

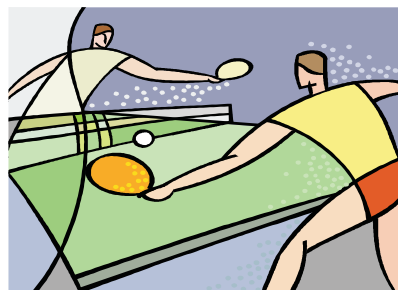
that they are supervised at all times). The atmosphere is relaxed and friendly and there's never any trouble. It's a great place to unwind after a stressful day at work. There is also a function room that hosts a wide range of activities aimed at all age groups from children's parties at Christmas and Halloween (free to children of members) to live music, themed nights and good old fashioned discos. There is also a regular quiz. All the activities are free to members and their guests. There are also regular trips away as well as sit down meals with entertainment, which represents great value. The social club is always looking for new activities to add to the list and welcome suggestions and participation.

The sports facilities are exceptional and include a full size bowls green, tennis courts, table tennis room, two snooker tables, two pool tables, darts, short mat bowls and a Nintendo Wii. There a number of active sports teams for the above, plus a football team, swimming club and a cribbage team. Table tennis, tennis, darts and the use of the Wii are free to members and there is a small charge for other activities - for example the snooker tables are £2.00 an hour to hire.

As well as the above, social club members can enjoy free car parking at County Hall on match days when Norwich City play at home.

It's very good value for £1.50 a month (or £3.00 for you and your partner) and a great way to beat the credit crunch!

For more information, please visit www.nccsocialclub.co.uk or email john.harries@norfolk.gov.uk



Norfolk Support Line

Norfolk Support Line is currently provided by BUPA and employees of Norfolk County Council are entitled to use their wide variety of member offers.

To view these offers, go to www.bupa.co.uk/memberoffers to see what is available. These special offers are changed regularly so keep checking online to see what's new.

Facilitator Training Sessions

If your school or department would like to join the Well-Being Programme or would like a new member of staff trained as a Facilitator see below for the next available days for training..

14 May 2009 - Norwich Professional Development Centre
9 October 2009 - West Norfolk Professional Development Centre
17 November 2009 - Norwich Professional Development Centre

Please contact the Well-Being office to book a place.

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 **Norfolk** County Council
at your service



NORFOLK CHILDREN'S SERVICES STAFF WELL-BEING PROGRAMME

Summer 2009

The newsletter for all employees of Norfolk Children's Services

Welcome!

Welcome to Summer 2009 Well-Being newsletter.

Do you have anything you would like to share about Well-Being in your organisation? We are always looking for items to add to the newsletter and share with our colleagues. If you have, please contact

Paula Amis at the Well-Being office, Room 055, County Hall, Norwich, NR1 2DL. Telephone 01603 222326 or email paula.amis@norfolk.gov.uk

In this Issue

Top Ten Stress Busters
Work / Life Balance
Norfolk County Council Sports and Social Club
Facilitator Training Days

Top Ten Stress Busters.

1 SMILE

Smiling is the first line of defence against stress. It's quick, easy and free! When you smile your body releases feel-good hormones, while the stress hormone, cortisol, is reduced. Smiling helps you feel calm and in control. It lowers your blood pressure and makes you feel good about yourself.



2 EXERCISE

As well as its undoubted benefits for your general health, exercise is highly effective in reducing

stress. It improves blood-flow to the brain, helping you think more clearly. Exercise is also another great way to release endorphins, the body's natural painkillers and feel-good hormones. There is also evidence that fit people are better to handle the long-term effects of stress.

3 GET ENOUGH REST AND SLEEP

Taking a rest isn't only about not doing anything. A rest can mean putting the emphasis on what you do in leisure time - hobbies, holidays, sport - to counterbalance work or everyday stress. We all need sleep for energy, good concentration and general health. Chronic sleep-deprivation can affect your performance at work, which can be a factor in raising stress levels.

4 POSITIVE THINKING

Changing your thoughts is not as difficult as you think. Try to adapt an outlook on life that stops you seeing external events as determining your happiness. It takes practice, but if you can do this you'll reduce the negative tension that leads to much of the stress in your life.

5 REACH OUT TO OTHERS

When you need to reduce the pressure in your life, you can't always do it on your own. Everyone should have a support network or friends, family, co-workers and other people they can call on to help take the strain - whether it's practical help or a sympathetic ear when you feel down.

6 ACHIEVE A GOOD WORK/LIFE BALANCE

Don't let work dominate your life. No matter how ambitious you are, it's important to make time for relaxation and fun. That might mean reducing the number of hours you work, or changing to a job that's closer to home so your commuting time is reduced. Use time management techniques to ensure you're more productive during your normal working hours, rather than continually staying late at the office.

