



Still-Well Newsletter Winter 2010

Vocational • Intellectual • Spiritual • Emotional • Physical • Environmental • Social

Still-Well
University Student
Wellness Program

“SafeZone for All” Project at ATSU under development

*by Arthur Matthews, Emotional Team Leader-
Arizona Campus*

Feeling safe on campus is about more than just making sure you lock your car, hanging on to your laptop or taking a well-lit route home at the end of a long night of studying. Some students feel unsafe on campus because of attitudes and bias about who they are or who they are perceived to be. To increase their sense of safety, a new program called SafeZone for All (SZ4A) is under development here at ATSU at the Arizona Campus.

“I see the SafeZone for All Project as a natural extension of the ATSU mission statement and statement on diversity,” says Art Matthews, Assistant Director of Counseling Services and chair of the SafeZone for All subcommittee. “The key to the success of the program is to be visible, enlightened and supportive to any and all members of the University community.”

The SZ4A is a program that proclaims a visible message of inclusion, affirmation, and support to all people. The purpose of the SZ4A program is to identify faculty, staff and students to model support, affirmation, and inclusion of all people re-

gardless of difference. Participants in this program self-select and voluntarily agree to be visible allies, completing a comprehensive training to be effective resources for their workplace and classrooms.

Campus SafeZone Projects have been springing up on colleges and universities all over the country for decades now. The original SafeZone Projects were designed to spread awareness and provide visible support to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people. The trend is now for those LGBT SafeZone programs to become more inclusive, transforming them into SafeZone for All programs addressing multiple facets of diversity on campus including, but not limited to:

- Sexual orientation
- Gender and gender identity
- Religious and spiritual beliefs
- Race and ethnicity
- Ability/disability status
- Socio-economic background

Through this program, participants attend educational workshops that explore the experiences of the diverse groups who make up our campus community.

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National Depression Screening Day

By Thom Van Vleck, Emotional Team Leader—Missouri Campus

On October 19, 2010, Thom Van Vleck, M.A. LPC of Counseling Resources combined resources with Erica Supple of Preferred Family Healthcare and held a Depression Screening Day. Students, faculty, and staff were invited to take part. Various studies report that 50 to 90% of the population will experience depression in their lifetime. Studies that are specific to depression in the physician population show that male physicians experience depression at the same level as the general population while female physicians experience it at a higher rate.

Screenings, whether for heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes or depression, provide a quick and easy way to spot the first signs of serious illness before that person might otherwise seek professional medical advice. Like screenings for other illnesses, depression screenings should be a routine part of healthcare.

The National Depression Screening Project, a mental health screening program, sponsors National Depression Screening Day each October. A.T. Still University held its screening day on October 19 and had 59 participants. Attendees heard an educational session on depression, completed a written screening test, discussed the results with a mental health professional, and/or learned where to go for additional help. Counseling services followed up on those that replied.

Screening of depression is critical. Depression is a prevalent mental health issue that can lead to serious medical illness

and possibly to suicide. People with depression often mistakenly believe that the symptoms of depression are a “normal part of life.” Clinical depression affects men and women of all ages, races and socioeconomic groups, and one in four women and one in 10 men will experience depression at some point during their lifetimes. Two-thirds of those suffering from the illness do not seek the necessary treatment and depression can co-occur and complicate other medical conditions. More than 80 percent of all cases of clinical depression can be effectively treated with medication, psychotherapy or a combination of both. Most importantly, screenings are often the first step in getting help.

All physicians, especially those in family practice, will deal with patients who are depressed. This depression may be a result of an illness or may be causing the illness. Either way, learning more about depression is integral to providing quality healthcare. So even if physicians don't have to deal with depression personally, they will have to deal with it in those that they are treating.

Screenings are not a professional diagnosis. Screenings point out the presence or absence of depressive symptoms and provide a referral for further evaluation if needed. You should see your doctor or a qualified mental health professional if you think you are depressed or experience symptoms of depression that are severe enough to interfere with your daily routine.



Erica Supple, Preferred Family Healthcare handing out surveys.



The Wilderness Medical Society, the Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Still-Well Environmental Team, along with Dr. Eric Snider, build a second bridge for the Nature Trail behind the Thompson Campus Center.



“All of us are afraid sometimes. That’s okay. It’s normal to be afraid sometimes. When that fear controls our lives, that’s dysfunctional.”

Author Unknown

Holiday Family Visits Don't Have To Mean Family Fights

What's more traditional than family visits for the holidays? Unfortunately, there's also, all too often, the tradition of family conflicts, as holiday stresses and holiday drinking bring old hurts and unresolved issues to the front.

If you find holiday family visits stressful, there are a number of things you can do to reduce the stress potential and to make them more enjoyable.

A good starting point is simply having a realistic view of the family get-together. None of us have families or family visits that match the images the media and advertisers bombard us with during this season. If you expect a family gathering will always be a perfect, loving, everything-goes-right experience, you're guaranteed to be disappointed. It's important to accept that families are just people with past histories, personal problems and personality quirks that aren't going to change.

