

Workplace Wellness Presents:

Workplace Wellness Works

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Warm Hands Mean a Warm Heart

by Cynthia Chapa, LCSW

In a carefully controlled experiment, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, and developed by Dr. Lawrence Williams and Dr. John A. Bargh of Yale University, people who held something warm were more likely to perceive someone else as emotionally “warm”—and they were more likely to behave in friendly, generous ways themselves.

Dr. Lawrence, who now teaches at the University of Colorado, helped Dr. Bargh design the experiment while he was a doctoral student at Yale. Student volunteers were unaware they were part of the study. Students showed up at the University’s psychology department and met their contact in front of an elevator. The contact was holding a cup of coffee and some textbooks. One by one she took each student up to the fourth floor lab, asking each student in an innocuous way to hold the coffee cup while she wrote down information. Half the students held hot coffee while the other half held iced coffee. Though they held the cup for only a few moments, in that

time something happened in their brains.

Once inside the lab, students were given a description of a hypothetical person described as industrious, cautious and determined, and then had to rate that person’s presumed personality traits. According to Dr. Williams, “participants who held the hot coffee assessed the fictitious person as more generous, gregarious, happier, and better nature than participants who held the iced coffee cup.”

Dr. Williams states further that he believes it is no coincidence that we use the same word—warmth to describe both a physical and an emotional experience. Somewhere in the brain these two sensations are linked. “Think of a baby held in its mother’s arms. The child is experiencing love, affection, comfort. You also have, at the same time, an experience with a warm object in this case the warm human being,” said Dr. Williams.

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Quotable Quotes



“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

~ Barack Obama

“The problems that exist in the world today cannot be solved by the level of thinking that created them.”

~ Albert Einstein

*“What do you get when you cross an insomniac, an agnostic, and a dyslexic?
Someone who stays up all night wondering if there is a Dog.”*

~ Groucho Marx

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Dr. Williams and his team then conducted a second experiment to confirm this connection. They recruited 53 different students and had them hold either a hot or a cold pad used for pain treatment. The students believed they were product-testing. In reality, the test was which gift the students chose as a thank you for participating: an ice cream coupon or bottled drink for themselves, or one for a friend.

Students who held the hot pad were more likely to choose

a reward for a friend, while those that held the iced pad were more likely to choose a reward for themselves.

Dr. Bargh states, "It appears that the effect of physical temperature is not just on how we see others, it affects our own behavior as well. Physical warmth can make us see others as warmer people, but also cause us to be warmer, more generous and trust as well."

Perhaps it would do us all well to serve hot drinks at our staff meetings-huh?

References:
MedicalNewsToday.com and *National Public Radio (npr.org)*

"How far you go in life depends on you being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and the strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these."

*~ George Washington Carver,
American Educator & Scientist*

LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Children learn by making choices

by Richard Williams, MFT

There are some major differences between punishment and logical consequences. Punishment assumes that the most powerful person gets their way. It is personalized and implies a moral judgment by the parent and is not directly related to the current situation. Punishment is based on past behavior, threatens the offender and demands obedience.

Conversely, logical consequences acknowledge mutual rights and mutual respect. A consequence needs to be related directly to the behavior and is impersonal with no moral judgment attached. Logical consequences are also concerned with present and future behavior; the parent's voice is calm and hopeful and permits the child to make a choice.

The purpose of applying natural consequences is to encourage children to make responsible decisions, not forcing them to submit to their parent's will. This helps to instill a sense of self-discipline regardless of the choices being made. It becomes a learning experience for the child rather than a follow-the-leader exercise. The child is forced to think and make decisions based upon the reality of the situation at hand. The child



will need to deal directly with the consequences of their decisions.

Some basic principles for logical consequences are: Try to understand the child's behavior, be both firm and kind, don't try to be a "good" parent (don't be overprotective), become more consistent in your actions, separate the deed from the doer (don't talk down to or humiliate your child but maintain respect for them), encourage independence, refuse to be overly-concerned about what other people think, recognize who owns the problem, talk less and act more, refuse to fight with or give in to your child, and when groups of children are involved, let all the children share responsibility.

Always provide choices for the child. Understand that the child may not pick the choice you would prefer. The logical consequence of their choice will either get them what they want or force them to deal with the consequences of their choice. As the child follows through with a consequence, give assurances that there will be opportunities to make different choices in the future. If the misbehavior is repeated, this is an indication that the child is not yet willing to be responsible for his/her actions. Offer the child the opportunity to make another choice, at a later time (allow some time to elapse so the child can process the situation and learn from his or her actions). In the next newsletter, we will provide some concrete, everyday examples of these principles in action. Stay tuned.

