

THE PORCELAIN PRESS

October 2011 - Weeks 3 & 4

Special Points of Interest:

FNAL's Employee Assistance Program provides effective on-line, telephone and face-to-face services for employees, household members, and any one covered under employees' health insurance benefits. Some areas the EAP can help with include: stress management, financial matters and emotional wellness. Contact them at x3591 for help.

Duplex Printing

On Sept. 1, all Fermilab central print servers defaulted to double-sided printing. The change, which will cut down on paper use, is part of Fermilab's efforts to go "green".

ES&H Concern or Suggestion?

Talk to your Supervisor, SSO or go to the ES&H homepage & click on 'Concerns & Suggestions'.

Workplace Stress

We hear a lot about stress, but what is it? Taber's Medical Dictionary defines stress as "the result produced when a structure, system or organism is acted upon by forces that disrupt equilibrium or produce strain". In simpler terms, stress is the result of emotional, physical, social, economic, or other factors that require a response or change. It is generally believed that some stress is okay but when stress occurs in amounts that you cannot handle, both mental and physical changes may occur.

"Workplace stress" then is the harmful physical and emotional responses that can happen when there is a conflict between job demands on the employee and the amount of control an employee has over meeting these demands. In general, the combination of high demands in a job and a low amount of control over the situation can lead to stress.

Stress in the workplace can have many origins or come from one single event. It can impact both employees and employers alike. Some stress is normal. In fact, it is often what provides us with the energy and motivation to meet our daily challenges both at home and at the workplace. Stress in these situations is the kind that helps you "rise" to a challenge and meet goals such as project deadlines. Some people may not consider this a type of stress because having met the challenge, we are satisfied and happy. As with most things however, too much stress can have negative impacts. When the feeling of satisfaction turns into exhaustion, frustration or dissatisfaction, or when the challenges at work become too demanding, we begin to see negative signs of stress. These signs may include:

Physical: headaches, clenched jaws, chest pain, shortness of breath, pounding heart, high blood pressure, muscle aches, fatigue, insomnia, frequent illness.

Psychosocial: anxiety, irritability, sadness, defensiveness, anger, mood swings, hypersensitivity, apathy, depression.

Behavioral: overeating or loss of appetite, impatience, quickness to argue, procrastination, increased use of alcohol or drugs, increased smoking, withdrawal or isolation from close family relationships.



Dealing with Stress

- Laughing is one of the easiest and best ways to reduce stress. Share a joke with a co-worker, watch a funny movie at home with some friends, read the comics, and try to see the humor in the situation.
- Learn to relax, take several deep breaths throughout the day, or have regular stretch breaks. Stretching is simple enough to do anywhere and only takes a few seconds.
- Take charge of your situation by taking a few minutes at the beginning of each day to prioritize & organize your day. Be honest with your colleagues, but be constructive and make practical suggestions. Be realistic about what you can change or accomplish.
- Exercise and eat healthy! Exercising with friends gives one a double-dose of stress relief.

