

# Bastows

Making London Beautiful

2010

## Health & Wellbeing News

Issue 5



12/12/2010

# Christmas is coming...

... And at Bastows, we're looking forward to a fulfilling and peaceful time with Family, as well as a chance to plan for 2011 and a look back at our achievements in 2010.



This year saw a huge investment in training and development, meaning our health and safety competencies now exceed the standard, and our people skills are more highly developed than ever before.

We've taken time to meet with one another to share ideas, plan for the future, and discuss how we stay ahead of the field in every area.

Of course, we have to recognise one of our biggest achievements this year- winning not only bronze and gold awards but also an award for one of the UK's Top 5 Most Considerate Sites at the Considerate Constructors' Scheme awards in May.

It's testament to our values and desire to lead the way that we then developed our in-house health & wellbeing programme with ideas from across the Family and consultation at every level. The first survey in July proved very successful, with a high level of participation and great feedback, which has enabled us to improve the programme so it meets the needs of the Family.

We can't let page one pass without thanking each and every member of the Family for their support in helping Bastows attain the prestigious Investors in People standard, recognising our positive actions, investment, beliefs, behaviours and efforts made by us all to create an organisation to be proud of.



In Spring 2011 we will be assessed again for the IiP Health & Wellbeing award, meaning we again lead the way by being not only one of the first companies to be assessed for this in the South East of England, but the first contractor in our market to do so.

**So let's look forward to 2011 with positivity, planning and pride in the year past... and a renewed sense of wellbeing!**

## The Bastows Heath & Wellbeing programme: moving forward in 2011

*Our Health & Wellbeing programme* has already proven an invaluable resource for us all to take a more active role and increase awareness of health and wellbeing issues, with the Summer 2010 survey giving us all a voice and some excellent feedback on how we can do better to feel better.

We've implemented a process now for booking time off for medical appointments and personal issues, which over 30% of Family members have benefited from in the first six months.



This reciprocal programme is enabling and empowering all members of the Family while sharing the sense of being cared for and about.

The cultural and commercial benefits of the programme are already being felt just six months in to implementation... imagine what we'll achieve in time.

We want to build upon the good we've achieved so far to create a programme that both creates an open, honest environment of care and support while preventing illness, stress and unhappiness in the Family.

As we move into a new year, we'll be looking at how we develop the programme and ensure it remains valuable to us all.

The success of the programme depends on input from everyone; without consultation, it cannot meet the needs of the Family and without your ideas and suggestions, we cannot ensure it will meet your needs.

### So what's next?

We will be running the survey again in early 2011, and we hope you'll appreciate the changes we've made to the programme following feedback received from the Summer survey.

These newsletters will be sent monthly, and as always, we'd love your ideas for information we can share and issues you'd like to see covered.

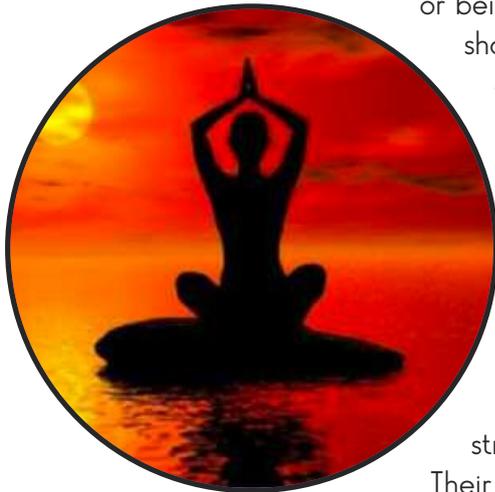
The Health and Wellbeing Working Party will also be meeting every month; please email Niki for more information and to advise if you'd like to attend.



## Nine basic human needs for emotional wellbeing: Part 2

### A sense of community and making a contribution.

Tying in with the need for meaning, this is a basic need that provides a context for a person. It gives them a reason for being, over and above their own personal needs, that has been shown to benefit the immune system, mental health and happiness.



This need can be fulfilled through supporting a relative or neighbour or being a part of a religious network, but can also be an idea shared with others, a club, charity or community work. In fact, anything that takes the focus off the self would enable a sense of purpose beyond our own existence.

### Taking heed of the mind body connection.

This is so important, and so often neglected. Without correct and regular nutrition, sleep and exercise, your psychological state can suffer considerably. It is often seen that young people, on leaving home and the structure that provides, succumb to one illness or another. Their mealtimes, sleep patterns and other regular habits become disrupted, with predictable consequences.

### The need for purpose, goals and meaning.

*"The devil will make work for idle hands to do."*

Perhaps the overriding element that sets human beings apart from other animals is the ability to identify, analyse and solve problems.

If this ability is under-used, the imagination can start to create problems of its own - perhaps in an attempt to give you something to do because it is not occupied doing anything else.

