KEELE HELPS SMOKERS KICK THE HABIT
RAISING AWARENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH
TAKE A BREAK FROM YOUR DESK AND TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT
BULLYING IS BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH
Welcome to the 2nd Edition of the Alive magazine which supports the health and wellbeing agenda for improving and maintaining the health of Keele staff.

Having a healthy and stress free environment is good for everyone, so it’s important that staff are in good health and feel good about themselves. The University is therefore keen to develop and explore opportunities to improve working life.

“What having a healthy and stress free environment is good for everyone, so it’s important that staff are in good health and feel good about themselves”.

As part of the health and wellbeing agenda a number of events have been organised for the campus health and wellbeing week starting on Monday 6th June. Other events will be planned throughout the coming months. Please get involved and participate if you can.

Vice Chancellor
Professor Nick Foskett

Tell us what you think?

- Did you find the newsletter useful?
- What would you like to see more of in future issues?
- Have you got an idea?

Contact

Ian Williamson on:
i.williamson@per.keele.ac.uk
Head of Department of Occupational Health & Safety
Keele Helps Smokers Kick the Habit

Keele University has recently taken on the Breathe Easy Award demonstrating the University’s commitment to the health and wellbeing of both its students and employees.

Run jointly by Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, the award recognises organisations which have ensured their premises are smokefree and that have given support and advice to help people give up smoking.

The University has also been supporting some cutting edge research taking place in Staffordshire in relation to the new ‘Age Progression Software’ which has been created to show smokers how the habit will change their facial appearance as they get older. Smokers have been given the opportunity to experience the new stop smoking intervention and take part in the innovative research to see how well the computer software works.

Results from the study will be available later in the summer and will contribute to how Stop Smoking Services may be delivered in the future. For more information contact Leo Capernaros (Breathe Easy Coordinator) leo.capernaros@staffordshire.gov.uk or Keira Flett (Research Associate) K.Flett@staffs.ac.uk

The photographs help to demonstrate that the younger you stop smoking the younger you will look later! Leo Capernaros will be in the Chancellor's Building on 7th June if you wish to ask any further questions about the stop smoking services.

Raising the awareness of mental health

Recently staff from the Human Resources, Organisational Development and Student Support Directorate attended sessions delivered by Changes 12 Steps to Mental Health, a Staffordshire based Mental Health Charity.

Changes 12 Steps to Mental Health deliver various recovery focussed training sessions throughout North Staffordshire.

The “Making Changes” programme delivered awareness and reality to facets of mental health that may prove useful to staff at Keele. Many aspects of mental and physical wellbeing were covered in the well - received sessions including self esteem, healthy thinking, assertiveness motivation and the interaction between thoughts, feelings and behaviour. The final session looked at what stress, anxiety and depression are and the symptoms and implications for people who experience them.

Staff found David Wilks, Wellness Coach from Changes to be an inspirational facilitator for the sessions. Speaking afterwards David said “I have to say that those who attended made these sessions very enjoyable to deliver and information shared was received positively. We at Changes would like to extend our thanks for welcoming us to Keele University and would like to show our support for the upcoming “wellbeing week” and encourage as many people as possible to get involved in this worthwhile venture.”

The “Making Changes” programme has also been delivered to other organisations including Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Fire Service and Britannia. If you would like more information please contact David direct at davidwilkschanges@yahoo.co.uk
Doing something positive to help yourself

Read through these positive steps to improve your wellbeing!

1. Get active and get out there
   Exercise is great for wellbeing – it improves your physical health, gives you more energy and can even improve your mood! Getting involved with group activities can take your mind off your worries, and other people can be a great source of support. So, pick a sport or activity you enjoy, so why not try dancing, walking or even giving your old bike a run out. The senior common room (SCR) organises walks through its rambling group from time to time and you don't have to be a member to take part. Alternatively why not drop in at our Sports Centre and see what is going or enquire about our active Keele cycling group (http://www.keele.ac.uk/ke/) - lots of local maps to Keele are available so there is no excuse! Cycling is also better for the environment too.

2. Be creative
   Boost your mood by getting in touch with your creative side! Creative activities like painting, drawing or playing a musical instrument are absorbing and relaxing – and can even help you forget your worries for a while. Why not form a local group?

