — Kabat-Zinn**

Simply put, mindfulness is being present without all the competing distractions in our head taken over. We are mindful when we notice a beautiful sunset and stop to fully absorb it. We are practicing it when we turn off our phone and move away from the computer to give someone our full attention through eye to eye contact.

To begin receiving some of the benefits of mindfulness, such as lowering your stress, boosting immune functioning and being happier, start with some simple steps:

- Practice slowing down by attending to the subtleties of an experience in the here and now (e.g., Walk slower noticing your feet meeting the ground with each step).

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Burnout

Stacie Chapman, LCPC

People talk about being "burned out" on a regular basis, but what does that really mean? The term was originated in 1974 by Dr. Herbert J. Freudenberger and was defined as follows:

"To deplete oneself. To exhaust one's physical and mental resources. To wear oneself out by excessively striving to reach some unrealistic expectation imposed by one's self or by the values of society (Burnout, 1980)."

In other words, we push ourselves to the edge of exhaustion and keep going until we have nothing left to give. We come into the office early, stay late and often take work home with us. We miss meals, sleep and sometimes family activities as a result. What's the price we pay for burning the candle at both ends? Here are some of the consequences of letting burnout go untreated for too long:

- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- Spillover into home life
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Heart disease
- High cholesterol
- Type 2 diabetes
- Stroke
- Obesity
- Higher risk of colds/flu

People who scored in the top 20% on the burnout scale were 79% more likely to develop coronary heart disease. Job burnout is a stronger predictor of heart disease then the classic risk factors doctors have been warning us about for years.

So what do we do about it? Here are some tips that might help.

- Use your vacation time.
- Make time to relax.
- Get a mentor and talk with other people about job strategies.
- Start volunteering in your community.
- Learn how to say no!
- Learn to do something just because it is fun! Fun is an essential part of good self-care.
- Join an association related to your job field.
- Make a plan; look at what you can and cannot change
- Talk to a professional. Your EAP is a great place to start.

If you are worried about burnout, the Employee Assistance Program can help. In addition to free individual sessions, The EAP is offering the workshop "Battling Burnout: Stop Burning Your Candle at Both Ends" on Tuesday, July 15, 2014 from 9:30 to 11:00 am in room B5 in the Pentagon Library and Conference Center. Please call 703-692-8917 for more information.

Summer Daze?

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- Finally, at the end of the summer, it is important to help children adjust back to school schedule and routine, including resuming bed time, which can be implemented gradually over a period of two weeks (i.e., 10 PM to 9:30 PM to 9 PM).

For more information about activities for children over the summer, check out: http://dc.about.com/cs/familyactivities/a/camps.htm

If you would like to talk further about this topic, please contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 703-692-8917. Help is available.

Summer is a time for fun, relaxation, and keeping kids minds sharp!

Mindfulness

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- Pause at various points during your day and look around you, noticing all the sights and sounds.
- Focus on the sensation of your feet being in your shoes or your body sitting in a chair.
- If you have to wait in line or at a light, rather than being impatient, focus on slowing down your breathing and being present.
- Practice diaphragmatic breathing. Take a slow breath and inhale like you're sipping through a straw for the count of three. Exhale slowly out through your mouth for the count of six.

If this has sparked your curiosity, please take advantage of the many resources that are out there including Jon Kabat-Zinn's book "Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness". Additionally, the Mark Center EAP will be offering the workshop "Mindfulness for Stress Management" on September 16, 2014. Please refer to our calendar for more information, or call 571-372-5619.

Work Place Bullying: Tips for Employers, Supervisors & Employees

Nicole Daniels, LMFT

What is workplace bullying and who is affected? Workplace bullying refers to repeated, unreasonable actions of individuals (or a group) directed towards an employee (or a group of employees), which is intended to intimidate, degrade, offend, or humiliate and creates a risk to the health and safety of the employee(s). Bullying is persistent unwelcome behavior creating feelings of defenselessness, which undermines an individual's right to dignity at work.