SEXUAL ADDICTION: "I need it, but I don't need you."

by Richard Williams, MFT

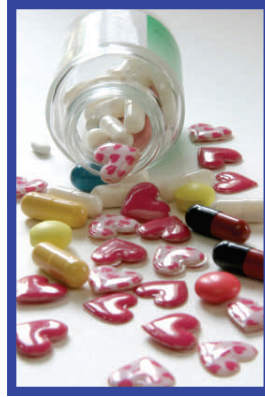
Sexual addiction is a controversial term used to describe a phenomenon in which individuals report being unable to manage their sexual urges. These are people who repeatedly and compulsively try to connect with others through highly impersonal intimate behaviors. Some researchers believe sexual addiction is an addiction, directly analogous to alcohol and drug addictions. Others believe that it is actually a form of obsessive-compulsive disorder, referring to it as sexual compulsivity.

According to the book *Synopsis of Psychiatry* (2007), sex addicts are unable to control their sexual impulses, the need for sexual activity increases and the person's behavior is motivated solely by the desire to experience the sex act. The person usually has repeatedly tried to stop, but is unsuccessful. The urge to act out is most severe during stressful times. Lastly, the sexual acting out tends to interfere with everyday functioning at work, in social settings and at home.

High doses of brain chemicals, especially dopamine, are released during sexual activity, arousal and sexual fantasizing. The release of dopamine creates a sensation of pleasure. The sexual addict starts repeating 'rewarding' activities with a repetition that leads to this pleasurable response. The constant releases of these mood-elevating

chemicals causes them to lose their effectiveness, leading to a desire to increase the frequency of sexual acting out.

According to Patrick Carnes (*Facing the Shadow*, 2006), the sexual addiction cycle begins with four core beliefs, 1) "I am basically a bad, unworthy person"; 2) "No one would love me as I am"; 3) "My needs are never going to be met if I have to depend on others"; and 4) "Sex is my most important need." The sex addict then enters a progressive and destructive course of events including, emotional discomfort, dissociation (disconnect from emotions), a preoccupation with thinking about sex through a trance-like state, ritualized acting-out (further separating from reality), realizing after the tension release from the acting-out that they have become a slave to the addiction (needing to immediately repeat the cycle), and finally a sense of despair and shame.



Treatment groups such as Sex Addicts Anonymous, based on a 12 step program, can be very helpful. Support groups, out- or in-patient programs, and individual therapy approaches can all be helpful and eventually successful.

Additional information and help can be reached through the internet (<http://www.Saahelp.com>).

High Calorie Beverages

by LeAnn Escobar,

ACE Certified Personal Trainer, BA PE
Modesto Fitness and Racquet Club

Are you finding it hard to lose those extra pounds? High calorie beverages just might be the main culprit. In recent years, consumers have greatly increased their consumption of popular beverages such as gourmet coffees, smoothies, shakes, sodas, energy drinks, alcohol, fruit and soft drinks. Calories from liquids should be limited to 10 percent or less of total calories; however most people consume far more than that. Water is being consumed less and less, though it is necessary for life itself. There are many people that drink no plain water at all.

Most people know that they need to keep track of their calories, but everyone should focus on steering clear of low nutrition/high calorie

drinks. Your body will be in jeopardy of not getting enough calcium and other vitamins, minerals and essential hydrating elements if you are not careful. Other significant health problems caused by excess refined sugars, artificial sweeteners, caffeine, and carbonation found in these beverages include: dental problems, osteoporosis, dehydration, obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, sleep disorders, etc.

Drinking one 200-calorie can of soda a day could add up to at least 15 lbs. of weight gain and cost about \$200 per year. Sports drinks, energy drinks, alcohol, smoothies and gourmet coffee are even more expensive, and are packed with empty calories. Check labels for total carbohydrates and calories and remember you have to walk about one mile to burn off 100 calories. Save your money and your health and limit these beverages significantly.

So, what should we drink? Skim milk has all of the nutrients of whole milk without calories and fat. Because your body can only absorb about 300 mg of calcium every 6 hours, it is recommended to drink at least 3 servings spread throughout the day. Soy milk is also a great source of calcium, but many brands add a lot of sweeteners. Vegetable juice is a great low calorie choice, high in antioxidants, vitamins, and fiber. One serving of 100% fruit juice, about 4-5 ounces per day, is plenty. Water is still the best all around choice at about 4-6 cups per day for adults. Be wise and healthy by choosing high quality beverages. You will hold onto your wallet and your waistline.