It also helps to remember that who you are now as an adult is not the child you once were. Don't fall into your childhood role. You're no longer the big sister who gets to boss everyone, or the family baby who never has to help.

Understand as well that your relatives are also different people. Neither you nor they can fully understand all the changes and issues you've each experienced. Rather than pulling up past injustices or restarting old arguments, make a holiday visit an opportunity to get to know



brothers, sisters and other relatives on an adult level, learning who they really are today.

If, despite your best intentions, your holiday visit is almost sure to be one of family warfare, there are still alternatives. You get to control your visit. Choose to spend time with relatives you enjoy and politely avoid those certain to cause irritation. When trouble or disagreements are brewing, excuse yourself and take a calming walk.

You can also limit the length of your visit. Don't let guilt keep you there if the visit really is stressful.

Another choice is simply not to go. You can always schedule a visit at another time, when there won't be all the activities and stresses of the holiday season.

Guilt or a sense of obligation should not be why you make a family visit that's certain to cause you stress and anxiety. A holiday visit should be to enjoy yourself and your family. Take steps to ensure that is what's going to happen.

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Improve your friendships, make new friends and improve your health

The Mayo Clinic offers the following suggestions to improve your mental state by focusing on relationships and friendships. Most importantly, they offer several suggestions to strengthen relationships as well as ways to make new friends.

Why are friendships so important?

The connections of friendship can:

- Increase your sense of belonging and purpose
- Boost your happiness
- Reduce stress
- Improve your self-worth
- Decrease your risk of serious mental illness
- Help you weather traumas, such as divorce, serious illness, job loss or the death of a loved one
- Encourage you to change unhealthy lifestyle habits, such as excessive drinking or lack of exercise
- Share in your good times, such as a new baby, a new job, a new house

Ways to actively seek out friendships

Some people need more friends, some people need less. One thing is clear, sometimes developing new friendships is difficult: new communities, busy schedules, lack of hobbies, etc. all can lead to a more difficult time finding new friends. Developing good friendships does take some work. But remember that friends don't have to be your age or share a similar cultural, religious or educational background.

Here are some ways you can develop friendships:

- Get out with your pet. Seek out a popular dog park, make conversation with those who stop to talk on your daily neighborhood jaunts, or make pet play dates.
- Work out. Join a class through a local gym, senior center or community fitness facility. Or start a lunchtime walking group at work.
- Do lunch. Invite an acquaintance to join you for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

- Accept invites. When you're invited to a party, dinner or social gathering, say yes. Resist the urge to say no just because you may not know everyone there or because you may initially feel awkward. You can always leave if you get too uncomfortable.
- Volunteer. Hospitals, places of worship, museums, community centers, charitable groups and other organizations often need volunteers. You can form strong connections when you work with people who share a mutual interest.
- Join a cause. Get together with a group of people working toward a goal you believe in, such as an election or the cleanup of a natural area.
- Join a hobby group. Find a nearby group with similar interests in such things as auto racing, music, gardening, books or crafts.
- Go back to school. Take a college or community education course to meet people with similar interests.
- Hang out on your porch. Front porches used to be social centers for the neighborhood. If you don't have a front porch, you can still pull up a chair and sit out front with a cup of coffee or a good book. Making yourself visible shows that you are friendly and open.
- Join a church or faith community. Many churches and faith communities welcome new members.

Remember, even the most mundane meeting can be the start of a life-time friendship.

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The training provides allies with cultural competence and campus/community resources for students who need support. After completing the basic training workshop, participants receive a SafeZone for All placard, pin or magnet that is displayed in their work/living space or on their person. The SafeZone symbol lets everyone know they can feel safe to disclose something about who they are that may otherwise cause them to fear being judged, devalued or otherwise “unsafe” on campus.

While the SZ4A subcommittee currently includes only members of the Arizona campus, the project has already been approved by the ATSU Dean’s Council to go University-wide. Outreach will soon lead to inclusion of members of both campuses and regional centers.

The SafeZone Project will be open to any faculty, staff or students who are committed to making A.T. Still University a safe and supportive environment for **ALL** who make up our community. Watch for more in upcoming notices and publications!

Wellness Day Responses from the Missouri Campus

Several students were asked about their plans for Wellness Day last quarter.

“Hopefully I will be taking a mini vacation away from Kville!”

“I will be going to Chicago for the weekend to visit my brother and his fiancé.”

“I am going to visit my alma mater, KU. Then I’m heading home to Wichita to hang out with my family.”

“Max Gutensohn Golf Tournament”

“I plan to sleep in and then go on a really long run. Afterwards, I am sure that either a friend or I will have people over to barbeque. I will probably round the day off reading a good (*non-academic*) book. Thanks for letting us have a Wellness Day again!”



Safe Zone for All

