



## LOCAL EFAP NEWS

### Mental Health and the Workplace

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#### The Latest Numbers

A July 14th Globe and Mail entitled "Tackling a hidden health menace" provided some startling statistics related to mental health and addictions and the workplace:

- On any given day, 10-15% of Canadians are experiencing a work-limiting mental disorder.
- Over the course of the year, 20-25% of the population experience mental disorders.
- Fewer than 20% of those who need treatment actually get it.
- Employees are absent from work for a total of 35 million days each year because of leaves related to mental disorders. This represents nearly half of the work days Statistic Canada estimates are lost to the economy due to illness and disability.
- There are 1.4 million Canadians on short or long-term disability

leaves for mental health or addiction. That is 10% of the workforce of 14 million.

- The costs to employers total more than \$30 billion a year, considering lost productivity in addition to the costs to companies for disability payments and staff replacement.
- The average length of time it takes someone on mental health leave to return to full-time work is 40 days, but for many it can take years.
- In Statistics Canada's 2003 Community Health Survey, 20% of people with either mental disorders or substance dependencies also reported a physical disability.
- Statistics Canada survey also found 18% of people who do not seek treatment for mental illness say that they are afraid to ask for help.

*Source: Figures analyzed by Watson Wyatt Worldwide and the Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Addictions and Mental Health*



**HAPPY EASTER**

# CONNECTIONS

## The Top Ten Sources of Problem Stress at Work

According to the Global Roundtable on Addictions and Mental Health here are the top 10 sources of workplace stress:

10. The treadmill syndrome: too much to do at once, requiring the 24-hour workday.
9. Random interruptions.
8. Doubt. Employees aren't sure what is happening, where things are headed.
7. Mistrust. Vicious office politics disrupt positive behaviour.
6. Unclear company direction and policies.
5. Career and job ambiguity. Things happen without the employee knowing why.
4. Inconsistent performance management processes. Employees get raises but no reviews or get positive evaluation, but are laid off afterward.
3. Being unappreciated.
2. Lack of two-way communication up and down.
1. Too much or too little to do. The feeling of not contributing and having a lack of control.

## A Cure for Winter Depression

Good news for people suffering from depression in winter. New research has found that consumption of steamed potatoes is highly effective in treating winter depression. Winter depression, also known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), is believed to crop up from a lack of bright light during the winter months. Bright light changes the chemicals in the brain; but how this occurs and its effects are still being studied. Serotonin, also called the happy hormone, and other nutrients such as folate are generally deficient in people who suffer from depression. The Australian Centre of Neuropsychotherapy has found that steamed potatoes could provide greater use of serotonin for treating the disorder.

"If people exercise, have enough bright light exposure during the day, and have a good social network and nutrition intake, they could perhaps, if not totally, give up anti-depressants such as Prozac," said Rod Markham, the center's director. Steam cooking potatoes resulted in the highest retention of amino acids compared to other cooking methods studied. The centre found nutritional factors played a key role in the onset of depression, and eating more foods containing necessary vitamins could ease symptoms. (ANI Sydney, May 15, 2004)

Source: *Mood Disorders of Canada Newsletter*

## WORKING WITH STRESS

On February 9th & 10th, 2005, the Community Living West Nipissing's EFAP Committee and the Canadian Mental Health Association (Nipissing Branch) sponsored a half day workshop on "Working with Stress" facilitated by Beverley Beuermann-King. EFAP/North participating worksites were invited to attend. People in attendance were provided with a workbook on techniques and strategies to interrupt the stress response and to help find the path to balance. A credible, experienced and dynamic speaker!

Paulyne Charron

## NEW REP TRAINING

**Thurs., March 31st from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.,  
and Friday, April 1st from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon.**

**Please RSVP to Debbie at 494-8086**

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**13th AGM April 7th, 2005 @ 5:30 p.m.**

**Voyageur Inn      Canadian Chinese Buffet**

**\$25.00 per ticket**

**Call Debbie at 494-8086 to reserve your tickets!**

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