

## *Engage Others (Byte 6)*

### **Contribute to the Creation of a Healthy Organization**

The wise leader pays attention to the systems and structures that lead to creating health and helps followers navigate both the informal and formal structures within that system. The end result is a happier and more effective employee.



## ENGAGE OTHERS (Byte 6)

### Email Question: Do humour and laughter improve workplace health?

The attached video clip scene with William Hurt in the movie Doctor, is taking place in the back stairwell of a hospital. Two doctors are laughing and singing “My Friend the Witch Doctor”. Another doctor depicted as tired and worn-out, witnesses this bizarre behaviour. Slowly his expression turns from, “What is going on?” toward a clear understanding and he “gets it”. His expression changes to a quiet knowing smile. Laughter is a powerful antidote and has been found to act as a coping mechanism to reduce stress, improve self-esteem and reduce psychological symptoms related to negative life events. Bringing humour to the workplace has been a popular subject but empirical data are difficult to obtain as the concept of humour is complex and is difficult to measure. Recently researchers at Loma Linda University found that simply anticipating having a good laugh could produce health-protecting hormones. In a smaller follow-up study the researchers found that the anticipation of a humour-filled hour or two lowered the stress hormones cortisol, adrenaline and dopac (a by-product of dopamine) by as much as 40 to 70%. (Spilner, 2008). Using humour to counter stress effects seems almost intuitive to health care providers. Laughter at work is good medicine.



Video Clip: Doctor directed by Randa Haines starring William Hurt  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Msgis8wPUMQ>

Bennett, M.P. and Lengacher, C. (2006). Humor and laughter may influence health: II. Complementary therapies and humor in a clinical population, *Evidence-based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, v.3 (2).

Appendix IV:

<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1475938>

Spilner, M. (2008). Laughter really is the best medicine. *Stop Aging Now: Healthier, Longer Life through Knowledge and Nutrition*.

Appendix V: [http://www.stopagingnow.com/news/news\\_flashes/4191/Laughter-Really-Is-the-Best-Medicine](http://www.stopagingnow.com/news/news_flashes/4191/Laughter-Really-Is-the-Best-Medicine)