

IMPACT

Employee Newsletter

October-December 2006

Did you know?

- Free "Simple Will" Kits are available from Claremont EAP
- A free credit report is available once per year
- Claremont EAP provides legal referrals for family law, consumer issues, traffic violations, and personal injury
- Referrals are available for child care, adult/eldercare, adoption assistance, school/college selection, and pet care

Claremont EAP

800.834.3773

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We're on the web
www.claremonteap.com

12 Ways to Keep the Holidays Stress-Free

The holidays are supposed to be a time of warmth, joy and excitement. And for many people, they are. Still, the anxiety of having too much to do in too little time, the pressure of unrealistic expectations and the tendency to overeat and overspend can easily overshadow holiday happiness. The following suggestions will help you enjoy the season to its fullest with a minimum of stress.

Eat Smart

- Don't arrive at a party starving; you're likely to overeat. Instead, before you leave home eat a piece of fruit, a small salad or a cup of low-fat yogurt. Eating a healthful snack will prevent you from overindulging on mini quiches and other high-fat fare when you arrive.
- Avoid handfuls of anything. At the appetizer table, fill your plate three-quarters full with fresh vegetables and fruit. Reserve the remaining quarter for anything you want, even if it's high in fat, so you don't feel deprived.
- Don't feel obligated to eat everything on your plate or to have dessert. And think twice before going back for seconds.
- If you overeat, get right back into your normal routine the next day.

Shop Smart

- Give yourself plenty of time to complete your holiday shopping. Shop with an itemized list of what you'll buy for each person and a ballpark figure of what you'll spend.
- Brainstorm for gift ideas. If you're stumped on what to buy, consider what's important to the gift recipient. To personalize a gift that isn't personal, give the story behind it. For a book, write an inscription that explains why you're giving it or mention specific pages the recipient may find interesting.

Party Smart

- Keep parties simple by having a buffet instead of a formal sit-down dinner. Serve uncomplicated dishes (made with six ingredients or less) that you've made before.
- Buy nonperishable party items days, even weeks, in advance. These include groceries, beverages, candles, napkins and decorations. Save the day before to buy items with a short shelf life, such as fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers.
- Cook ahead. On the day before your party, prepare salad dressings, stews, casseroles, cold sauces, soups, desserts and dips. That way, during the party, you can spend as much time as possible with your guests.
- Hire a helper. To make your party more manageable, employ a teenager or a catering waiter to help you serve during the party and clean up afterward.
- Devise games guests can play to help spark conversation. For example, tape a piece of paper with the name of a movie character onto the back of guests when they arrive. Challenge them to guess who their characters are, with clues provided by the other guests.
- Be sociable. Attending parties when you don't know many people can be stressful. To break the ice, elect yourself the official introducer. If you see someone standing alone, go over and ask nonthreatening openers. For example, ask these questions at a corporate function: Are you a spouse or an employee? What do you do? What does your spouse do?

Addiction is a Family Affair

Addictive diseases trap the addict and the entire family. The addiction affects the thoughts, feelings and actions of every family member. You need to understand the effects on the family, as well as the roles that family members take on, and how to get help.

Effects on the Family

The addict's family members often share these concerns:

- They are suspicious of the addict's actions. This leads to constant family conflict.
- They blame themselves for the addict's illness.
- They are afraid of the addict's changing behavior, especially the mood swings. They also fear that the family unit will break up.
- They are constantly feeling disappointed by the addict's behavior.
- They feel isolated by the unspoken rule not to discuss the problem among themselves.
- They are embarrassed by the addict's behavior.
- They resent the unfair demands placed upon them by the addict.



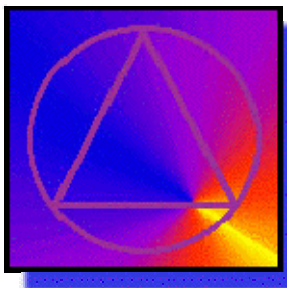
Family Roles

Family members can take on inappropriate roles:

- The rescuer wants to protect the addict from the results of the addiction by making excuses for him or her.
- The caretaker tries to make up for the addict's unreliability and lessen the possibility of trouble.
- The rebel draws attention away from the family's primary problem of addiction.
- The hero engages in nearly perfect behavior, secretly thinking that this will make it easier for the addict to quit.
- The blamer makes the addict the scapegoat for all the family's problems while not doing anything positive to change the situation.
- The adjuster distances himself or herself from pain by withdrawing from upsetting situations.

