

**Enhancing
Meaningful &
Purposeful
Living for Residents**

Very Funny!

**Using Humor to Lighten
the Living and Working
Environment**



Copernicus

Claudia S. Blumenstock, PHA, President & CEO
407 Taylor Road, Honeoye Falls, NY 14472
P: 585.329.2071 | F: 585.624.3412
www.copernicusview.com | claudia.blumenstock@gmail.com



**Enhancing
Meaningful &
Purposeful
Living for Residents**

Very Funny!

**Using Humor to Lighten
the Living and Working
Environment**



Copernicus

Claudia S. Blumenstock, PHA, President & CEO
407 Taylor Road, Honeoye Falls, NY 14472
P: 585.329.2071 | F: 585.624.3412
www.copernicusview.com | claudia.blumenstock@gmail.com



V
e
r
y



F
u
n
n
y
?



Humorous?

What is funny?



What is *Humor*?

- ▮ a funny or amusing quality
- ▮ jokes, funny stories, etc., of a particular kind
- ▮ the ability to be funny or to be amused by things that are funny

"Humor." Def. 1,2,3. Merriam-Webster. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 06 Oct. 2014. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/humor>>.



Alleviates the Stress of Everyday Life

For Our Residents
Research has shown that stress can worsen memory and learning ability in elderly individuals because tension and anxiety increases production of cortisol (hormone that can cause damage to neurons in the brain).



For Our Residents
Less stress improves memory performance. Humor may be the key to reducing stress levels.

Singh Bains, Gurinder, Lee Berk, Pooja Deshpande, Premar Pawar, Noha Daher, Everett Lohman, Jerrold Petrofsky, and Ernie Schwab. "Ernie Schwab ." *Effectiveness of Humor on Short Term Memory Function in Elderly Subjects* (2012): n. pag. [Http://www.fasebj.org](http://www.fasebj.org). Web. 20 Jan. 2015.

Motivates People to Think

The Benefits of Comedy



Laughter Therapy in Australian Nursing Homes





The Most Accepted Theory

INCONGRUITY THEORY

The best way to get an audience to laugh is to setup an expectation and deliver something "that gives a twist."

The surprise must somehow "fit the facts,"...be capable of a resolution.

"A joke can fail in one of two ways:

- **It can be too benign, and therefore boring, or,**
- **It can be too much of a violation, and therefore offensive.**

To be funny, a joke has to land in that sweet spot between the two extremes."

McGraw, Peter, and Joel Warner. "What, Exactly, Makes Something Funny? A Bold New Attempt at a Unified Theory of Comedy." *Www.slate.com*. The Slate Group, 23 Mar. 2014. Web. 21 Jan. 2015.

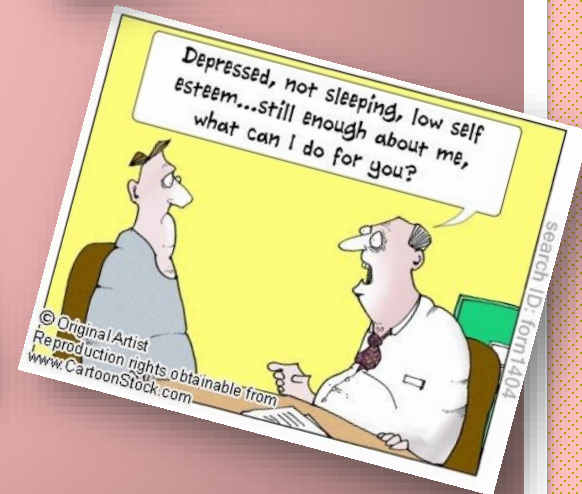
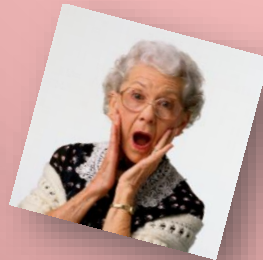


Universal Phenomenon Rather Than Universally Funny

Studies show that humor techniques like exaggeration, understatement, witty cynicism, verbal irony, disguise, and deception are consistently funny in markedly different regions of the world.

Are There Any Forms of Comedy That are Virtually Universal?

Should Any Topics Be Off Limits?



What Do You Think?

So How Do We Figure Out What's Funny to Our Residents???





Age Related Differences in Judgments of Inappropriate Behavior are Related to Humor Style Preferences

Stanley, Jennifer T., Monika Lohani, and Derek M. Isaacowitz. *Age - Related Differences in Judgments of Inappropriate Behavior Are Related to Humor Style Preferences*. [Http://blogs.uakron.edu/](http://blogs.uakron.edu/). University of Akron, n.d. Web. 14 Oct. 2014. <<http://blogs.uakron.edu/eal-ua/files/2014/07/Stanley-et-al.-in-press.pdf>>.

