



# 141

September, 2010

# Helping Hands

The Employee Assistance Program Newsletter

[www.iam141.org/eap](http://www.iam141.org/eap)

## Disability Etiquette and You

**F**ear of the unknown and lack of knowledge about how to act can lead to uneasiness when meeting a person who has a disability. When co-workers use “disability etiquette,” employees with disabilities feel more comfortable and work more productively. Disability etiquette is a broad subject with history and research to support it. Practicing disability etiquette is easy, and you will feel good helping a disabled worker feel more welcome. Did you know that you should not automatically give assistance to a disabled person but instead should ask first if the person wants help? If you are walking with a person who is using a guide dog, do you know what side of the dog to walk on? (The side of the person opposite the dog.) Download a disability etiquette guide at [www.unitedspinal.org](http://www.unitedspinal.org).



## School's Begun! How's It Going?

**S**chool is in full swing. Consider these tips to keep things moving in a positive direction. Try having a small back-to-school party soon to help your child bond with new friends. You'll meet new parents, too. Get the e-mailed updates, new rules, or schedules that may have been lost in your SPAM folder last month. Routinely ask your child about homework and relationships at school. Don't wait for problems to come to your attention because almost always, needed intervention is more difficult if it is delayed.



## Eat More Veggies!

**T**he federal government has designated September as “Fruits and Veggies Matter Month.” If you're a man, this is a good opportunity to start learning more about improving your diet. Research shows that men are more at risk for cardiovascular disease, stroke, and certain kinds of cancers because of poor dietary practices that skimp on vegetable intake. “Manly foods” are not steak and potatoes. They are asparagus, broccoli, peas, tomatoes, and other foods with cancer-fighting elements in addition to their contributions to helping build muscle strength.



## Harassed, but Not Telling?

**A**re you being harassed at work, picked on, or bullied, but staying silent about it? It's important to speak up. Say “no” and ask the person to stop the unwanted behavior. Do not hesitate to ask for help from a person who can assist you - your local union rep, your EAP coordinator, or even a good friend. If they cannot resolve it, then report it to a supervisor or manager. Surveys show that many workers who feel bullied don't report it. Suffering in silence is a recipe for building frustration, anger, and resentment. Your union wants you to be happy at work, and there are people whom you can trust who will help.



## Do You Have Social Anxiety Disorder?

**D**o you experience intense anxiety, have a pounding heart, sweat, shake, or even get an upset stomach at the thought of experiencing certain social events? Unexpected casual gatherings of coworkers where social competence is a must, giving a presentation, or suddenly finding oneself the center of attention can bring about debilitating anxiety for some people. These are signs of a possible social anxiety disorder. Social anxiety disorder is not shyness. It is associated with fear of being watched, being criticized, and others having negative opinions of you. Don't let this condition disrupt your quality of life and relationships with others. A counselor or your EAP can help you find resources to help you with this very treatable and common condition.



## IAM-EAP Peer Coordinators

**T**he mainstay of the District 141 EAP is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer much of their personal time to assist our brothers and sisters who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations. However, coordinators are trained to make a basic assessment of the situation and then refer to a professional resource for a more detailed evaluation and course of action. A complete listing of IAM EAP local and regional coordinators, including phone numbers, can be found on the District 141 website at [www.iam141.org/eap](http://www.iam141.org/eap).

## Surrendering to Social Websites

**S**ocial media sites are fascinating tools, but for many people they have become the primary means of interacting with others. It is easy to slip into compulsive use and rob yourself of time, productivity, and the benefits of socializing with people face to face. Has a website like Facebook become critical to your self-esteem? Are you anxious and frustrated if you can't get online? If you are "defriended," do you experience a grief reaction? If "logging on" is more important than reaching the bathroom first thing in the morning, or if not getting an electronic birthday card has you feeling depressed, consider your use of the computer and its role in your life. Computer addiction is not only about online gambling, pornography, or compulsive shopping. It is also about being overtaken by the Internet, feeling defined by it, and feeling inadequate without this activity being part of your life. Social websites are tools. But compulsive use can rob you of a more fulfilling life.



## Is Alcohol Making the Rules?

**I**f you are trying to reduce drinking-related problems by creating guidelines and restrictions to control your consumption, consider a professional assessment to rule out alcoholism. In the course of the illness, it is not uncommon for alcoholics to experiment with rules that they hope will prove or demonstrate that they are still "in control" of alcohol. This process is a natural part of denial. These rules may include vows to never drink until after a certain time of day (e.g., 5 p.m.), avoiding types of alcoholic beverages that have caused "problems" in the past, enlisting help from others to count drinks at social events, or planning abstinent periods ("going on the wagon") at specific times during the year. Drinking from smaller glasses may also be attempted. None of these practices demonstrate control over alcohol. They are indicators of lost control, a key symptom of the disease.

