

# UPDATE

Volume 3 • Issue 3

FALL 1999



201  
Dempsey Hall

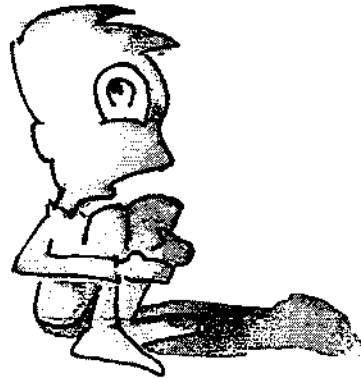
University of  
Wisconsin  
Oshkosh

800  
Algoma  
Boulevard

Oshkosh  
Wisconsin  
54901-8613

(920)  
424-1078

Fax  
(920)  
424-1066



## Job Stress & The Employee Assistance Program

By Karen Reiter

Job stress has been called the disease of the 20th century and is re to continue as a major problem as we enter the 21st century. Chances are you know someone who has experienced stress on the job, or you've experienced it yourself; the knot in your stomach, the sleepless nights, the vague sense of hopelessness, headaches at work, and low morale. These are some of the warning signs of job stress. Work overload, sexual harassment, office politics, co-worker conflict, and unclear job roles are some of the common stress lurking in the workplace. When any or all of these are allowed to take place, job stress will be experienced.

One-fourth of employees view their jobs as the number one stress in their lives, and problems at work are more strongly associated with health complaints than any other life stress, according to recent studies done. Chronic absenteeism, backaches, migraines, substance abuse, marital and family conflicts, financial problems, and poor job performances are some of the more obvious manifestations of job stress. Less obvious but just as destructive are the pervasive feelings of frustration, hopelessness and anger that any stressed out employee carries to work each day, like so much extra baggage.

Okay, you're thinking, so we all know what job stress is. But what can I do about it? There are many answers to this question. One answer is available here at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

We have an Employee Assistance Program on campus. This service is free to all employees and their families. Susan Barbour, the Director of the EAP program and other counseling staff can assist individuals in understanding and dealing constructively with problems at home and on the job. Referrals are also made in some situations.

That all sounds very nice, but how do I seek help for a personal problem without jeopardizing my job? The answer is simple. Any EAP professional or psychotherapist is obligated to maintain confidentiality in their relationships with their clients- -it's the law. For example, if your boss refers you to EAP for help, everything that is said is private, unless you sign a written document allowing communication to occur with anyone else.

You may love your job, hate your job, or be totally indifferent (probably not!), but one thing is for sure, employees need to balance their work, family and personal lives as we move into the 21st century. They need to develop a relaxed and positive outlook. Work takes up at least one-third of our lives. Doesn't it make sense to try and make our jobs as stress free and enjoyable as possible?

# WILL YOU BECOME A NON-SMOKER IN THE NEW MILLENIUM?

By Joe Abhold, Ph.D

With the Great American Smokeout coming up on November 19th, smoker's thoughts will again turn to quitting. You may or may not be ready to quit smoking right now and that's okay. The EAP Program is offering you an opportunity to learn how to succeed at your next attempt to quit smoking. Years of research has shown that there are several stages that people move through when they are faced with the challenge of quitting smoking.

This "Stages of Change Model" may help you to understand where you are in the quitting process and perhaps why your other attempts to quit were not successful. See if you can identify yourself in one of the following categories.

**Pre-contemplation** - In this stage, people are not seriously considering changing or modifying their behavior.

**Contemplation** - Here people begin to think about quitting, but have not made a commit-

ment to change in the immediate future. Most smokers are in this stage.

**Preparation** - Smokers in this stage intend to take action in the next few months and are laying the foundation for change.