3. Try something new
   Learning something new can stimulate your mind, boost your confidence and can give you a new interest in life. For those of you who are less active, why not take up a hobby or learn a skill, like learning a new language, pilates classes, belly dancing or even coaching? Coaching courses are available through Keele Staff Development – see the article by Paul Yates in this issue for a fuller insight into coaching.

4. Chill out, take a proper break, and unwind
   If your life is hectic, it can sometimes be hard to relax – so why not set aside even half an hour a day to unwind and do something you really enjoy, like reading or listening to music? Looking forward to your ‘relaxing time’ every day can really boost your mood!

If you want to chill why not try alternative therapy, such as an Indian Head or Body Massage or even indulge in an aromatherapy session. Most Fridays Keele is fortunate to be able to offer a range of therapies through Melanie Bloor of Clear Channels. Melanie can be contacted on 01782 316563 / 07990552935 or by email mel@clearchannels.info
5. Eat well
What you put in can dramatically influence your mood! Cutting back on sugar and refined carbohydrates and eating a diet rich in fruit, vegetables, lean meat, wholegrains and oily fish will give you more sustained energy, boost your concentration and increase your mental wellbeing.

Try the following healthier alternatives to your usual sugary treats and see the benefits to your mood – and your waistline!

- A banana gives you a sustained energy boost and is packed with vitamins and mood-boosting tryptophan to keep you feeling good for longer.
- Dip a carrot or other crudité into a tub of dip, like low-fat houmous.
- An apple and a handful of nuts is a nutritionally balanced snack and fills you up between meals.
- If you can't resist sweet things, try mango – it’s sweet but nutritious, making it an ideal snack. You can even buy it in packs at the supermarket ready-sliced.
- Blueberries are a so-called ‘superfood’ – low in sugar and high in anti-oxidants, try them mixed with low fat yoghurt for a tasty snack.

Don’t forget the benefits of broccoli too, it’s rich is potassium and is great for battling high blood pressure. Broccoli also has other benefits including high in Vitamin C, aiding iron absorption and preventing cataracts. So get the most of your roast and serve with a large portion of broccoli!

6. Get a little help
Don’t be afraid to talk to someone. Don’t suffer in silence – It really is OK to ask for help if you’re stressed or feeling a bit down – chat to a close friend, family member, or even a counsellor. For a number of years Keele have had access to trained counsellors who provide a face to face, 1:1 confidential service.

Currently counselling for staff is via the NHS staff counselling service who can be contacted on 01782 552888 or by email staffcounselling@uhns.nhs.uk

More counselling information is available on the Department of Occupational Health and Safety website (http://www.keele.ac.uk/dohs/staffsupport/).

7. Drink sensibly
Many people take a drink to help them unwind – but did you know alcohol can be a depressant? Try to drink in moderation, drinking no more than 2-3 units a day for women and 3-4 units a day for men. You can enjoy yourself by drinking responsibly – and still take care of your health and wellbeing.

8. Manage your time
Workload can sometimes be a problem. Try these simple time management techniques – if you feel happy and in control you’ll work better.

- Break up a task into small, manageable chunks, and tick them off as they get done.
- Make a to-do list for the week, prioritising the most important tasks you have to get done.
- Clear your desk of clutter, so that you can focus on the task in hand.
- Work on difficult tasks when you have most energy – so if you’re a morning person, do them first thing. Save mundane or routine tasks for when you’re feeling less energetic.
- For a week or two, log how you spend your time in work. You’ll be amazed at how much time you spend emailing your friends or surfing the web! Then work out how you can minimise time-wasting activities.
When was the last time you had a really good laugh? Whilst we can appreciate how enlivening laughter is when we watch a hilarious comedy or see our kids in stitches, how often do we take the time to laugh in our daily lives? As part of the Health and Wellbeing Week, Keele University and College Union (UCU) are co-sponsoring (along with the Department of Occupational Health and Safety) a laughter workshop. These will take place on Tuesday 7th June and will be delivered by John Hipkiss from Team Building Laugh, who has led sessions for the University of Nottingham, amongst many other organisations. You can find out more at http://www.teambuildinglaugh.co.uk/

Amongst its countless benefits, laughter is energising, a great de-stressor, boosts the immune system, improves communication and aids positive thinking. The workshops will blend laughter yoga exercises with an uplifting mix of sound, movement, creativity and meditation. The session will take place in the Dance Studio, Sport Centre and will last around 1 hour. Please note, that whilst this workshop is co-sponsored by Keele UCU, it is aimed at all members of the Keele community, not just UCU members.