Bullying is different from aggression. Bullying involves repeated attacks against the target and creating an on-going pattern of behavior; whereas aggression may involve a single act. Also being a "tough" or "demanding" supervisor is not an act of bullying as long as the supervisor's primary motivation is to obtain the best performance from his/her employees by setting high expectations without degrading or humiliating them. Many bullying situations often involve employees bullying their peers, rather than a supervisor bullying an employee.

Bullying involves repeated attacks against the target and creating an on-going pattern of behavior; whereas aggression may involve a single act.

How to recognize Workplace Bullying: Bullying can generally be regarded as negative acts directed towards another person and can most readily be seen in terms of:

- Unwarranted or invalid criticism
- Swearing and shouting at the employee
- Exclusion or social isolation from information, opportunities, outings, etc.
- Threatening the individual's work status
- Threatening personal standing (e.g., ageist or sexist comments)
- Undermining the individual by demeaning their standard of work

What are the effects of Workplace Bullying on People? Victims of workplace bullying experience significant physical and mental health problems:

- High stress, depression, anxiety and sometimes even suicidal thoughts or behavior
- Financial problems due to absences from work
- Reduced self-esteem and self-confidence
- Sleep disturbance
- Digestive problems
- Significant reduction in work performance and quality

How does Bullying effect Organizations? The health problems experienced by victims of bullying can result in a sense of helplessness

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Work Place Bullying: Tips for Employers, Supervisors & Employees

(Continued from page 4)

and negative emotional states among the employee(s), which leads to a negative organizational climate. This negative climate impacts employees' abilities to respond to difficult situations and certainly hampers employees' abilities to meet challenging goals.

The breakdown of trust in a bullying environment may mean that employees will fail to contribute their best work, will not give extra ideas for improvement, may be less honest about performance and will no longer trust the organization or leadership.

What can an Employee do to handle Workplace Bullying? Every situation is different and how you, the employee, handle bullying depends on your particular work environment, the resources available in your workplace and the nature of the bullying. If you are being bullied, you could take a personal and informal approach or follow a more formal approach. **Informal steps are recommended as a possible first approach in dealing with most bullying cases:** Check policies and procedures, seek advice, keep records, consider all available options and lastly, lodge a formal complaint, if necessary.

Available options include:

- Recognize that you are being bullied and are not the source of the problem
- Approach the bully only if you feel safe or with a supervisor
- Use the mediation services if available
- Contact your Human Resource Representative
- Use the EAP Counseling Service

How can the Employer/ Supervisor work against Workplace Bullying? Managers are responsible for ensuring that all employees understand that bullying is not tolerated in the workplace. Taking early corrective action to deal with behavior which may be offensive or intimidating sets a standard of behavior for everyone.

If a manager or supervisor feels that a reported incident might constitute bullying, but is in need of consultation regarding policy and procedure, the matter should be referred to a Human Resources Representative.

The prevention of all inappropriate behaviors including bullying requires managers and supervisors to:

- Create a zero tolerance anti-bullying environment
- Be aware of workplace policy on bullying
- Encourage all staff to behave in accordance with the principles of equal opportunity and anti-discrimination
- Provide leadership and role modeling in relation to appropriate and professional behavior in the workplace
- Respond promptly, sensitively and confidentially to all situations where inappropriate behavior is exhibited or alleged to have occurred

If you have concerns about workplace bullying and would like to talk to someone about them, please contact the EAP at 703-692-8917.

Resources: Retrieved from http://www.workplacebullying.org/individuals/problem/definition/#

Balancing Work & Family

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The Employee Assistance Program can help your quest for defining priorities, acquiring assertiveness skills, making tough decisions, or identifying family goals that you want to pursue. If you would like more information, the Mark Center EAP will be offering the workshop "Balancing Work & Family" on August 26, 2014. Please refer to our calendar for more information, or call 571-372-5619.

