

Planning a Healthy 2011

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As we welcome in the New Year it is an ideal time to pause, reflect and ask ourselves what kind of year we would like to experience in 2011.

Within the workplace it's a chance to review our overall work circumstances. A chance to ask ourselves whether our position, role and function within our department and organisation continue to satisfy us. It's an opportunity to assess whether the role is meeting our professional needs, whether the job satisfaction continues and to review our contribution to the organisation, team and ultimately the consumer. Am I making a positive difference through my contribution?

If the answers to our questions are favourable I'd consider ourselves to be fortunate and take the opportunity to build on this. If the answers are unfavourable perhaps it is a chance for us to look for opportunities or challenges which will provide us with satisfaction and a sense of fulfillment.

Is it time to look for an alternate role within the organisation? Is it time to seek new challenges in new environments? Is it time to cut back on the hours we work or to look for opportunities to add value by contributing more of our time?

An individual's particular circumstances may make it difficult to simply move from one job to another. There will always be certain factors associated with our life, work and employment that require us to be careful with our decision making. However each of us has the ability to pause, reflect and ask ourselves these questions. This process costs you nothing more than a little time. Be kind to yourself by taking this time. You might be surprised by what you find!

While we're at it we can run a 'health and wellbeing' check of our life outside of work. This check can identify problems or warning signs which alert us to issues looming which may have the potential to harm or impair our health. Good health and wellbeing does not just happen! It's important for each of us to work on it on a daily basis.

Key points in a 'health and wellbeing' check include such things as diet. Let's take a moment to review what we eat, when we eat, how much we eat and even why we are eating!

Are we hungry? Is it out of habit? Is it to comfort us? It's important to listen to our body and to respect it! Do we need to make changes in response to these questions? Could I eat less, more often and not so close to bed?

Exercise and rest are important factors also. Let's ask ourselves how often we get outside into the sunlight, whether we move briskly, get our heart pumping and take in the environment that we are doing this in. Rest is equally important and something to monitor. We at the VNHP certainly know how hard it can be to get good sleep when working shifts, so the challenge certainly exists. However be mindful of not getting to bed too late and getting quality sleep when you do.

Our check also includes our links to others through family, friends and community. Let's ask ourselves how our relationships are tracking. Are they in need of time and work? Do I need to spend more time with my partner? Would my mental health benefit from visiting friends? We are social creatures and need social contact and interaction.

Nursing is a wonderful profession and for many makes for an amazing career however we must acknowledge that there can be a cost of caring which can come with negative consequences if we don't keep a check on things and make those changes when identified.

We at the VNHP are committed to supporting a healthy nursing and midwifery workforce in 2011 and beyond. Consider the questions above and don't hesitate to contact us if you need.