



# Perspectives®

## NEWS ON THE NET:

Helping organizations and individuals maximize their human assets.

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### QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

“A mediocre idea that generates enthusiasm will go further than a great idea that inspires no one.”

-Mary Kay Ash

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### IN THIS ISSUE:

#### Perspectives Celebrates its 25th Year in 2006

A message from the President, Bernard Dyme. [MORE...](#)



#### Doctors Test Drug to Ease Traumatic Memories

Suppose your brain could be wiped clean of sad and traumatic thoughts. That is science fiction. But real-world scientists are working on the next best thing -- a pill that might make traumatic memories of events such as rape less intense. [MORE...](#)

Article Courtesy of Deployment Health Clinical Center newsletter

#### Set Healthy Goals and Help Your Child Do the Same

For many of us, New Year's resolutions are easily made and easily broken. Whether it's to lose weight, save money, or adopt a healthier lifestyle, New Year's resolutions can be hard to keep. But, working toward these and other goals can improve your life. Setting realistic goals year round -- and not just at New Year's -- can lead to a healthier lifestyle, improved self-esteem, and increased confidence. [MORE...](#)

Article Courtesy of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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*As Perspectives enters its twenty fifth year, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for putting your faith in us and allowing us to help your organizations and the people that work in them. Our success is due, in large part, to you and the many ideas and suggestions that you have given us in order for us to assist your organizations. I can't help but reflect back on the changes that have occurred in the workplace. Perspectives began because we saw a growing need to assist employers and employees to live more productive lives. In 1981, the U. S. economy was in the throws of a deep recession which saw many businesses in bankruptcy, the unemployment rate and the cost of employee benefit programs beginning to rise and an overall sense of economic insecurity.*

*Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) provided a way to help individuals better cope with this insecurity. They were designed to help companies maintain productivity and retain employees. Initially, mental health and chemical dependency services were the main issues addressed by EAPs but over the last two decades, we have broadened our focus to include "early intervention" and "prevention" services. We at Perspectives like to refer to these as solutions to "issues of daily living". Our goal has always been to try and intervene in organizational and individual concerns as early as possible. Therefore, we have always partnered with our client organizations to help them develop strategies for assisting employees before they develop problems. This proactive approach includes providing Childcare, Elder Care, Legal and Financial assistance.*

*We have also expanded the ways in which users can access our services. Unlike many EAP firms today, we still provide In-person services by EAP-Capable clinicians. In addition to these In-person services, EAP users can get assistance via the telephone through direct contact with our Professional Masters' Level counselors who can and will provide services if needed. On-line access to a wealth of information is also available on our website which is continually up-dated to provide new and relevant information. Finally, we can immediately direct people in need of assistance to resources using our extensive international database of professionals. But the services don't end there. We strive to make sure that the person in need of assistance is getting what they need so we will maintain contact with them for as long as is necessary.*

*In a world marked by constant change, Perspectives has been able to remain independent and stable. We have never deviated from our original mission of helping employees and employers to live and work more productively. Over these past 25 years, we have been able to maintain a steady focus on continuous improvement of the already high quality services we provide to anyone in need, whether that is an employee, family member or significant other, organization, supervisor or manager. Thanks to your continued confidence in Perspectives, we have been able to create long lasting partnerships with our client organizations. We have appreciated the many opportunities that you have provided us and look forward to working and growing with you for many years to come.*

*-Bernard Dyme, President*



# Doctors Test Drug

Psychiatrist Hilary Klein could have offered it to the man she treated at a St. Louis shelter over the Labour Day weekend. He had fled New Orleans after hurricane Katrina and was so distraught over not knowing where his sisters were that others had to tell Klein his story.

“This man could not even give his name, he was in such distress. All he could do was cry,” she said.

Such people often develop post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, a problem first recognized in Vietnam War veterans.

Only 14 per cent to 24 per cent of trauma victims experience long-term PTSD, but sufferers have flashbacks and physical symptoms that make them feel as if they are reliving the trauma years after it occurred.

Scientists believe the brain goes haywire during and right after a strongly emotional event, pouring out stress hormones that help store these memories in a way that keeps them fresh. Taking a drug to tamp down these chemicals might blunt memory formation and prevent PTSD, they theorize.