July 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9*	10	11	12
13	14	15*	16	17	18	19
20	21	22*	23*	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

EAP July 2014 Training Schedule

PENTAGON

Jul 9: Sleep Hygiene, 10 –11 am, DiLorenzo TRICARE Health Clinic, Upton Conference Rm. 219

Jul 11: Finances for Women, 12 – 1:30 pm, Pentagon Library Conference Center, Rm. B3

Jul 15: Battling Burnout, 9:30 – 11 am, Pentagon Library Conference Center, Rm. B5

Jul 16: Sandwich Generation: Taking Care of Your Children and Your Parents, 9:30 – 11 am, Pentagon Library Conference Center, Rm. B8

Jul 22: EAP Supervisory Training, 9 – 10:30 am, Pentagon Library Conference Center, Rm. B8

Jul 30: Retirement in Mind, 9:30 – 11 am, Pentagon Library Conference Center, Rm. B5

MARK CENTER

Jul 9: Building Communication, 9:30 – 11:30 am, Rm. 3

Jul 15: Working Styles, 9 – 11 am, Rm.13

Jul 17: Taking Control of Your Cash, 12 – 1:30 pm, Rm. B3

Jul 22: EAP Supervisory Training, 9 – 11 am, Rm. 20

Jul 23: Grow Professionally: Emotional Intelligence, 9:30 – 11:30 am, Rm.14

Jul 24: Estate Planning, 12 – 1:30 pm, Rm. 14

* A training is also at the Mark Center on this date

August 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12*	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

EAP August 2014 Training Schedule

PENTAGON

Aug 12: EAP Supervisory Training, 9 – 10:30 am, Pentagon Library Conference Center, Rm. B8

Aug 14: Financial Fitness, 12 – 1:30 pm, Pentagon Library Conference Center, Rm. M3

Aug 18: Mind Over Mood , 9 – 10:30 am, Pentagon Library Conference Center, Rm. M3

Aug 28: Improving Your Credit, 12 – 1:30 pm, Pentagon Library Conference Center, Rm. B7

MARK CENTER

Aug 6: EAP Supervisory Training, 9 – 11 am, Rm. 17

Aug 8: Improving Your Credit, 12 – 1:30 pm, Rm. 14

Aug 12: Sleep Hygiene, 10 – 11 am, Rm. 23

Aug 13: Relationship & Gender Communication, 9:30 – 11:30 am, Rm. 13

Aug 22: Finances for Women, 12 – 1:30 pm, Rm. 13

Aug 26: Balancing Work and Family, 12- 1 pm, Rm. 13

Aug 27: Acceptance: Coping with Negative Things, 12 – 1 pm, Rm. 10

* A training is also at the Mark Center on this date

September 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24*	25	26	27
28	29	30				

EAP September 2014 Training Schedule

PENTAGON

Sep 5: College Planning,12 – 1:30 pm, Rm. B2

Sep 17: EAP Supervisory Training, 9 – 10:30 am, Pentagon Library Conference Center, Rm. B8

Sep 18: Sleep Hygiene, 10 – 11am , Pentagon Library Conference Center, Rm. B8

Sep 18: Estate Planning, 12 – 1:30 pm, Pentagon Library Conference Center, Rm. M2

Sep 24: Time Management 9:30 – 11 am, Pentagon Library Conference Center, Rm. B9

Sep 25: Parenting Styles, 9 – 10:30 am, Pentagon Library Conference Center, Rm. B8

Sep 30: Mindfulness in Everyday Life, 9 – 10:30 am, Pentagon Library Conference Center, Rm. B9

MARK CENTER

Sep 4: Financial Transitions, 12 – 1:30 pm, Rm. 3

Sep 9: Retirement in Mind, 10 – 11:30 am, Rm. 14

Sep 10: Adult ADHD in the Workplace, 9:30 – 11:30 am, Rm. 13

Sep 16: Mindfulness for Stress Management, 12 – 1:30 pm, Rm. 14

Sep 24: The Power of Focus: Learn How to Be More and Do Less, 9:30 – 11:30 am, Rm. 14

Sep 26: Financial Fitness, 12 – 1:30 pm, Rm. 3

* A training is also at the Mark Center on this date

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.

The EAP motto:

"Provide short-term services for...long-term benefits."

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!!!

http://www.dthc.capmed.mil/EAP/SitePages/Home.aspx