

# Solutions

FAMILY  
SERVICES



EMPLOYEE  
ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAMS

NEWSLETTER

Issue 25

## WELLNESS:

*Are you taking care of your **WHOLE** self?*

### ***What is Holistic Medicine?***

*In our society it is common to think of wellness as the absence of illness. Holistic medicine emphasizes the need to care for the whole person – body, mind and spirit. The basic principal of holistic medicine is that optimal health results from harmony and balance in the physical, environmental, emotional, spiritual and social aspects of our lives.*

## HOW HEALTHY ARE YOU?

### PHYSICAL HEALTH

*High energy and vitality*

#### **How to improve physical health:**

- **Exercise regularly**
- **Eat a balanced diet** including lots of fruits and vegetables, avoid foods with chemical additives, and reduce your intake of sugar, red meat, unhealthy fats, caffeine, salt, refined carbohydrates and alcohol.
- **Drink lots of water.** Most people are chronically dehydrated. Drink 2.4L (10 cups) of water a day to replace water lost through regular metabolic processes.
- **Practice abdominal breathing.** Breathing through the abdomen instead of the chest improves energy, increases oxygen flow, relieves stomach pain and diminishes stress.

### ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

*Harmony with your environment (neither harming nor being harmed)*

#### **How to improve your environmental health:**

- **Go outside.** Indoor air can be as much as 100 times more polluted than outdoor air.
- **Sleep with your bedroom window open** to let in fresh air.
- **Keep indoor plants.**
- **Take frequent breaks** away from your computer.
- **Clean carpets and rugs regularly** with non-toxic cleaners to prevent build up of mold and bacteria.
- Ensure both your home and workplace are **well ventilated.**

\* Permission to photocopy with credit given to Lisa Pridmore, Consultant, Family Service Canada.

## WELLNESS: HOW HEALTHY ARE YOU? *(continued)*

### MENTAL HEALTH

*Peace of mind and contentment*

#### How to improve your mental health:

- **Seek psychotherapy or counseling** to help address deep-rooted emotional problems (Contact your EAP provider for counseling services).
- **Become aware of your beliefs.**
- **Replace negative beliefs with positive ones through affirmations** - positive thoughts that you repeat to yourself each day.
- **Practice guided imagery and visualization** - a way of using mental images much like those we have when daydreaming. Studies show that visualization can increase immune responses. Find guided visualization audiocassette tapes and CDs at your local bookstore or library.
- **Breathe.** Consciously taking full breaths will help you deal with emotional pain more effectively.
- **Meditate.** Meditation can improve immune function, reduce stress, increase oxygen intake, and relieve chronic pain and headache. Many communities provide training in meditation techniques.
- **Pay attention to your dreams.** Dreams are symbolic expressions of our inner emotional life. Write down your dreams immediately after you wake so you will not forget them. You will notice certain symbols or events tend to recur. Pay attention to these themes; usually they contain the most important messages your dreams have for you.
- **Keep a journal.** Writing out your daily experiences and feelings usually results in increased self-knowledge.
- **Have a job you find fulfilling.**
- **Play.** Regularly do something you enjoy.
- **Laugh.** Laughter improves our emotional state. Studies show that laughing can strengthen the immune system.

If you need assistance or guidance with holistic self-care, consult your EAP provider or a holistic practitioner.

Adapted from *The Complete Self-Care Guide to Holistic Medicine* by Robert S. Ivker, Penguin Putnam, New York, 1999.

### SPIRITUAL HEALTH

*Experience of unconditional love/absence of fear*

#### How to improve your spiritual health:

- **Pray.** Prayer helps connect you to Spirit. Most people who pray have a greater sense of well being than those who don't.
- **Meditate.** In the East meditation has been used for thousands of years to contact Spirit.
- **Be Grateful.** By becoming more aware of our blessings we strengthen our connection with Spirit.
- **Regularly take part in spiritual practices.** Make spirituality part of your routine.
- **Find Spirit in Nature.** Outdoors in an ideal setting to connect with your spirituality.

### SOCIAL HEALTH

*Strong positive connection to family and others in the community, and an intimacy with one or more people*

#### How to improve your social health:

- **Forgive.** Intimate relationships and unconditional love cannot exist without forgiveness. Learn to forgive yourself and others.
- **Make and keep friends.** Most adults have many acquaintances, but few still have a best friend in whom they can confide. If you find yourself in need of a good friend, remember it is never too late to rekindle old friendships or make new friends.
- **Volunteer.** Helping others through donations of your time and resources produces feelings of connection, a sense of unity and the recognition that in giving to others you are ultimately giving to yourself.
- **Foster committed relationships.** Your role as a lover, spouse, parent or friend provides you with the most powerful opportunities for spiritual growth on a daily basis. Make a commitment to become more conscious of all your relationships, especially those with whom you are most intimate.

**Family Services** offers confidential professional assistance on a wide variety of personal and work-related issues. For more information on your EAP, call:

**1-800-668-9920**