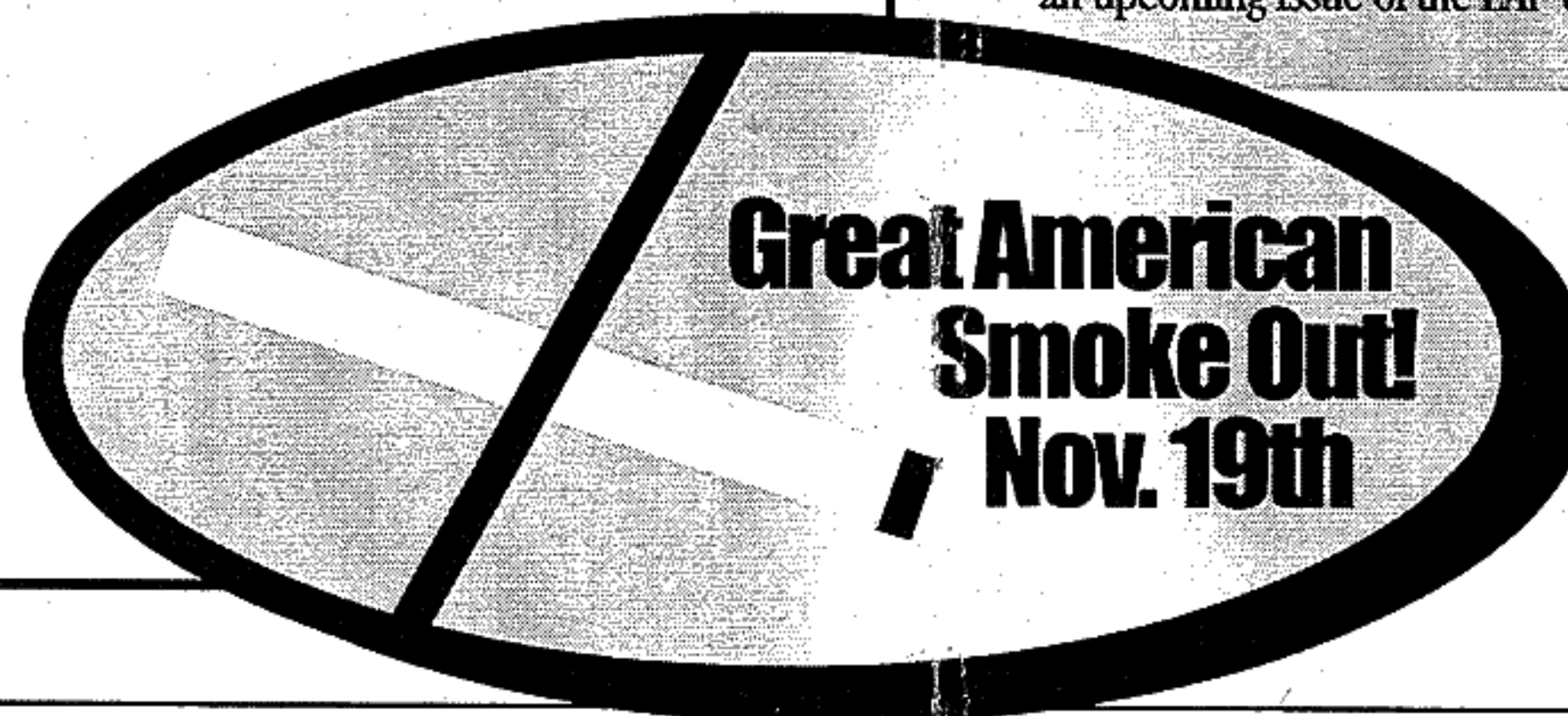
**Action** - During this stage people actually change their environments and behaviors to create change, in other-words they make an attempt to quit tobacco.

**Maintenance** - The smoker has quit and works to prevent relapse.

If you found yourself in the pre-contemplation, contemplation, or action stage, you might like to quit, but are unsure if you are ready to go through the pain and hassle of a quit attempt. We have developed a program specifically designed with you in mind. This program will show you the benefits of quitting and teach you strategies to make any future quit attempt less painful and more likely to succeed.

## How does the Program Work?

This educational program will be conveniently delivered to you **via e-mail**. All you have to do is complete an enrollment form and send us your e-mail address. You will get a brief message about every other day for two months. We will focus on the positive side effects of quitting, not on beating you down or making you feel guilty. You do not need to be ready to quit to participate. You can simply learn the techniques for developing a successful quitting plan for when you DO feel ready to quit. If you are ready to quit, there will be a quit date in the program - January 1, 2000. If you would like to learn more about this program, please e-mail me at: [ABHOLD@UWOSH.EDU](mailto:ABHOLD@UWOSH.EDU), or call Joe Abhold at: 424-2061.



**Depression Screening Day**  
October 7th -  
Two locations for Staff  
11:00-3:30  
Reeve Union - Trading Post  
201 Dempsey Hall

## INTERESTED IN READING THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN OSHKOSH EAP CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT?

The EAP Confidentiality Statement explains the parameters of confidentiality for employees using the EAP. It describes your right to confidentiality and the legal exceptions to it. The Policy will be published in an upcoming issue of the EAP UPDATE.

# Providing Feedback to EAP

By Susan Barbour, Ed.D.

*With your help I can continue to assure the program's improving quality of services to meet employees' needs.*

I want to encourage communication between EAP staff and employees. Your feedback about what services EAP could offer in the way of: brown bags, newsletters, consultation is taken seriously. With your thoughts, comments and criticisms I can shape and reshape the program to be relevant and useful to you. I also want to know if you have a problem with EAP and what it is so we can make improvements. There are some structured ways to do that. I will mention however, that any time you want to call and talk about EAP programming or the service you received, I am available to do that.

