

# Faculty & Staff Living

A work and life newsletter

November 2005

Employee Assistance Program 278-5018

Norman Gibson, MFT, EAP Clinician  
Demetra Mihalakos, MFT, EAP Clinician

## Preparing for Natural Disasters



**W**hile some natural disasters are easily predicted, others happen without warning. Plan in advance so you are prepared. First, find out what natural disasters are most common in your area.

Flooding is the nation's single most common natural disaster and can happen in every state. Earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes, wildfires, landslides, and severe winter weather can also cause natural disasters. Making an emergency supply kit and developing a family communications plan are important in any natural emergency. Prepare your family by creating a family disaster plan. Gather family members and review hazards, warning systems, evacuation routes, and community plans, as well as what you would do if family members are not home when a warning is issued. Additionally, discuss the following: family communications, utility shut-off and safety, insurance and vital records, special needs, caring for animals, and safety skills. Create an emergency supply kit including your own food, water, and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for at least three days. Remember that basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment, and telephones may be cut off for days, or possibly weeks.

Once you have developed your plan, you need to practice and maintain it. Conduct drills that test the knowledge of your plan. *Important:* Don't forget to replace and update perishable disaster supplies!

Source: [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) (Disaster Communities> Preparedness> Community and Family)

## Kicking Off the Eating Season



**A**s the holidays arrive so do holiday parties, food, gift baskets, and goodies. It can all add up to thousands of extra calories. Preparation and awareness are your best weapons for this challenging season. Consider the following rules to arrive in 2006 no worse for the wear: 1) Decide you won't feel guilty for saying "no thank you" to office holiday treats. 2) Consider settling for keeping your weight the same rather than losing weight during the holidays. 3) Are buffet tables in store for the holidays? Eat a filling, but nutritious snack beforehand to help curb your hunger. 4) Holiday foods can be exciting, but don't make them a recreational sport. 5) Team up with a friend to help reinforce your commitment to reduce over-eating during the season.

EMPLOYEES ASK ABOUT THE EAP

## EA Professionals Not Judgmental



**Q** I want to be open, but am worried about what the EA professional might think of me or record in his or her notes during my session. I know the EAP is confidential, but I am still concerned. Should I be?

**A** EA professionals obtain only the information necessary for optimal EAP service to the client. EA professionals recognize the value and uniqueness of all persons. Therefore being "judged" or criticized is not part of the EAP assessment process.

# Cell Phone Risk Revisited



**T**alking on your cell phone while driving will quadruple your risk of a serious accident, according to new research by a leading Australian university. The study also found that hands-free mobile phones are no safer than handheld mobile phones while driving. The distraction of your mind appears to create the risk, not your hands! The link between cell phone use and increased crash risk was true regardless of the driver's age or sex.

Source: British Medical Journal; 07-12-05; Role of Cellular Phones in Motor Vehicle Crashes

# Alcoholism: The Lost Diagnosis?

**T**he American Medical Association (AMA) studied 250 insurance plans and discovered that less than one percent of alcoholics are diagnosed with alcohol use disorders by health care providers. The rate should be four to five times higher.

Although approximately 8 percent of working adults suffer from alcohol dependence, only .06 percent of all plan members (less than 10 percent of those with the disease) receive such a diagnosis. In contrast, 40 percent of depressed patients, 65 percent of diabetics, and 70 percent of patients with hypertension are identified. Ironically, alcoholism often contributes directly to these medical conditions, but is still not treated on par with them.

Source: AMA, Science News Department, 7-21-2005.



# Suicide Prevention: Counseling Works!



**A** person who receives counseling following a suicide attempt is 50 percent less likely to make another attempt. So, encouraging a friend or family member to seek professional counseling is the most important thing you can do to demonstrate support. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death for adults under 65, according to the National Institute for Mental Health. Seventy percent of people who commit suicide tell someone about their plans or give warning signs. Despite progress in the battle against the stigma of seeking mental health services, much of society still lacks a positive attitude toward mental health care. This results in patients failing to show up for scheduled appointments and other resistance to help. Give positive reinforcement to the person seeking mental health services, acknowledge a person's depressed state, and provide support to save a life.

Source: NIH News; 08-02-05

# Ask, "What" not "Why"



**A**lthough everyone experiences stress, the natural response to sudden and unexpected stressful events is often frustration and a belief that these things can be avoided if only we knew how. Some stress we can't control well, such as our response to natural disasters or rising gas prices, but the reality is that most stress is caused by our negative thoughts in response to situations and events. The good news is that we can control the way we think. To intervene quicker and experience less stress, ask yourself, "What can I do to manage this situation?" Ask this question sooner, and use it as a key health management strategy. This strategy takes you out of the victim role that emphasizes helplessness—the most stressful feeling of all.

## [Forward F&S Living to a Friend](#)

[Ask for automatic delivery by electronic mail](#)

[E-mail us at: eap@csus.edu](mailto:eap@csus.edu)

[Visit the EAP webpage!](#)

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

[Self-help web links](#)

[Community referral information](#)