

# EAP Connection

Quarterly Newsletter

"To stay connected with you & workplace issues"

Winter 2010

## Family & Children's SERVICE OF ITHACA

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*Risks and Impact of Social Media on Employees and the Workplace*

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### **Risks and Impact of Social Media on Employees and the Workplace**

Technology without a doubt has had some negative impacts on the workplace. We've all seen it with email: co-workers sending around offensive jokes and pictures, or saying things in an email they would never say to a co-worker in person. Now, online social networking such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace have found their way into our workplaces. Public embarrassment, defamatory lawsuits and terminations have been some of the results. For example, an employee of a government agency in Australia was terminated after posting a derogatory comment about her employer on her Facebook page. Two Domino's Pizza employees are facing felony charges for filming a prank in the restaurant and posting it on the Internet. The CEO of Whole Foods Market made posts under a pseudonym on financial message boards bashing competitors. Employees may be

putting themselves and their employers at risk while using social media sites at work or involving anyone that you work with into this social network.

#### **Considerations for employees:**

All employees, including supervisors and managers should always consider how their online persona may effect their professional identity and professional relationships.

Individuals should use good judgment and discretion with the type of messages you post. If you choose to engage in online social networking, consider having a "friend network" and a "business network." Keep professional boundaries.

Remember that information you put online is NOT private. Anyone can perform Internet searches and find information about you, or for example, read your Twitter posts. Employers sometimes search Facebook or MySpace as a screening tool for hiring employees.

Take a look at what you've posted about yourself. Is there anything you've posted online that you wouldn't want broadcasted over the evening news or printed in the local newspaper? That includes photos too!

Employees are responsible for their actions and how they treat other employees and their employer whether it be in person or online.

#### **Tips for Employers:**

Have a clear policy about harassment, sexual harassment, and Internet use in the workplace and train employees about prohibited behaviors.

Quickly investigate and address issues or complaints

Consider blocking certain websites so employees can't access them at work

Managers should be especially cautious and maintain professional boundaries with subordinates, and avoid engaging in online social networking with employees

## **Family and Children’s Senior Services: Serving Individuals at “Every Stage of Life”**

Family and Children’s Service is dedicated to supporting individuals at “Any Age and Every Stage of Life.” The Senior Services program continues to embrace this concept through a continuum of care including Respite Care, Caregiver Counseling, and Geriatric Care Management. Senior Services offers compassionate support for individuals and families caring for an Elder or an individual living with a disability. Under the direction of the Senior Services Coordinator, a committed staff provide personalized services with a home-based option. The Seniors Services team ensures clients dependable, high-quality services with professionalism and dignity. Family and Children’s Service welcomes new program staff to administer the program, Jessica F. Gosa, LMSW, Kelly Philiba, and Elfin Johanson.

### **Senior Services**

- Respite Aides
- Caregiver Counseling
- Geriatric Care Management

### **Respite Care**

Respite services offer relief for caregivers who provide ongoing care for an individual requiring in-home supervision. Assistance is available for a few hours on a regular basis, to allow the primary caregiver personal time to engage in community activities, run errands or simply time to relax. Respite aides offer companionship and a wide variety of engaging activities designed to assist individuals maintain their highest level of independence. Respite aides provide:

- Relief for the Primary caregiver
- Meal preparation and feeding assistance
- Safety, comfort, conversation and activities
- Medication Reminders
- Ambulation Supervision

\*Please note Respite Aides are not intended to replace Home Health Aides or Nursing Services.

### **Caregiver Counseling**

Caregiver counseling services are provided by a MSW-level counselor with specialized training in Gerontology. The caregiver counselor offers ongoing education, supportive counseling, communication strategies, along with a continuum of care option through the Family and Children’s Service mental health clinic. Caregiver counseling services assist family members who are feeling:

- Stressed
- Isolated
- Overwhelmed
- Tired or fatigued
- Guilty or angry
- Fearful of the future
- Abandoned by family and friends

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## Geriatric Care Management

Geriatric Care Management offers a variety of client-centered, personalized, and customized services to assist older adults and their families in meeting long-term care needs. All service delivery options are designed by the Geriatric Care Manager (GCM), a trained professional dedicated to helping individuals and families access various resources and services. Geriatric Care Management includes:

- Care-planning, assessment, monitoring of individuals
- Information, referral, and access to community resources
- Organization of healthcare appointments
- Arrangement of home-maintenance, errand services, and meal delivery
- Review of legal, financial, and medical needs
- Assistance with placements in skilled nursing center, assisted living, or senior housing
- Education and advocacy
- Coordination of services for long-distance caregivers.

## Tips for Winter Wellness and the Winter Blues

Winter is a season where environmental characteristics and stresses affect many of us and our feeling of wellness. Decreased exposure to daylight can make some people feel fatigued and/or depressed. Many people experience what we call the “winter blues.” This is fairly normal for people to get blue once in awhile. However, for some people sad and blue feelings are much more intense and severely impact one’s functioning, behavior and mood. Some of these individuals may be experiencing **SAD or Seasonal Affective Disorder**: a type of winter depression that affects people each year between September and April. One should be diagnosed and treated by a trained professional, such as a physician or therapist.

### Symptoms include:

- Disturbed sleep: early morning wakening, desire to oversleep, difficulty staying awake
- Increased weight gain. Craving carbohydrates and sweets
- Depression (hopelessness, despair, misery, apathy) that occurs regularly during fall or winter months, but in remission in spring and summer
- Irritability, tension, mood swings and/or low stress tolerance
- Avoiding social contact
- Loss of libido
- Tired, lethargic, fatigue
- Loss of pleasure or interest in most all activities
- Leaden paralysis: heavy, leaden feeling in arms or legs

### Tips for Winter Wellness:

- Get exercise on a regular basis. Sedentary winter lifestyles lead to achy, fatigued bodies.
  - Change your fitness routine if you are bored of it or unmotivated.
  - Create some structure. Join a club, socialize, participate in a hobby.
  - Use brighter lamps and turn more lights on during the winter months.
  - Take walks at lunch or during daylight to get some exposure to natural light.
  - Restructure your workspace: put your desk by a window or add a lamp or two.
  - Strengthen your immune system by: limiting sugar, caffeine, alcohol.
  - Wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your face with your hands.
  - Drink plenty of fluids, and use a humidifier in your home and/or office.
  - To beat stiff muscles, stay warm and use stretching exercises daily.
  - **Contact your EAP or physician if your symptoms are severe or impact your functioning and get help.**
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## EAP

EAP is a free, confidential service for employees and eligible family members (spouses, dependent children, and sometimes domestic partners) EAP provides assessment, short term counseling and/or referral for nearly any personal, family or work related issue you may have. If further counseling is needed beyond the EAP, you can continue to be seen at Family & Children's Service using your health insurance and our sliding fee scale, or we can make a referral to another provider if needed. Contact your EAP for an appointment.

**607-273-7494 or 1-800-834-1239**

For questions about EAP, email us at [askeap@fsith.org](mailto:askeap@fsith.org)

Check out EAP Help Topics and EAP Links

[www.fcsith.org](http://www.fcsith.org)

### References:

McMillan, Wendy, LPC, CEAP "Social Media: The EA Professional's Role," Journal of Employee Assistance, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 2009.

"Social Networking 101: What Employers Should Know When Dealing with Employees' Social Networking Activity," E-Zine, Summer 2009.



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