

# Employee Assistance Program

Faculty & Staff Living Newsletter

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Wellness, Productivity, & You

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## Families Fighting to Fit It All In



## Battling Against Sleep a No Win



**L**ate night school practices, fast-food dinners, cramming for tomorrow's schoolwork, music lessons, sports events, errands, housework—now repeat. If this routine rings familiar and you can't give anything up (right now), how do you reduce family stress? Those who've done it say the trick is to implement "family management rules." 1) *The Huddle*: Organize a family meeting to discuss how to make the week less stressful. Ensure that there is nothing that can be postponed till a later time and that everyone is ready to contribute to the success of the upcoming week. 2) *Map It Out*: Agree on the weekly routine. Include completing homework and getting ready for school (the night before); doing chores—who, what, and when; what times activities happen; and when the lights go out for bedtime. This organizing effort will reduce stress; it won't turn you into robots. Live by a master calendar. Refer to the calendar during the week so no one is "surprised" that this was the day for music lessons. 3) *Recharge*: The weekends are busy too, but find several hours of family alone time and just have fun. If it can't be all day, try only a few hours. Recharging builds up a cushion for dealing with stress during the rest of the week. View it as a necessity, not a luxury. 4) *Weekly Summit*: Meet to analyze and make adjustments for the following week. Pass out kudos (and cookies). Praise is important, even if someone "only" did what they were supposed to have done. Evaluate the past week and make adjustments as needed for the upcoming week.

**I**f waking up and getting out of bed is a daily "chore," a tardy arrival at work and/or decreased productivity usually follows. Stress, anxiety, and depression may all have a negative impact on sleep. In return, a lack of adequate sleep can enhance the impact these conditions have on someone. If there's no medical problem, a likely cause is an improper attitude toward sleep. Like exercise, you may see sleep as a nagging inconvenience—something getting in your way. You have to sleep, but you wait for it to force itself upon you. Like exercise, you may not incorporate sleep into a routine that allows the necessary amount of time—somewhere between seven and nine hours for most people. Give up the battle against sleep. Make it part of your routine to reap its benefits and avoid the side effects of deprivation. Set a regular time to wind down prior to laying down to sleep. Avoid evening caffeine, including coffee, tea, and even chocolate. Trust that, given the chance, you will feel sleepy at the appropriate time if you just lay down and allow yourself to relax. The benefits for your emotional and physical health can be great.

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**Visit the EAP webpage!**

[www.csus.edu/eapprogr](http://www.csus.edu/eapprogr)

Self-help web links

Community referral information

## Attitude-Changing Secrets



**S**cott Hamilton, the famous Olympic skater, once said: "The only disability in life is a bad attitude." His extraordinary life of achievement and adversity convinced him that dealing with life's challenges is something no one escapes. How well we master this task is reflected in how we behave and interact with others. Our attitude says something about how we are doing with our most important job—living. To fire up a new attitude, practice thinking and believing things that support the attitude you want. The more you practice this "refurbishment," the faster change comes. Try this "cloud seeding" technique: Each night, before going to sleep, mentally tick off all that you have done well that day. Focus on what went right. In the morning, take a few minutes to again focus on the positives and to set realistic goals for yourself for the day. As a new attitude unfolds, you'll notice new opportunities and feel and act more positive. Others will notice too, and they'll say so.

## Was It a Panic Attack?



**I**f you use an "I can take it" approach to managing stress, you may be building *cumulative* stress, especially if you don't exercise, get a break from work, or seek balance with some fun. A fast-paced, high stress society with conflicting work and family demands, combined with greater financial risk and insecurity about the future, may make your body respond with anxiety or panic-like symptoms. The term "panic attack" can conjure up an image of extreme agitation or franticness. Although many people with anxiety and panic symptoms experience this type of attack, many do not. Instead they suffer a host of disturbing and puzzling, but less acute, symptoms such as heart palpitations, sleep disturbances, rashes, breathing difficulties, or other problems. There are dozens of symptoms related to panic and anxiety. Discovering the cause may not happen until an acute attack forces you to seek medical attention. Prevention of anxiety and panic symptoms is not a test of your willpower. Instead, learn about panic and anxiety symptoms from your doctor, EAP, or health care provider. The EAP website has a confidential self test for anxiety. Excessive, chronic anxiety has been linked to a host of health problems and can contribute to depression.

## Nurturing Your Creative Juices



**Y**ou have probably discovered that your best ideas—your real rocket launchers—come while you are not at work. They pop into your head while driving, walking, taking a shower, or participating in nonwork activities. How can you use this awareness to effectively inspire creativity? Plan for opportunities where you can be stimulated by a completely different environment. Include new sounds, sights, places, conversations, people, and open space to free up your thoughts. Factor in undistracted "alone" time. When ideas come, have a way to capture or record the inspiration. Newton was alone under a tree when the apple hit him on the head.

## Your EAP Program

**A** new academic semester has begun, which often coincides with a significant increase in stress and demands for those who work at Sac State and its related entities. The EAP program is available to assist you with near any situation that may be causing distress or turmoil. A problem does not have to be work related to access EAP services. Some of the more common inquiries, in addition to stress and work situations, include relationship issues, concerns for a partner or significant other, child issues (we can see children as young as 3 years old) and parenting concerns. Our Web site contains self assessments for Depression and Anxiety. We offer short term counseling, consultation, trainings, and just the opportunity to discuss a situation with an impartial, though knowledgeable, person. All services are free of charge and confidential.