Please let s.gillham@isc.keele.ac.uk know if you wish to take part in the 12.30pm – 1.30pm workshop, or if you have any questions.
Coaching - helping individuals realise their potential

Paul Yates from the Learning and Professional Development Centre writes:

The Learning and Professional Development Centre has probably been best known for its well publicised programme of face to face workshops on a wide variety of topics. In some ways this is the tip of the iceberg, and less visible is the Centre’s work with individual members of staff. One way in which this takes place is through coaching.

Coaching is often confused with mentoring and the two do share many characteristics. People are often surprised when I tell them that a coach doesn’t have to have detailed subject knowledge. In fact, it could be argued that this could actually be a hindrance to successful coaching! Having been coached by someone from outside higher education, I can testify that there are benefits to being asked the obvious question, the answer to which has always been taken for granted. “Why do you do it that way” is a perfect example, that I am sure many of us would have difficulty in answering on occasions.

Questioning is in fact at the heart of effective coaching. A good coach will say very little, on the understanding that their client will actually have all the answers within them but may not yet have recognised that or been able to describe those answers. I never fail to be amazed when a client receives what we call a lightbulb moment and everything suddenly becomes clear in their mind. This does actually happen in most coaching sessions.

So what are the areas where coaching could be beneficial? Two areas where we have a track record are in preparing people for job interviews and helping them once they have assumed a new role. However, the potential benefits of coaching go much wider than this. It’s probably true to say that if an individual has an issue that they wish to address, coaching may be a means of doing so. Executive coaching is currently fashionable, but again this may hide the fact that coaching can be beneficial for the full range of staff. In higher education it may be worth stressing that this applies equally to academic and non-academic staff.

Who can coach? Several members of Keele staff have undertaken a formal programme in coaching, with others having attended a less formal workshop on the subject. It is therefore quite likely that you will have a trained coach nearby. Staff in LPDC are always happy to discuss how coaching could be used in your development if it’s appropriate.

Finally, it’s important to realise that coaching is inherently positive. In that sense it’s different from counselling, although again there are overlaps. Coaching is about developing the individual so that they can realise their potential. It shouldn’t be seen as a sign of weakness, but rather as another tool in the development of an effective workforce with all that that implies for the individuals and the organisation.

Coaching sessions normally last for about an hour and you would commit to a series of four or five such sessions, held by mutual agreement every few weeks. However, as part of Health and Wellbeing Week (on June 8th) you will be able to sign up for a single coaching taster session of half an hour to see whether coaching could be of benefit to you, without any obligation. First come first served! Please contact Paul in the first instance (p.c.yates@per.keele.ac.uk).

“People are often surprised when I tell them that a coach doesn’t have to have detailed subject knowledge. In fact, it could be argued that this could actually be a hindrance to successful coaching! Having been coached by someone from outside higher education, I can testify that there are benefits to being asked the obvious question, the answer to which has always been taken for granted.”
Endorphins, adrenalin and well-being on the hills

By Peter Hooper

As a keen (if intermittent) hill-walker I’ve known for a long time the many and various benefits of a regular dose of the hills. Whether its gently strolling over a local fell, or yomping at a ridiculous pace up a more remote mountain, a great sense of well-being can be achieved by attaining – through your own physical effort – a highpoint commanding extensive views. As Richard Macfarlane puts it in his book Mountains of the Mind (Granta Books, 2003) “...the mountain summit has become a secular symbol of effort and reward. ‘To peak’ is to reach the high point of endeavour. To be ‘on top of the world’ is to feel incomparably well”.

However, don’t be satisfied with a gentle stroll when there is so much more to be gained with just a little more effort. Well, actually quite a lot more effort, but you can do it in easy stages. It is like taking up running – start with a gentle half mile jog, build up to being able to run three miles and before you know it you’ll be addicted to 10k races, signed up for the next London Marathon and pushing out twenty mile training runs. Ditto with the fells: start by increasing the length of your strolls in the hills, begin planning some slightly more ambitious peak-bagging expeditions and then add to the enjoyment by letting your legs run away with you on the easy and grassy downhill slopes and you’ll suddenly (over a year or so) find you’ve transformed into a chilled out and seriously skinny fell-runner.