America seems to be a parody of extremes when it comes to how we think about food. We love fast food and often assume whenever we eat that more is better. In fact, our love affair with food has many people concerned about the rising number of obese children—and with good reason as the rise in obesity seems to go hand in hand with a rise in diabetes and other lifestyle diseases.

On the other hand, we continue to idolize the slender bodies of actors and actresses on the covers of multiple fashion magazines and in innumerable media options. In response to idealization of the slender, there is a rise of individuals experiencing eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia. These disorders are easily as dangerous as the previously-mentioned lifestyle diseases.

Perhaps the answer for both of these extremes is intuitive eating. Intuitive eating is a philosophy that

encourages individuals to become more in tune with their bodies' natural hunger signals and to eliminate, not foods, but the idea that certain foods are bad, while encouraging nutritional common sense and exercise.

Did you know that in a study of four countries the USA was rated as "the highest of the four in worrying about the fattening effects of food as opposed to savoring it; we associated food the most with health and the least with pleasure"?

The Intuitive Eating Method helps individuals give themselves unconditional permission to eat any food. Why would that be good, you say? According to Evelyn Tribble, MS, RD, when we are allowed to eat foods, we are able to habituate the experience of eating that food. Habituation decreases the desire for the food because it is no longer forbidden and exposure to the food makes it less desirable.

Individuals who diet often have a black and white relationship with food. If they are dieting, they are eating "good" food, if they're not dieting, they are eating "bad" food. Intuitive Eating can eliminate this vicious cycle.

This philosophy does require individuals to have/learn a high-degree of self-awareness because they need to learn to recognize the body's natural hunger signals and how they differ from emotional eating (such as after a fight with a friend), social eating (such as at a party) or habitual eating (having a snack when you get home, because that is what you are used to doing). Instead, people who learn to eat intuitively set aside the usual concept of dieting or eating and eat whenever they are hungry and stopping when they are full.

So, instead of trying a new diet this spring, consider trying intuitive eating and start enjoying your food rather than worrying about it.

REFERENCES:

Intuitive Eating in the Treatment of Disorder Eating, Evelyn Tribble, MS, RD, Scans Pules, Summer 2006

Eat What You Want, When You Want, Steven Hawks, BYU News Release, 11/16/05

The Family Caregiver



According to the National Family Caregiver Association more than 44 million Americans per year will provide care to an adult family or friend.

Caregivers will often be inexperienced in taking care of the elderly, or the seriously ill, and

will have many questions. Some areas of concern for caregivers include resources available for the elderly or sick family member, health care management, caregiving questions, medical care, and resources available for the caregiver's needs. These topics and more are addressed in the web sites given below.

The website: www.familycaregiving101.org has listed the progression of caregiving as follows:

1. I may help a relative soon.
2. I am beginning to help.
3. I am helping.
4. I am still helping!
5. My role is changing.
6. My caregiving role has ended.

Wherever you are in this progression, they have tips to help you manage your situation better.

Local Resources for the Elderly or Sick Family Members include:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Adult Day Care Centers | Financial Assistance |
| Children's Resources | Home Health Care |
| Cancer Resources | Hospice, and much more |
| Diabetes Resources | |

To find out more information in each of these areas go to: www.knowwhat2do.org.

For information to help caregivers keep themselves healthy while caring for their loved one, go to www.snocare.org and go to Caregiver Kit—there are many great tools available to make the caregivers life a bit easier. Use your resources.

Eye on the Web



Wellness Calendar

Spring Calendar: March - May 2009

March

Clear Direction for a Confident Retirement

March 5, 2009 (3:00-4:45 PM)
MEMBERS Financial Services &
StanCERA Representative

Women and Investing

March 5, 2009 (5:30-7:15 PM)
MEMBERS Financial Services

Drive Away Happy: Car Buying Decisions

March 19, 2009 (5:30-7:00 PM)
Valley First Credit Union

The Art of Harmonious Change

March 26, 2009 (2:00-5:00 PM)
Rebecca Tucker, LCSW

April

Clear Direction for a Confident Retirement

April 2, 2009 (3:00-4:45 PM)
MEMBERS Financial Services &
StanCERA Representative

Estate Planning

April 2, 2009 (5:30-7:15 PM)
MEMBERS Financial Services & Atty. Judy Jensen

Anger Management

April 7, 2009 (9:00 AM-12:00 Noon)
Richard Williams, LMFT

Assert Yourself: For Supervisors

April 9, 2009 (1:30-5:00 PM)
Cynthia Chapa, LCSW

Don't Let Your Fears Stop You

April 16, 2009 (9:30 AM-12:00 Noon)
Cynthia Chapa, LCSW

Understanding & Coping with Depression

April 16, 2009 (3:00-5:30 PM)
Richard Williams, LMFT

Coping with Divorce

(3 Sessions)
Beginning April 16, 2009 (Thursdays, 5:00-6:30 PM)
Rebecca Tucker, LCSW