I have found that some people do not like themselves very much when they mention problems because they think they are "complainers." Constructive comments and feedback about EAP is helpful to me and I welcome it. Here are some ways for you to routinely give both formal and informal feedback about EAP services:

1) **Program Evaluations**- Distributed at Brown Bag Seminars. Please complete and return these evaluations to provide feedback about the educational programs offered and topics you'd like to attend in the future.

2) **Needs Assessment** - The Needs Assessment Survey mentioned in this issue, is completed every 3-5 years. It takes a "read" of employee needs, preferences and interests to shape services offered by EAP.

3) **Satisfaction Questionnaire** - Twice a year EAP sends out anonymous Satisfaction Questionnaires to anyone who had a consultation and gave permission for follow-up. Thank you all for completing the survey and returning them so promptly. Let me encourage anyone who has suggestions to be as specific as possible. Frankly, anyone who was not helped fully and calls EAP will have the opportunity to meet with the same or a different counselor and consider alternatives. With specific changes we can make specific improvements.

**There are also ways to contact me less formally and they are just as useful:**

4) **Inform by a Note** - You are welcome to drop an anonymous note to the EAP Director (Susan Barbour, 201 Dempsey Hall) to complain, criticize, praise or suggest ideas for the program. Any input is welcomed as long as it is constructive and intended to improve the program. Keep in mind that when I read your note I do not know what the situation is, so the more information you are willing to give, the more I can use your feedback. If you are willing to include your name, we could talk about your concern as well and that would help both of us.

5) **Inform by a Phone Call or In -Person Meeting** - You are invited to meet with me any time you wish to share ideas about the program or if you have suggestions to improve a service. Of course, if you wish to register a complaint it is very important that you help us to know what has occurred so we can understand and rectify the problem.

6) **Meet with a Member of the Quality Assurance Committee of Advisory Board**. An alternate option is to meet with a member of the Quality Assurance Committee or the Advisory Board to EAP to register a suggestion or criticism. A list of staff serving in this capacity is published in this issue.

**Since confidentiality is a cornerstone of our program, I especially ask that:**

**IF THERE IS EVER A TIME YOU SUSPECT OR BELIEVE THAT CONFIDENTIALITY HAS NOT BEEN RESPECTED, I ASK YOU TO CALL ME. I WANT TO KNOW AND TALK ABOUT THE PROBLEM.**

EAP STAFF MEMBERS

## EAP ADVISORY BOARD

Church, Frank	News Bureau	Academic Staff Rep. ('00)	#1398
Dettlaff, Dawn	Residence Life	Non-represented Classified Staff ('99)	#2393
Geise, Debra	College of Nursing	Academic Staff Representative ('01)	#7215
Hansen, Bunny	Continuing Education	Classified Staff Representative ('00)	#1139
Hartman, Diana	Vice Chanc. Office	Rep. Assoc. Vice Chancellor	#1412
Merz, Don	Counseling Center	Faculty Representative ('00)	#2061
Ramanayake, Asoka	Mathematics	Faculty Representative ('02)	#2305
Rauscher, Frances	Psychology	Faculty Representative ('01)	#7172
Reiter, Karen	LLR-Polk	WSEU Local 579 Representative	#3343
Zanto, Diane	Student Health	Academic Staff Representative ('01)	#0425
Willihnganz, John	Human Resources		#0283

## ADVISORY BOARD COMMITTEES

### QUALITY ASSURANCE

Julie Allen	Reeve Union	#0897
Diane Bunck	Personnel	#0216
Frank Church	News Bureau	#1398
Jeanne Foley	LLR	#7315
Don Merz (Acting Chair)	Counseling Center	#2061

## ADVISORY BOARD COMMITTEES, cont.

George Philip	College of Business	#3152
Abbas Yaghmaian	Dir. of Academic Support	#3081
<b>PUBLIC RELATIONS</b>		
Sally Fox, Chair	History	#2456
Norris Batts	Admissions	#0227
Andrea Bevernitz	Social Work	#7180
Kathy Dolan	Political Science	#0435
Pam Goode	Advisement/Registration	#2495
Mandy Isaacson	Biology/Microbiology	#1102
Jan Keene	College of Business	#1424
Marshall Missner	Philosophy	#7311
Warren Potratz	Postal Services	#1145
Rosalie Slomski	Student Health Center	#2425
Tom Witte	Residence Life	#3120

## EAP COUNSELORS

Susan Barbour, EAP Director	Jayne Lokken
Joe Abhold, Counseling Center Director	Don Merz
Mike Altekruise	Michael Mussen
Joan Killinger	

# Employee Assistance Program Needs Assessment Survey Results

In September of 1998, the Employee Assistance Program circulated a survey to ask employees about the EAP program. Questions were asked about consultations and perceived levels of confidentiality, trust, and usage; the newsletters; and topics of interest and attendance at Brown Bag Seminars. First of all, we thank the 20%, or 305 of the 1520, UW Oshkosh employees who took the time to give us valued feedback. Some interesting quantitative and qualitative follow.