Actually, I can’t guarantee the ‘seriously skinny’ bit – I’ve been fell-running off and on for a decade or so and wiry leanness is still eluding me (probably something to do with all that pre-race carbo-loading and the regular post-race gallon of energy drink), but I can vouch for the chilled out experience. Think of the peacefulness of looking at views to forever and beyond, multiplied by the endorphin high from pushing yourself to your athletic limits (and it doesn’t matter if your limits are very modest – it’s pushing yourself to reach them that counts) and compounded by serious doses of adrenalin from blasting down precipitous and rocky slopes. I do wonder sometimes how much of the happy feeling is actually just from surviving a run without breaking something. They do say cheating death is the ultimate adrenalin high. Whatever. The feeling is fantastic and even better if you’ve achieved it in a fell race and are surrounded by similarly high and happy people. You’ll be buzzing for days...

If you’re interested and want to know more I can thoroughly recommend The Best of the Fells (Lulu 2010), a little anthology about fell-running that I published last year. It features sixty race accounts from all over the UK (and beyond) and all proceeds go to Mountain Rescue (you’ll be glad of that should you mis-time a downhill leap and have to call them out). But in terms of fitness, happiness and general well-being – well, as Cameron McNeish put it in his review of the book “Wish you could bottle that kind of character and give it away through the NHS. We’d be a changed nation”.

Best of the Fells is available for £9.95 plus P&P from lulu.com. If you want to try out some local fell walking and exploratory downhill jog then have a go on the Roaches – not too far, not too high and there’s an excellent post-race tea-shop for refuelling.
Resilience is the capability to maintain high performance and positive wellbeing. Resilient persons can achieve high performance and positive wellbeing in the face of adverse circumstances, and recover from and easily adjust to misfortune or change. Mairead Walsh, Counsellor and Service Manager from the University Hospital North Staffordshire (and a Counselling Tutor here at Keele) writes:

He suggests that we should:

- Be optimistic
- Develop the ability to think more flexibly
- Develop a personal moral compass or set of beliefs
- Be altruistic
- Find a resilient role model
- Build up an ability to face our fears
- Develop active coping skills
- Establish and nurture a supportive social network
- Keep fit
- Maintain a sense of humour and laugh frequently

Charney has written a book on this subject, entitled, The POW Response: A Prescription for a Resilient Life, which is to be published shortly by Houghton Mifflin.

There is already a book by Michael Neenan, an expert in stress management, called Developing Resilience; A Cognitive-Behavioural Approach. If you don’t know anything about the cognitive-behavioural approach, don’t be put off by the title. This is a very user-friendly book which provides useful guidance on building resilience.

If you want to learn more then Mairead will be giving a workshop on the subject on 9th June in DH 1.30A between 15:00 and 16:30. Please come along or book in advance – c.a.osborne@uso.keele.ac.uk
Alan Richardson (Pharmacy)

I’ve studied martial arts for a number of years, and found it to be extraordinarily beneficial. The image people sometime have of martial arts is very inaccurate. We are not all violent and aggressive individuals who think we can magically fly through the air between the treetops (well, I don’t think I can, but to be honest I haven’t tried)! I have found it enormously beneficial for dealing with stress, tension or even cheering me up if I am feeling a little depressed. Perhaps this is due to the release of endorphins during exercise, maybe it is the real sense of achievement when I learn a new physical skill. I can almost guarantee that during training, you’ll forget all the other problems in your life. A fist heading for your face tends to grab your attention!

It also helps with your fitness, self-confidence and spirit (I don’t mean this in a religious sense). There are many different styles of martial art, and within each of these there are also different reasons for practising them, the most common being sport, self-defence, fitness and personal development.

Some are athletically demanding, others are not. Some involve significant bodily contact and some pain, others can be completely non-contact.

At Keele there are several martial arts available at the sports centre including Judo, Ju-jitsu, Karate, Koryu Uchinadi, Ninjutsu and Taekwondo. It is probably best to decide what you want to achieve from practising a martial arts and use that to decide which you study. If you would like help with this, I am happy to provide advice.

Shirley Caldwell
(Primary Care & Health Sciences R.I.)

I like to walk with my husband, dogs and grandchildren at weekends or walk around the University sometimes in the week. I am a Reiki Practitioner so I not only do Reiki on myself and clients, but also sometimes for other colleagues should they be in need of some stress relief and relaxation.