Roles learned in childhood due to the presence of an addict in the family will carry over into adulthood.

Getting Help



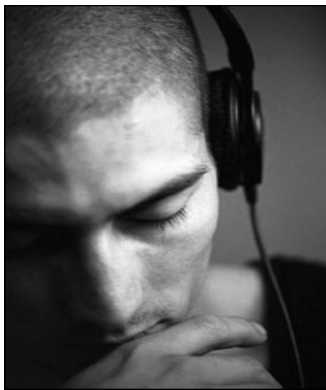
Some of the most well-known programs for families are Al-Anon and Alateen. Although Narc-Anon for the families of the drug-addicted is available in some areas, Al-Anon and Alateen can be just as effective. Many areas have Alateen groups (again, not necessarily just for alcohol-related problems) for teenagers who are struggling with the results of growing up in an addicted family. In addition to participation in these groups, professional counseling can be helpful. By reaching out for help and support, family members can begin their own recovery and get back into enjoying the world around them. Call Claremont EAP at 1-800-834-3773 to learn more.

Hassle-Free Travel Tips

Here are some pointers to keep in mind when you travel on business. They can help you reduce tension, put travel time to good use and improve your health and security.

Preparing at Home

- If you have family members at home or friendly neighbors, leave phone numbers with them where you can be reached.
- Leave specific instructions, such as household rules and what to do about visitors, medications, meals and activities, for anyone handling child care while you're gone.
- Ask a friend or neighbor to pick up mail and newspapers. If that's not possible, request that your mail be held and that newspaper delivery be suspended while you're gone. Avoid displaying notes on your front door.
- Travel as lightly as possible, packing items that can do double duty, such as dress shoes that could pass as comfortable walking shoes. Be sure to pack your exercise clothes and any portable exercise gear you may have, such as a jump rope, rubber or elastic tubing, swimming goggles or inflatable weights that can be filled with water.



On the Road or in the Air

- Take breaks to stretch, breathe deeply and shake out the kinks when fatigue starts to set in.
- Wear loose clothing.
- Counteract tension by regularly taking several deep breaths.
- Relax tight muscles by flattening your back against your seat, pulling your stomach in, holding your breath for a count of five and repeating; by rolling and shrugging your shoulders several times; by lifting your chin slightly and opening and closing your mouth as if chewing; by curling your toes, tensing your feet, holding that position and slowly relaxing the muscles; and by repeating this tension/relaxation cycle with different parts of your body.
- Use the radio or stereo in a car and headphones in a plane for stressbusting music.

At Your Destination

- Dress conservatively, carry your own luggage (and stay with it), and carry travelers checks and credit cards. Opt for accommodations with or near a fitness club, tennis courts, a golf course, a pool or a jogging path. Try to exercise vigorously at least three times a week, 20 to 30 minutes each time. If you jog, carry ID with you.
- When entering a hotel room for the first time, leave the door open while you inspect closets, under beds and in the bathroom. Then close and lock the door.
- Make a mental note of where the fire escapes are.
- Check out the local TV guide for exercise programs. You can get a half-hour workout in the privacy of your own room. Some hotels even offer their own fitness classes for guests.
- Whenever possible, use stairs instead of the elevator, and walk to meetings. Explore the area you're visiting and do any sightseeing you can on foot.
- If you see the sign "Watch out for pickpockets" or if someone asks if you've lost any money, resist the urge to check your purse or pockets. A pickpocket may be watching to see where you keep your money.
- Always keep valuables and important business documents with you.

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CLAREMONT EAP

Claremont distributes this newsletter to provide employees with general behavioral health information. If you have concerns about these or other behavioral health issues, you can call Claremont to arrange for assistance. You will be directed to an appropriate, experienced professional who can offer guidance in a variety of work and family matters.

Responding to the Human Factor in the World of Work