Regardless, if a person is deprived of the outward focus and satisfaction created by achieving goals, mental illness is often close behind.

The need for meaning is perhaps even more profound. Viktor Frankl's book 'Man's Search for Meaning' documents the impact of lack of meaning on concentration camp prisoners. He says in it that "What is the meaning of life?" is a question that others ask you, not one you ask yourself - it is only by being subjective about things that brings us closer to identifying what we feel to be the meaning behind life's big questions.

**Next month: challenge and creativity, and the need for control and intimacy**

# Top Ten Tips to a Better Lifestyle

**Smile and be Happy!**



The stresses and strains of today's world can lead to a hectic roller-coaster ride, with more and more pressures placed on our bodies.

The results can be excessive tiredness, increased stress levels; poor diet and generally run down machines. It does not have to be like that though; here are a few tips to a better lifestyle.

## **1. To lose your tummy - just add water**

Water is the single most important constituent required by the body. Most people do not drink enough fluid to keep the body working efficiently and by the time you feel thirsty you are already dehydrated to the point that your performance is likely to be impaired. Water can also help with a calorie-controlled diet, increasing the body's ability to metabolise food and therefore aid weight loss.

## **2. For peak fitness, eat the best foods on earth**

A well-balanced diet including at least five portions of fruit or vegetables a day will result in a healthy body and a healthy mind, free from toxins and impurities, which cause tiredness and irritability. Eating well helps the body to cope much better with a hectic lifestyle. As an added bonus not eating between meals burns fat faster.

## **3. Moisturise**

Don't neglect your skin. Increasingly varied climatic conditions can result in the over use of central heating, which can dry the skin. The use of a moisturiser will help to reduce dry skin with the effects of premature ageing and a sun UV protection cream will protect your skin from too much sun exposure.



#### 4. Get active

Increasing your body's activity levels will improve your internal systems, making for a fitter and more efficient you. Thirty minutes moderate exercise five times a week are the recommended levels but it can be as simple as using the stairs instead of the lift, brisk walking the dog, swimming or just altering your daily routine to include some keep fit time!

#### 5. Detoxification

Give up those stimulants that are harmful, which place more and more physical demands on your organs and systems. Give up smoking; reduce your alcohol intake (recommended safe limits: 2 units per day for women; 3 units per day for men) and all these will decrease your blood pressure and internal stresses.



#### 6. Early to bed, early to rise

Sleep is the body's regeneration time - returning all systems and functions back to optimum levels. A continual cycle of disrupted sleep will prevent this happening and ultimately reduces performance of the body. Earlier to bed will result in an earlier riser with a fully re-cycled body ready and able to cope with the day. Taking regular exercise can help regulate sleep pattern.



#### 7. Be body aware

Learn to listen to your body and spot signs of injury or potential injury.

Know what is normal for your body; including your skin, breast and testicular self-examination.

If you recognise a change ensure you report it immediately to your GP.

#### 8. Think positive

When you are happy or feel a sense of achievement your body releases positive hormones. This places your body in the positivity cycle. The positive hormones induce a feeling of well-being, which allow the body to cope with all kinds of situations. When you accomplish a task, the feeling of well-being increases again, constantly improving positive thinking.



### 9. Chill out

Be kind to your body, experience relaxation through Aromatherapy, Indian head massage and Reflexology.

Relax the body's reflexes and pamper yourself - you will be amazed at just how energised you will feel.

### 10. Take it a day at a time

You cannot change everything at once - try concentrating on achieving one positive thing per day.

It might take time; so be prepared to be patient but the results will be worth it.

**Please note: our external advisor Steve McGrane's email address for all Bastows Health & Wellbeing queries has changed to:  
healthandwellbeing@orangehome.co.uk**

## Child Support

This article by Karen Williamson originally appeared in 'Healthy' magazine, August 2010

When educating your little one, it's not all about teaching facts and figures. Learning about emotions is a vital element, too

You're a model parent - from solving quadratic equations to researching Henry VIII's wives, you're always on hand to help your children with their homework. It's giving them the edge over their classmates, right? Not necessarily. The latest research shows that if you really want your children to excel at school, you'll be better off helping their emotional intelligence - or EI.

Psychologists at the University of Central Lancashire found that children with greater emotional intelligence did better in SATs and GCSEs, and that children with lower IQs often did better than those with higher ones as long as their EI was higher. 'Faced with failure, a student low on IQ but who is emotionally intelligent will be able to manage their feelings about failure, reconcile poor performance and work to improve,' says research leader Dr Pamela Qualter. They also tend to be better at setting goals and dealing with the stress of exams, she adds.

It's not just academic performance that benefits either. According to John Gottman, author of *Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child* a child with high EI is more able to cope with everyday highs and lows, relates better to others and forms stronger friendships than one with lower EI.