I like to do belly dancing as a way of trying to keep fit, it also helps me to relax, make and be with friends whilst de-stressing.

If you need advice on how to set your computer up to avoid health problems then please contact the Department of Occupational Health by email healthandsafety@uso.keele.ac.uk
Bullying is bad for your health...

As part of the Health and Wellbeing week, Keele University and College Union (UCU) have organised two events about bullying on Thursday 9th June.

From 1pm - 2pm there will be a talk on Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace, in which John Bamford, UCU’s Healthy and Safety Advisor, will speak about bullying: what it is, some of the main issues that arise, what you can do about it, and the picture nationally. Local officers will outline the support available at Keele and then there will be a question and answer discussion, where you can ask John and local trades union reps your questions about bullying and harassment. A light buffet lunch and refreshments will be provided. All University staff welcome, but please confirm by email j.h.smith@keele.ac.uk - so that we have an idea of numbers and do let us know if you have any special requirements.

Then from 2pm - 3pm there will be an activists workshop on Tackling Bullying. John Bamford will lead this more practical session on campaigning against bullying and the importance of health and safety reps. Union members only. Again, please email j.h.smith@keele.ac.uk if you wish to attend the workshop.

Both sessions will take place in CBA1.098

Keele UCU is here to support you and we help our members with many issues relating to wellbeing in the workplace, including cases involving bullying. If you think you are being bullied, do not suffer in silence! Talk to one of your Keele UCU representatives listed at www.keeleucu.co.uk/committee-members/

Spinning for Charity

In support of a Sports Centre colleague who has suffered from testicular cancer recently a 12 hour sponsored spin was organised on 12 May. There were nearly 100 people taking part in the indoor cycling spinning event and they managed to raise over £1000 for the Orchid cancer charity. A great effort. Everyone enjoyed the event many of whom were in fancy dress!

Orchid is a male cancer awareness charity which is dedicated to supporting people affected by male cancers through a range of services, education and awareness campaigns and an innovative research programme.

www.orchid-cancer.org.uk

On the 9th June Keele Medical School will be in the Chancellor’s Building CBA0.013 providing information on Sexual Health and Self Examination.
Quiz - What do you know about wellbeing?

This fun quiz is designed to test your knowledge about wellbeing issues.

1. Approximately what percentage of the Stoke population is now classed as obese?
   a. 5%
   b. 10%
   c. 20%
   d. 40%

2. One of the following habits worsens the influence of stress; which one?
   a. Sleeping too much
   b. Undertaking physical activity
   c. Committing yourself to work
   d. Eating in a non balanced way

3. Which of the following statements are false?
   a. A rise in blood pressure is a response of the body to stress
   b. Massage is recommended for someone who feels stressed
   c. Some stress allows the nervous system to function efficiently
   d. You should never tell anyone you are feeling stressed

4. Is chocolate taken in moderation and as a treat good for your heart?
   a. Yes – all chocolate is good for you
   b. No – chocolate has no positive effects at all
   c. Yes – but it has to be dark chocolate

5. What is the most common fitness related complaint in women as they age?
   a. Diabetes
   b. Obesity
   c. Arthritis

6. Which of the following is the best source of vitamin C
   a. Brussels sprouts
   b. Sweet peppers
   c. Carrots
   d. Oranges

7. In a recent national survey what percentage of workers ate their lunch at their desk?
   a. 24%
   b. 44%
   c. 52%
   d. 66%

8. How many attempts do most people on average take before they successfully quit smoking?
   a. 1 –2
   b. 7 - 12
   c. 25
   d. up to 40

9. Stress is something:
   a. Natural
   b. Negative
   c. Unnatural
   d. Pathological

10. An ideal Body Mass Index (BMI) Score is:
    a. 10 – 15
    b. 20 – 25
    c. 25 – 30
    d. 30 – 35

11. How much of the body is water?
    a. 5-20%
    b. 20 – 40%
    c. 40 - 60%
    d. 50 – 70%

12. All the following symptoms can begin after an exposure to a stressful event, except for one. Which one?
    a. Concentration problems
    b. Panic Attacks
    c. Hyperactivity
    d. Toothache.

Answers:

1. c
2. b
3. d
4. c
5. b
6. a
7. b
8. b
9. a
10. b
11. d
12. c