Memory: Use It or Lose It

April 21, 2009 (9:00 AM-12:00 Noon)
Richard Williams, LMFT

College Financing 101

April 23, 2009 (5:30-7:00 PM)
Valley First Credit Union

May

Solving the Mystery of Credit Report

May 7, 2009 (5:30-7:00 PM)
Valley First Credit Union

The Benefits of Relaxation & Meditation

May 21, 2009 (3:00-5:00 PM)
Cynthia Chapa, LCSW

Making Stress Work for You

May 14, 2009 (9:00 AM-12:00 Noon)
Cynthia Chapa, LCSW

Dealing with Difficult People

May 5, 2009 (8:30-11:30 AM)
Richard Williams, LMFT

Doing It All as a Single Parent

May 14, 2009 (3:30-6:00 PM)
Richard Williams, LMFT

Healthy Communication

May 19, 2009 (8:30-11:30 AM)
Richard Williams, LMFT

For detailed workshop description and other information, please visit our website at:

www.workplacewellness.org

The Very Real Grief of Pet Loss

by Katherine Newton, MSW Intern

The unconditional love we receive from animals often results in a very meaningful bond; a bond similar to what we share with humans. Pet loss is another life event that results in grief for many pet owners from diverse backgrounds and ages, particularly when the loss goes unrecognized.

Two Stanislaus County locations participate in supporting pet owners who experience the loss of a pet. It is also normal to experience "anticipatory grief" about a pet, which occurs very often with families who are faced with terminal illness. With Monte Vista Small Animal Hospital and Community Hospice sponsoring these support groups, the event of pet loss as a life-changing event can be alleviated through group support.

The phases of grief are a result of the normal human reaction to the loss of something meaningful. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross contributed to the human experience of loss by describing it in the following stages:



- ◆ Shock/Numbness/Denial "This didn't really didn't happen."
- ◆ Anger "How could this happen!"
- ◆ Sadness/Isolation "I feel like crying."
- ◆ Depression "I just don't want to eat today and I didn't sleep well last night."
- ◆ Acceptance "Everything will be okay and he is in a better place now."

Vast research has been conducted regarding the loss of an animal companion. It is profound experience that should be recognized as an event worthy of self-acceptance, social acknowledgement, and has a parallel need for supportive responses just as human losses do. It can be further complicated with feelings of guilt due to the often necessary decision to euthanize a pet. Life, as we know it, may change after the death of our pet, which may have a direct effect on our ability to engage in our typical daily activities. Pet loss can also trigger prior losses or exacerbate existing mental illness. Offer yourself or those around you acknowledgement and validation about their pet loss. By doing so, healing can begin and life can be renewed so a new chapter can begin.

Avoiding Pitfalls for the New Supervisor

by Cynthia Chapa, LCSW

Becoming a supervisor for the first time is a classic example of a "good" stressor. It is a positive event despite being inevitably stressful. Being aware of predictable pitfalls that face a new supervisor can give the first time supervisor a "leg up." So what are the pitfalls you may avoid and some tips to help you succeed? Read on...

- ◆ Letting team members get away with things. It is natural for a new supervisors to want to be liked and therefore avoid difficult conversations. This can easily translate into letting a team member get away with undesirable behavior. This can set a pattern for other team members and problems escalate.
- ◆ Vague instructions. If you are not clear about the instructions, goals or objectives you provide your team, be assured they will not be clear.
- ◆ Unconscious favoritism. Often, first time supervisors are chosen to lead a team they were previously part of. You may favor those people you previously worked with without being aware. This



easily causes resentment from those members feeling left out.

- ◆ Postponing decisions.
- ◆ Making unrealistic promises to team members.

◆ Being disorganized. This one will really get you and has the potential to directly impact the productivity of your team. Beware of assigning tasks at the last minute.

Top Tips

- ◆ Be clear and specific about your expectations. Know what you want from your team and ask for it.
- ◆ Be generous with recognition for their effort. Acknowledgement and appreciate goes a long way.
- ◆ Deal with underperformance swiftly and succinctly. If this is a weak area for you take the Assertion Skills for Supervisors offered regularly by Workplace Wellness.

SUPERVISOR'S CORNER