7 RELAXATION

A good relaxation technique is an anti-stress weapon that you can always carry with you, to help you deal with any stressful situations as it arises. Make relaxation a regular part of your routine. There are so many relaxation techniques, from deep-breathing and visualization to mediation and self-hypnosis. Find one that works for you - check out the many books, cd's and DVD's that can help.

8 EAT A HEALTHY DIET

A balanced diet that delivers all the nutrients your body needs to function as its optimum level is essential for dealing with stressful situations. Cutting back on stimulants like caffeine, sugar, depressants like alcohol and nicotine will keep your blood sugar levels constant and help you to avoid mood swings.

9 HUGGING

Make sure you get and give your fair share of hugs. Not only does hugging feel good, it has been proven to help reduce the stress level, cortisone.

10 SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP IF YOU NEED IT

If you feel that despite all your efforts stress is getting the better of you, there are lots of people who can help.

Source from the International Stress Management Association.

Work/Life Balance

The term work/life balance was first coined in the 1980's when people began to recognise that while work is an important part of life, it shouldn't dominate people's family and personal life, and that a happy worker is a productive worker.

What gets in the way of a healthy work/life balance?

- The rising cost of living and an increasingly consumer society that means that people are more driven to earn.
- Supporting a family is more costly than ever with children becoming major consumers.
- We work longer hours, UK workers work the longest hours in Europe and many companies have a culture of overtime.
- People travel further to work, and journey times have increased significantly.
- More mothers go back to work and over two thirds of families now have both parents

working outside the home which puts a strain on managing childcare.

This all combines to make many of us feel that our leisure time and interests have become a low priority. However, it is possible to change things and to take control back to get the right work/life balance.

Achieving a better work/life balance

If you're feeling weighed down with work, chores or the daily grind, it's time to take a good look at life and the balance between everything to make sure that you're getting the most out of every area of your life.

- Work out what you want to achieve out of life so you can make sure you are working towards it.
- Even if you don't think you know, write a list of what you like and don't like about your life. Then you can start changing the things you don't like and finding ways to make more time for the things you do like. Writing it down will make you think about the choices you make to help you realise what your long term goals are.
- Once you've decided what you want to change, it's time to start setting yourself goals to achieve them.
- Make these goals achievable and give yourself deadlines but be realistic. Things might not change overnight, but taking steps to put change in motion and having things to look forward to will immediately start to make you feel more positive and in control of the situation you are in.

Top tips for putting your job back into balance

Examine ways you can improve things. If it's workload, can this be shared or would be better time management help?

Top tips for putting your life back into Balance

Think about why you're unhappy in your home life. Do you feel bored, stuck in a rut or like you haven't got anytime for yourself after you've finished working and looking after everybody else.

If you're bored a new hobby or interest can inject you with enthusiasm and widen your circle.

If you're feeling you haven't got any time for you, talk to your family about sharing the responsibilities and chores in a way you get more time to pursue your interests. Get a cleaner, ditch the DIY and call in a professional or tell everyone that a specified time every week is your time and you're not to be interrupted

Get a new hobby

If you want to inject some freshness into your life, taking up a new hobby is a great way to get inspired. If you've ever wanted to try rock-climbing, mountain biking or improving your vinyl collection, make time to explore your passion.

Hobbies are excellent ways to make you feel fulfilled and they can be a brilliant way of making friends and coming into contact with people who have similar interests, which can lead to a whole new social life as well.

If an obvious hobby doesn't spring to mind, sit down and think about what interests you and how you could get involved. Love reading? Join a book club. Love music? Buy some decks and learn how to mix.



Travel

Taking time out to experience a different place, culture or pace of life can recharge the batteries and help you go back to normal life feeling refreshed and motivated. Whether it's taking a day off or a year off, it's easier than you think to find a way to get away.

If money or time is an issue, there are still lots of options open to you to get the most out of your free time and have a break....

- Be a day-tripper. From day trips to France to cheap day rail returns, once you've got around the mental block of going a long way for a day, you'll be amazed at how much you can fit in so you feel like you've had a holiday.
- Be a weekender. Find a nice cottage in the country and enjoy the fresh air

Norfolk County Council Staff Sports and Social Club

Norfolk County Council Staff Sports and Social Club is a private members club, and membership is open to all local authority employees (including teachers) in Norfolk. It's also open to people who provide a service formerly by NCC (i.e. if you've been privatised you can still join).

At the clubhouse at County Hall there is a good selection of real ales, beers, and spirits, plus and extensive wine list. The prices are extremely competitive: £1.80 - £2.10 for beer. £6 - £7.50 for a bottle of good quality wine. Food is available on Friday lunch times, before Norwich City home games and is very good value for money. The club has been recently refurbished in a modern style (cafe/bistro style in the function room, leather sofas in the main bar) and has fruit machines and a very popular quiz machine. The club is fully wheelchair accessible and non smoking. Well behaved children are very welcome (although we do ask