Luckily, we're not stuck with our emotional intelligence and there's plenty we can do to improve it. 'Emotional intelligence is laid down in childhood but you can still learn a lot of inter-personal



skills in adulthood,' says psychologist Dr Pat Spungin. 'Working with your child's emotions will help you look at your own emotional intelligence, says Dr Qualter. 'It's also a great excuse to have a lot of fun in the process.'

### **Talk about feelings**

'Children copy their parents, so, if you don't talk about emotions, your children will be

emotionally illiterate,' says parenting coach Dorothy Boswell. Say things like 'I feel sad that Granny is in hospital' or 'I feel nervous about this new job'. And don't forget the positive emotions too, such as 'I feel happy when we watch DVDs together.'

'You should also ask your children about their emotions,' says Boswell. "'How did you feel when your friends didn't play with you?', for instance.' It can help to talk about your own childhood experiences and how you dealt with them.

And never belittle their feelings. If your child admits they're scared to do something, don't say, 'I don't know why you're scared - there's nothing to be scared of'. Say it can be scary to try new things. You may need to give very young children the words to describe their feelings - disappointed, frightened or excited, for instance.

### **Acknowledge their emotions**

'In everyday life, notice your child's emotions,' says Dr Spungin. 'Say, "I can see from your face that something has upset you".' If a young child is angry or upset, show him that you're taking his feelings seriously before trying to pacify or distract him. 'With older children, let them know that it's fine to feel angry - what's important is what you do with it,' says Boswell. 'By asking the right questions, you encourage them to find their own solutions.'

### **Read and play together**

Working out what other people think is a large part of EI. When you're reading or watching TV, Dr Qualter suggests talking about the emotions of the characters in the stories and how these might affect the plot. Books also increase the number of feeling words your child knows - characters are not just excited, for instance, but can be elated, overjoyed or thrilled.

Young children can also learn the effects their feelings can have on their behaviour through pretend play. 'It's fun and teaches children how emotions affect the way other people feel and behave,' says Dr Qualter.

## Deal with conflict

'Ideally, don't get angry and lose your temper with your children,' says Dr Qualter. 'But it happens - and when it does, apologise and calm down to talk through the problem.' If your children see you and your partner arguing, they should also see that, in the end, you work things out.

'People with high EI learn to remove themselves from a conflict situation for a while, perhaps about 20 minutes, to let their emotions adjust,' says Dr Qualter. 'Then they come to the discussion again calmer and more composed.' Seeing their parents do this could be a good lesson for children.

## Be open with children

'We often try to protect children from problems,' says Dr Qualter, 'but they are very perceptive so they will build up their own ideas of what is happening and why.' She says it's important for parents to talk to children about family decisions and problems - without frightening them. 'It's another chance to teach them about emotions and appropriate responses,' she says.

## Teach them it's OK to fail

'We all want our children to be successful at school,' says Boswell. 'In reality, children who have an easy ride and are unused to failing often don't know how to bounce back the first time they encounter failure.' She suggests allowing your child to fail from a young age. 'Let your two-year-old hold a drink and spill it - and show them it doesn't really matter,' she says. This helps them realise it's alright to fail sometimes.

'And if your child has done badly in maths homework, for instance, encourage them to think back about how they could have done it differently or whether they could have asked the teacher for help earlier on,' says Boswell. 'In other words, help them work out their own solutions by asking them questions and listening.'

## Mind your language

The language you use makes a big difference to the way your children perceive your emotions. The general rules of EI thinking are that you should label your feelings rather than label your children, take responsibility for your feelings rather than blaming your children, and suggest rather than tell your children what to do. So try our low to high EI swaps:

### After a clash with your child

LOW EI: 'You're making me angry.'

HIGH EI: "I feel upset and angry when you don't listen to me."

### Before leaving the house

LOW EI: 'Get your hat and gloves.'

HIGH EI: "What do you need to be ready for school?"

### To your teenager

LOW EI: 'You can't go there or come back at that time.'

HIGH EI: "I don't want you to go there because I worry about you. Sorry, but that's how I feel."

### When talking about another child's behaviour

LOW EI: 'What an idiot!'

HIGH EI: "He seems like an angry boy."



The Bastows Health and Wellbeing programme has been designed to support, enable and empower our Family

- to offer support when needed to help our Family members in times of crisis, anxiety or ill-health
- to enable us all to work towards the prevention of ill-health, and to take responsibility for our own health and wellbeing, in the knowledge that Bastows will listen, care and empathise with genuine need
- and to empower us all, so we each have a voice in how Bastows health and wellbeing programme develops and is shaped in future

**SUPPORTING - ENABLING - EMPOWERING**

Bastows are a responsible, caring company, but ultimately the responsibility for health and wellbeing rests with us all as individuals; without personal reflection, change and investment in ourselves, we cannot reap the benefits of any programme.



Your ideas, thoughts and suggestions are crucial to the success of the programme- get involved, have a say... and have a wonderful Christmas with your families!