## Highest returns:

- Academic Staff returned 31% of the surveys.
- Females returned 70% of the surveys.
- Those with 1-5 years at UW Oshkosh returned 23%
- Those between 46-55 years of age returned 33% of the surveys

## Who uses the EAP service (percentages based on total number of survey respondents)

- 26% have used EAP consultation services.
- 34% have referred an employee, co-worker, family member or other to EAP.

When asked if there were reasons you would not use or refer someone to EAP, 32 said "no." Others wrote a variety of comments, such as: lack of private office entrance, fear that others will gossip if they know I went there, misperception that EAP is used when disciplining employees, confidentiality, and that psychiatric/psychological services are covered by insurance.

## Of 305 responders on four features:

288 rated confidentiality very important.

When asked what can the EAP do to increase your trust, some comments were:

Tell me how you can help me; Inform the new employees of your mission and location; Seek outside sources to facilitate process; Are any past users of EAP willing to let their "success" story be published? Publicize your EAP ethical code standards—are you under an oath of privacy? Become as visible as possible. I very much enjoyed and appreciated the new director's visit to a department meeting last year.

129 rated evening appointment options somewhat important,

91 rated location somewhat important (to have a location other than Dempsey 201), and

275 said trust was very important.

## Newsletter data:

238 read the EAP newsletter and said it was easy to read

## Brown Bag Educational Seminars:

63 said they attend sometimes or always

167 said they never attend

When asked why not attend a Brown Bag Seminar, 126 responded saying they had conflicts with other commitments, had a short lunch hour, or it was an inconvenient time.

166 said they would attend a summer Brown Bag

## The top 7 educational seminars requested for Brown Bags:

1. Stress Management
2. Work Relationships
3. Health and Medical Issues
4. Health Fair
5. Depression
6. Exercise
7. Nutrition and Weight Management

When asked for specific program titles, interesting ones such as balancing a life in a workaholic environment, racism and sexism in the university environment, getting organized, low morale at UWO among staff members, and new employee stresses and concerns in a University setting and investment counseling.

Information Summarized by Jeanne Foley  
Quality Assurance Committee Member

## Where we go from here?

The Quality Assurance Committee will formulate recommendations based on the survey results. The Advisory Board to EAP and the Program Director will review these recommendations. Recommendations will include program changes or suggestions regarding how to better communicate to and with employees about what the program offers. For instance, most survey respondents believe that confidentiality and trust are essential. Wisconsin statute sets forth guidelines for confidentiality. The EAP program conforms to statute (See The EAP Consultation: How Does it Work).

If you would like to respond to the survey results and add ideas, feel free to drop a note to the EAP Office.

## UPCOMING

### Brown Bag Seminars

#### The Problem with Happiness

Marshall Missner, Ph.D., UW Oshkosh Faculty Philosophy

Thursday, October 21, 1999

Reeve 222, Noon- 1:00PM

Many people assume that the goal of life is to maximize their happiness. However, there are certain difficulties with this. One is that happiness may not really be the thing we want most of all. The second is that even if we do want happiness, it may be the kind of thing we just have to luck into, and that we cannot achieve for ourselves.

#### ADHD or Just Strong Willed: What Makes my Kid Act Like This?

Dee Christenson, MSSW, CICSW, Private Practice, Appleton, WI.

Wednesday, November 17, 1999

Reeve 220, Noon-1:00PM

There has been a lot of controversy about ADHD and whether it is over diagnosed. How does a parent begin to assess what is really going on with their child and where do they go for help?

#### Credit Union Brown Bags

Oct. 27 So You Want To Buy A House:  
First Time Home Buyer

Nov. 30 Y2K: Scams, Myths and Why You Don't  
Need To Worry

Mar. 1 How To Buy A Car

April 15 Life After College: What Every Grad  
Needs To Know

## EAP Update Staff:

For further information contact  
Employee Assistance Program  
at 920-424-1078

Susan E. Barbour, Ed.D., EAP Director

IRC - Layout

Document Services - Duplication

