

The purpose of the "Wildcat Wellness Connection" newsletter is to keep you informed about wellness related issues.

Please note that information in this publication, along with other similar materials, is meant to complement the advice of your physician, not replace it. Before making any major changes in your medications, diet or exercise, please consult your physician.

Questions and Comments regarding the newsletter are welcomed. Please feel free to contact Wellness Coordinator, Megan Meeuwsen any time.

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## Occupational Wellness

Occupational wellness is about the happiness and fulfillment that you get from your work. "It is the ability to achieve a balance between work and leisure time, addressing workplace stress and building relationships with co-workers. It focuses on our search for a calling involves exploring various career options and finding where you fit.

Because what we do for a living encompasses so much of our time, it's important for our overall well-being to do what we love and love what we do. When people are doing what they were meant to do, they deepen their sense of meaning and purpose.

The occupational dimension of wellness recognizes personal satisfaction and enrichment in one's life through work. At the center of occupational wellness is the premise that occupational development is related

to one's attitude about one's work. Traveling a path toward your occupational wellness, you'll



contribute your unique gifts, skills and talents to work that are both personally meaningful and rewarding. You'll convey your values through your involvement in activities that are gratifying for you. The choice of profession, job satisfaction, career ambitions, and personal performance are all important components of your path's terrain" (Chobdee, 2010).

### Tips for optimal occupational wellness include:

- Setting career goals that reflect your personal goals
- Finding work that you enjoy

- Looking for opportunities to learn and grow in your work

### Explore the occupational dimension by:

- Making friends at work
- Participating in work-related social activities
- Finding work that is meaningful to you
- Setting career goals

"Are you engaged in the process of occupational wellness?"

Do I enjoy going to work most days?

Do I have a manageable workload at work?

Do I feel that I can talk to my boss and co-workers when problems arise?

If you answered "No" to any of the questions, it may indicate an area where you need to improve the state of your occupational wellness."

(Chobdee, 2010)

*“An important way to build good relationships at work is to learn how to handle criticism.”*

## Handling Criticism

An important way to build good relationships at work is to learn how to handle criticism. The natural reaction to criticism is to become angry, deny the problem and put the blame on someone else. This is expected because feelings have been hurt and the ego wounded. Self-protection will automatically come into play. Learning how to override the natural reaction takes time and practice and will help improve relationships at work.

Here are some ways to overcome criticism.

- When you first enter your work place, take a deep breath, smile and

try to relax.

- Keep good eye contact with others at work, especially the boss.
- Put negative thoughts and feelings about yourself out of your mind. Shift your thoughts to what you do well or like most about yourself.
- Don't take the criticism personally. It is your work you are being asked to change and not you as a person.

When the supervisor or boss criticizes, listen carefully without interrupting. Taking notes may be helpful, but be sure to keep good eye contact so that you ap-

pear to be paying attention. You can look back to your notes whenever you need to do so. This helps avoid making similar mistakes in the future. At the same time, you will be viewed as an individual who is concerned about getting the job done the right way. The relationships shared with co-workers and supervisors will improve if you handle criticism well. You will also gain additional respect from co-workers. Tension in the work place will lessen, and you will feel better about the job and about yourself.

(Taylor & Jones, n.d.)

## Improving Work Relationships

### **Develop a positive**

**attitude:** Avoid negative thoughts and criticisms.

Be less judgmental and more accepting of others.

### **Do not jump to**

**conclusions:** Gather as much information as possible.

Reacting defensively to situations without knowing the whole

story can cause misunderstandings. So you should respond, and not just react.

### **Improve your**

**communication skills:** Listen carefully and focus on the speaker's message. This will allow you to respond appropriately and avoid misunderstandings.

When the speaker is

finished, state your understanding to ensure there is no misinterpretation.

### **Resolve conflicts**

**early:** When a negative situation does arise, do not let it fester.

Be direct, but courteous.

Develop a plan of action to address the problem with your co-worker. (Cont'd...)



Image retrieved from cancer.gov

## ...Improving Work Relationships

Then work together toward resolving it, before bringing it to your supervisor.

**Set boundaries:** Developing friendships with co-workers is a natural process. However, it is important to set boundaries to ensure that the friendship does not interfere with your work.

Focus on your priorities at work. Try to limit personal discussions to lunch breaks or after work.

**Treat all co-workers with**

**respect:** Be respectful by paying attention, listening carefully, and responding appropriately.

Regardless of the situation, try not to lash out or be rude.

Be open and honest about your feelings and allow others to do the same.

**Understand and accept**

**personal / cultural differences:**



When you and a co-worker do not see eye-to-eye, try looking at things from his or her perspective. You will both be more productive if you recognize the need for cooperation to reach common goals (Stanford, 1999).

## Pulling Together: Teamwork & Collaboration

Are there lessons about teamwork that we can learn from geese?

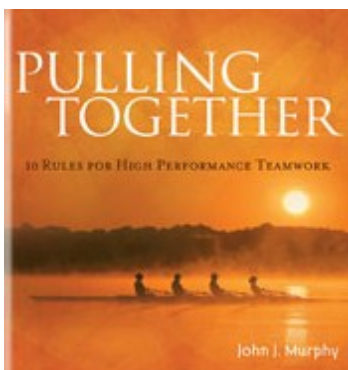
As geese flap their wings, they create uplift for the bird following.

By flying in a V formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if any bird were to fly alone.

If we share a common direction and a sense of community, we can get where we are going more quickly and easily because we are traveling on the thrust of one another.

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone and quickly returns back to formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front. If we have as much sense as geese, we will stay in formation

with those who are headed where we want to go... and we will be willing to accept their help as well as give ours to others.



When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies at the point position.

If we take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership, as with the geese... we become interdependent with one another. The geese in formation honk

from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. If we “honk,” we need to make sure it is positive and encouraging.

When a goose gets sick or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it.

They stay with it until it is able to fly again or dies.

They then launch out on their own, with another formation or catch up with the flock.

We, too, should stand by each other in difficult times, as well as when we are strong.

Let us all try to fly in formation and remember to drop back to help those who might need it! That’s the power of pulling together (Murphy, 2010).

*\*Excerpt taken from the Simple Truths DVD, Pulling Together.*

# Work Relationships

How you relate to people at work is an important part of being successful on the job. Developing good relations with co-workers and the supervisor should be one of your top goals when you begin work. This may take some time, but in the end it will be worthwhile.



Good relationships will allow progress to be made and will make work more enjoyable, but they must be kept in balance with the work itself. Here are some rules of thumb to keep in mind.

- **Do not become too intimate with co-workers or the supervisor.** Becoming friendly with a co-worker is OK, as long as others are not excluded, and everyone is treated with the same respect in work-related situations.
- **Try not to burden your employer or co-workers with personal or family problems.** This may make them feel uncomfortable and want to avoid your company. Besides, talking takes up too much of your work time.
- **Learn to keep emotions and feelings under control.** No matter how rude someone is to you, stay calm and don't lose your temper. If you continue to have problems with them, talk to your supervisor about it in private.
- **If there is a person you dislike or cannot seem to get along with at work, don't tell the whole world.** Talk to the person involved and be civil when working together. Keep your distance from this person in social situations. Keep conflicts with co-workers at a minimum or transfer to another job.
- **Avoid gossiping about co-workers.** Workers who do this are rarely trusted because they are so busy with other people's business that they can't tend to their own (Taylor & Jones, n.d.).

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