STANFORD WORKS TO IMPROVE WELLNESS IN THE GREATER COMMUNITY

Since 2011, the Stanford Health Promotion Network (SHPN) has brought wellness information to the medical, business and greater community. As a collaborative outreach arm of the Stanford Prevention Research Center and the Health Improvement Program, SHPN is a network of over 50 organizations including Cisco, Apple, Kaiser and local counties, facilitating thought-provoking and science-based discussions on current best practices and the future of worksite wellness.

As one recent example, Vic Strecher, PhD from the University of Michigan, spoke about having a sense of purpose. Dr. Strecher defines purpose as a set of goals associated with what matters most in a person’s life, and states that there are domains of purpose, such as personal life, family life, work life, and community life. Problems may ensue when a sense of purpose is lacking, (such as physicians losing their sense of purpose due to burnout); when there is intense focus on one domain area, such as work, at the expense of the others; or when lack of self-care leads to lack of enough energy to attend to the various purpose domains.

Research has found that individuals with a strong sense of purpose live longer; are less likely to develop stroke, heart problems, diabetes, depression, and even Alzheimer’s Disease; and are more likely to engage in preventive health behaviors, sleep better, and show more resilience to stressors. On a practical note, one research study showed that hospital workers were 40% more likely to use good hand-washing hygiene if they were told it helped prevent patients from catching diseases than if they were told it helped them.

Dr. Strecher believes that a life of purpose that changes over time and transcends the self can provide meaning and direction in an increasingly complex world. Please join us on Tuesday, June 5th for an encore event to hear Dr. Strecher’s inspirational story and the research behind “Life on Purpose: How Living for What Matters Most Changes Everything”.

Research:


Review of the health benefits of a sense of meaning/purpose in life, and review of evidence for possible mechanisms of this association including reduced stress, more adaptive coping, and greater engagement in health-promoting behaviors. Psychology Today blog