



HEALTHQUEST

Workplace Wellness Matters ... from your EAP - January 2002

Make Your New Year's Resolutions Work For You!

The type of resolution we set for ourselves is a good indication of where we want to see changes in our lives. But too often, we're enthusiastic about making that change in the first few weeks of a new year, then the resolve fades away. If you're serious about wanting to make positive changes, you can be successful. Here are some guidelines that may help:

- **Be realistic.** Before you set your goals, think about whether they are really achievable, and what small steps can be put into place to make them more achievable. Be clear about what you want to gain out of sticking to the resolution: Is it a permanent lifestyle change? A temporary modification? A new attitude or approach?
- **Be flexible.** Rather than giving up on your resolution and then being disappointed with yourself, consider making some adjustments that will help you modify your resolution and stick to it. For example, consider another method of quitting smoking if cold turkey's not working for you; arrange to go to the gym with a friend instead of alone; start your quest again February 1 or 15 after more planning.
- **Prepare for roadblocks.** Think hard about what may get in your way of success, then plan on how you'll overcome those challenges. You may not be able to anticipate all the roadblocks, so also be prepared to note them as they come up and give them some thought at a later time. Don't feel you need to respond immediately and successfully to all roadblocks. Take it slowly. Change is a process.
- **Get help.** There is such a great deal of information and support available today that it just doesn't make sense to try to 'go it alone'. Pick up a book, check out a website, sign up for a course, join a support group, make an appointment for counselling, ask a friend to help. Your chances of success are increased dramatically when you seek out the kind of help you're most comfortable with. When we connect with others, or acquire knowledge through others, we're strengthened, and so is our resolve.

- **Listen.** Listen to your body, your thoughts, your instincts, your dreams. In a fast-paced world, it's easy to lose touch with ourselves and our motivations. Take the time to experience how you're feeling, how you're reacting to people, places and things. If it's painful to alter your ways or to give something up, what does the pain mean for you individually? How can it help you know yourself better? Very often, those who have emerged through a difficult time (overcoming an addiction, changing old behaviors) not only feel great pride and a sense of accomplishment, but feel the experience has made them more confident, secure and content.

More Than The "Winter Blahs" ... Seasonal Affective Disorder

Some people experience an extreme and prolonged form of the 'winter blahs' that is related to dramatic changes in their brain's chemistry, triggered by diminished sun exposure. This disorder is formally known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) with SAD sufferers experiencing cyclical symptoms beginning in the fall and often persisting until late spring.

SAD sufferers frequently experience:

- feelings of sadness
- tiredness and fatigue during the day
- cravings for carbohydrates with overeating and weight gain
- a loss of interest in things usually pleasurable
- a decline in sex drive

There is excellent treatment available for SAD. Individuals experiencing feelings of sadness or any of the other symptoms noted above are encouraged to seek the assistance of a physician or a professional counsellor.

Balancing Act - Work/Life balance tips

We want to help you stay informed about ways to keep things simple and easy in a fast-paced world. We're in the process of building a new area for tips on work/life balance on the Warren Shepell website. If you have any special tips that work well for you in balancing your work and home demands, please let us know and we'll share them with website visitors. Visit The Balancing Act at www.warrenshepell.com.

QUICK FACTS - The Flu Season

- The flu is caused by influenza viruses and is infectious between 3 to 7 days from onset.
- It is transmitted through the air (coughing, sneezing) and by surface contact (doorknobs, telephones).
- It has a sudden onset with headache, chills, cough, fever, runny nose, sneezing, throat irritation.
- Flu season is commonly November through to May.
- Frequent hand-washing helps prevent its spread.
- Vaccination is the only proven effective method of prevention.
- You cannot get the flu from the flu vaccine.
- It is possible to become infected after vaccination, however, for those who still get infected after vaccination, the illness is likely to be less severe.
- Treat flu symptoms with fluids and rest.

Thinking about quitting smoking? How long before you benefit?

Within 8 hours of stopping smoking

- carbon monoxide level drops in your body
- oxygen level in your blood increases to normal

Within 48 hours

- your chances of having a heart attack start to go down
- sense of smell and taste begin to improve

Within 72 hours

- bronchial tubes relax making breathing easier
- lung capacity increases

Within 2 weeks to 3 months

- circulation improves
- lung functioning increases up to 30 percent

Within 6 months

- coughing, sinus congestion
- tiredness and shortness of breath improve

Within 1 year

- risk of smoking-related heart attack is cut in half

Within 10 years

- risk of dying from lung cancer is cut in half

Within 15 years

- risk of dying from a heart attack is equal to a person who never smoked.

TOP TIPS - Moving Forward Through Change

They say that change is constant. Whether we're experiencing a lot or a little of it, change in our lives can create opportunities, as well as a sense of insecurity, loss and confusion. To stay strong and positive, the most important thing we can do in the face of major change is take one step at a time. There has been much written on the important topics of change and stress and there are many resources available, including EAP support, to help respond to change and stress in the most positive, constructive way possible. Don't hesitate to reach out for support if you're feeling burdened with change in your work or home life. Here are a few helpful tips.

- Expect change to be stressful.
- Examine how you are feeling. Don't deny the emotional effects of change – accept and express your sense of loss and pain.
- Be aware of expectations you place on yourself and others. Be patient with yourself.
- Slow down your regular routine so that you can adjust to the change with less pressure.
- Times of reorganization and change can provide opportunity for creative energy. Now, or in time, you can find ways to put it to use.
- Change is inevitable, but how you react to it is within your control. Being positive in the way you respond to change can help you move through it successfully.
- Adopt active coping strategies: talk or write about your stress; use music, art or humour to diffuse it; reach out to others to give or receive support.
- Examine what gives you satisfaction at work, then pursue those areas.
- Reflect on what matters most to you, then build it into your life.

If you have any questions about this topic, or if you wish to discuss a personal situation you may be experiencing, we invite you to contact your EAP counsellors to arrange a telephone or in-person counselling session.

All contact between you and your counsellor is completely confidential.

English Service: 1-800-387-4765
French Service: 1-800-361-5676
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*HealthQuest is produced four times a year for employees and their families.
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