Some doctors have an even more ambitious goal: trying to cure PTSD. They are deliberately triggering very old bad memories and then giving the pill to deep-six them. The first study to test this approach on 19 long-time PTSD sufferers has provided early encouraging results, Canadian and Harvard University researchers report.

“We figure we need to test about 10 more people until we’ve got solid evidence,” said Alain Brunet, a psychologist at McGill University in Montreal who is leading the study.

It can’t come too soon. One government survey found almost one in six of American troops returning from Iraq showing symptoms of mental stress, including many with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Disability payments related to the illness cost the government more than \$4 billion US a year. The need is even greater in countries ravaged by many years of violence. Memories, painful or sweet, don’t form instantly after an event but congeal over time. Like slowly hardening cement, there is a window of opportunity when a memory can be shaped.

During stress, the body pours out adrenaline and other “fight or flight” hormones that help write memories into the “hard drive” of the brain, experiments have showed.

Propranolol can blunt this. It is in a class of drugs called beta blockers and is the one most able to cross the blood-brain barrier and get to where stress hormones are wreaking havoc.

It already is widely used to treat high blood pressure and is being tested for stage fright.

A pilot study by Dr. Roger Pitman, a Harvard University psychiatrist, at Massachusetts General Hospital, suggested that propranolol helped prevent the symptoms of PTSD in eight of 22 accident and rape victims. The finding was enough to convince the federal government to fund a larger study that Pitman is doing now.

Another study on assault and accident victims in France confirmed that propranolol might prevent PTSD symptoms. One of those researchers, Brunet, now has teamed with Pitman on

the boldest experiment yet -- trying to cure longtime PTSD sufferers.

The experiments being done in Montreal involve people traumatized as long as 20 or 30 years ago by child abuse, sexual assault or a serious accident.

“It’s amazing how a traumatic memory can remain very much alive. It doesn’t behave like a regular memory. The memory doesn’t decay,” Brunet said.

To try to make it decay, researchers ask people to describe the trauma as vividly as they can, bringing on physical symptoms like racing hearts, then give them propranolol to blunt “re-storage” of the memory. As much as three months later, the single dose appears to be preventing PTSD symptoms, Brunet said.

Joseph LeDoux, a neuroscience professor at New York University, is enrolling 20 to 30 people in a similar experiment and believes in the approach.

“Each time you retrieve a memory it must be restored,” he said. “When you activate a memory in the presence of a drug that prevents the re-storage of the memory, the next day the memory is not as accessible.”

Some critics suggest that rape victims would be less able to testify against attackers if their memories were blunted, or at least that defence attorneys would argue that.

“The important thing to know about this drug is it doesn’t put a hole in their memory. It doesn’t create amnesia,” said Pitman, but argued that medical concerns would trump legal concerns.

# Healthy Goals

Children also can benefit from learning how to set and reach goals. It helps them learn how to manage their time and make good decisions—skills that can have a lasting and positive impact on their future.

The following tips can help you and your children successfully set and achieve your goals:

## Be specific.

When thinking about your goal, be as exact as possible. People who set specific goals are more likely to succeed. For example, instead of saying that you want to save money, set a specific goal to save \$20 (or whatever your goal amount is) per week.

## Put it in writing.

Write down exactly what you want to achieve and post it in a place where you will see it every day. This will help remind you what you're working toward. When you write, use positive terms. For example, instead of writing, "I will stop eating junk food" re-word your goal in more positive terms: "I will make healthy food choices."

## Set realistic goals.

When you think about setting goals, make sure that they are within your reach. Be mindful of your finances, schedule, and other personal affairs. Many people forget to think about these important factors and, as a result, they set unrealistic goals for themselves.

## Develop an action plan.

Create a timeline with steps toward your goal. Set deadlines for each step and cross them off as you go. Sometimes just crossing things off and watching your list get smaller can give you a sense of accomplishment and help you to keep going.



## Believe in yourself.

Stay positive about your progress. Share your goal with a friend and ask him to help keep your spirits up.

## Be flexible.

Keep in mind that setbacks can happen. Don't get discouraged and give up. Your hard work will pay off!

## Reward yourself.

Acknowledge your achievements, even the small ones. Reaching a goal takes hard work and you should be proud of your efforts.

The start of a New Year doesn't have to be the only time you decide to accomplish a goal. Having clear goals and something to aim for can bring your family together and help you lead healthier lives year round. Make this New Year count and follow through on your resolutions!

