



Metropolitan Employees Benefits Association

MEBA MINUTE

April 2009

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the Arts

We are Not April Fooling! MEBA has a website!

The website contains a wealth of information – including benefit summaries, frequently asked questions helpful health links, printable forms, and much, much, more!

Visit today: www.mymebea.org



Anthem Blue Cross News

LAUGH AWAY THAT STRESS!

The Robin Williams film, "Patch Adams," told the true story of a doctor who used humor to help his patients. The movie's message – that laughter is sometimes the best medicine – has actually been scientifically proven through research. But you don't have to be a rocket scientist to know that a good chuckle can make a big difference when the chips are down.

Laughter is great medicine for just about any stressful situation, from the hospital ward to the workplace. A good laugh can distract us and relieve tension when we're scared, worried, or sad. For example, even funerals and memorial services can have their lighter moments when friends or relatives share humorous stories about the person being remembered. It feels good to laugh and smile with others, even when it's through our tears.

So, the next time you feel stressed or worried, remember that humor can help. Pick up a funny book or search the Internet for the latest jokes. Read the comics or rent a comedy video/DVD. Call up an old friend and laugh as you reminisce about the past. And don't forget that laughter is a great tool to keep in your "stress reduction" file.

For more information visit:
www.anthem.com/ca/meba
Program name: MEBA

April is National Humor Month!



Kaiser Korner

FITNESS

By Debby Golonka, MPH



Fitness helps you feel better and have more energy for work and leisure time. When you stay active and fit, you burn more calories, even when you are at rest.

Fitness lowers your risk for heart attack, diabetes, high blood pressure, and some cancers. It also can help you to sleep better, handle stress better, and keep your mind sharp.

If you are ready to add more physical activity to your life, here are some tips to get you started:

- Make physical activity part of your routine. Try biking to work, using the stairs more often, or walking to do errands near home.
- Schedule activity for times that you are likely to stick with it. For example, walk in the morning if you tend to talk yourself out of it later in the day.
- Find a partner to do your activities – it can make exercising more enjoyable.
- If you want a more structured exercise routine, consider joining a health club or a community center.
- Find an activity that you enjoy and stay with it. Vary activities so you don't get bored.
- Setting small, realistic goals can help you improve your fitness. Write down your goals and activities. Give yourself a reward, like getting a massage, each time you reach a goal.

For more information visit: www.kp.org



News of job losses (whether we label them as downsizing, layoffs, or restructuring) reaches us daily. Sometimes the reality hits at or close to home. So if you are among this group of “survivors,” you may experience stress as well as feelings of anxiety or depression. These reactions are normal and will diminish with time.

Below, are some of the most common challenges survivors of downsizing face with suggestions for overcoming them.

Guilt – You may have heard the expression, “survivor’s guilt.” Even though the decisions about layoffs were not under their control, some remaining employees may feel guilty that they were “saved” from the job cuts. If you find yourself feeling guilty, try to look at the facts. Since the decisions were out of your control, you could not have prevented the cuts or determined who would go and who would stay. If you have difficulty overcoming feelings of guilt, consider calling your EAP or speaking with someone else who can help.

Stress – Any change is stressful and downsizing – whether you stay or leave – is particularly stressful for employees. Not only do you have to cope with the stress of job insecurity, but also you probably have even more work to do with fewer resources. Recognize the signs and symptoms of stress and learn to anticipate rather than merely react. Take care of your physical health as well as your mental health – get enough sleep, eat well, and remember that exercise is a great stress reducer.

Anxiety - You may still be on the job but you find yourself asking: “for how long?” The anxiety engendered by job cuts doesn’t end with initial layoffs. Survivors often live in a state of shock, wondering if the worst is over or still to come. The best way to relieve this anxiety is to get the facts. Recognize that fear of the unknown makes this situation seem far more threatening. If you know what will happen, you can begin to plan for it.

General Tips for Surviving Employees –

Try not to feel guilty about having survived the layoffs. The decisions about staff cuts were out of your hands. Do voice your feelings and concerns to your manager or supervisor, and ask for information that will help you in understanding where the company is headed and how you fit in.

Recognize that management may well be feeling some of the same things as you. Be willing to listen to them. Utilize staff meetings to offer ideas that may help the company, your team, and yourself.

Ask for clarity on new job responsibilities so that you are aware of the criteria on which you are being evaluated.

If you need additional skills to meet new responsibilities, ask for training.

Recognize any stress you are experiencing and learn relaxation and stress management techniques.

Think about what you want professionally and prepare for your future. Whether you remain with your company long-term or eventually move on, being actively involved in and positively contributing to reorganization efforts can enhance your professional growth.

Finally – don’t forget your EAP – this company benefit is available to help you “weather the storm” of organizational change.

Call 800-999-7222 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or visit online at www.anthem.com/ca/meba Program Name: MEBA

Is it so small a thing
To have enjoy’d the sun,
To have lived light in the spring,
To have loved, to have thought, to have done...
~Matthew Arnold



Anthem Blue Cross 24/7 Nurseline

You can call the 24/7 Nurseline any time to speak with a registered nurse who is trained to help you make more informed decisions about your health situations.

For accurate, confidential health information, call

1-800-977-0027

This number is also printed on the back of your Anthem Blue Cross Member ID Card.

KP On Call

Not sure what kind of care you need?

Call a registered nurse for advice, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The nurse can help assess your symptoms, provide advice over the phone to help you decide what to do next.

To reach an advice nurse, please call your physician’s office during the day and

1-888-576-6225 (1-888-KPONCALL)

after hours.