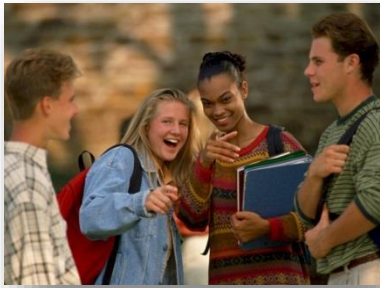


The Perception of *Funny* for Older Adults

A recent study found that older adults were less able to discriminate socially appropriate from inappropriate behavior than young adults which were depicted in clips from the British comedy, The Office (Halberstadt et al., 2011).

This study took the examination further and questioned how these social appropriateness ratings related to potential age differences in the perception of what is actually funny and what is not.

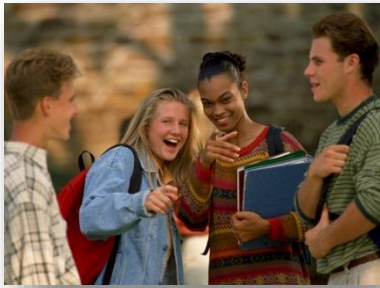




Social Appropriateness Ratings: Age Differences in the Perception of What is Actually Funny or Not



- **Young, middle-aged, and older adults were equally able to discriminate between appropriate and inappropriate social behavior in a diverse set of clips relevant across age groups**
- **Young and middle-aged adults rated the gaffe (social blunder or faux pas) clips as funnier than control clips and young adults smiled more during the inappropriate clips than the control clips**
- **Older adults did not show this pattern, suggesting that they did not find the inappropriate clips funny**



Social Appropriateness Ratings: Age Differences in the Perception of What is Actually Funny or Not



- **Young adults endorsed a more aggressive humor style than middle-aged and older adults**
 - **Older adults were much less likely to be fans of the aggressive style of humor, laughing at the expense of others**
 - **Older participants...liked affiliative humor, the kind of jokes that bring people together through a funny or awkward situation**

Based on the Research

THE YOUNG AT HEARTS

Northhampton, MA



Made up entirely of older adults, ages 70 to 94, they spend their Fridays taking nursing home residents on a nostalgic tour with their hour-long song-and-dance routine.

Creating a Fun-Loving Environment Begins With...



**Residents at
Manhattan Nursing
Home in Bronx, NY
perform their comedy
review, "It's
Vaudeville."**



**Something Our Residents
Can Relate to and....**



You!

**Obstacles?
Impediments?
Difficulties?**

**Barriers?
Stumbling
Blocks?**



Stress



Trust



Comfort Level

**: physical force
or pressure**

STRESS!

**: something
that causes
strong
feelings of
worry or
anxiety**

**: a state of mental
tension and worry
caused by problems
in your life, work, etc.**

- **Form into groups of eight people**
- **Appoint one person as the Facilitator**
- **Each Facilitator will be given six different kinds of balls**
- **The Facilitator will throw out balls to the team**
- **Each ball represents a work task/objective that the Facilitator will identify as each ball is thrown out**

- **The Facilitator will throw out the first ball to a member of the team.**
- **The aim is to throw and catch a ball between team members in any order or direction.**
- **Each ball represents a work task/objective named by the Facilitator.**
- **The ball must be kept moving (this equates to processing a task).**
- **Develop a method or process for throwing and catching the ball if this is helpful.**
- **A dropped ball is a failed task. A held ball is a delayed task.**
- **New balls will be introduced one at a time which equate to a work task or complication. Balls currently being thrown and caught must be kept moving.**
- **Keep it up as long as you can.**

**WHAT DOES
TOO MUCH
PRESSURE
OR FAILURE
FEEL LIKE?**

**WHAT ARE THE
DIFFERENCES IN
THE WAYS EACH
TEAM MEMBER
EXPERIENCED THE
STRESS?**

**DO WE KNOW
HOW OTHERS ARE
FEELING AND CAN
BEST DEAL WITH
STRESS AND
CONFUSION,
UNLESS WE
ASK?**

**HOW CAN WE
ANTICIPATE,
MANAGE AND
AVOID THESE
EFFECTS AT
WORK?**

**WHAT HELPS
US HANDLE
THESE
PRESSURES AND
WHAT MAKES
THINGS
WORSE?**



Ten Work Stress Busters

What the Experts Say



"10 Work Stress Busters - Follow These Top Tips from the Experts to Smash Stress at the Office." *Men's Health*. Hearst UK Wellbeing Network, n.d. Web. 29 Jan. 2015.

Copernicus

**1. Harness 'good stress' to deal with 'bad stress'.
Focus on the positive aspects of your day, even if they're only small, to lift your mood and help you focus on other problems.**

Dr. Robert Rosen, author



2. Scribble out anxiety by writing your thoughts down. If you're feeling overwhelmed, ...jotting down all the tasks you need to do and dissecting them (can) help you overcome tension.

University of Chicago



3. Phone home: talking to a loved one (can) boost the feel-good hormone oxytocin, leaving a smile on (your) face...

University of Virginia



4. Listen to music at your desk. Melodies provide a distraction, reducing muscle tension and cutting your levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Research has shown that listening to Mozart can help to improve your communication skills, creativity and task performance.

Mayo Clinic



5. If your To Do list becomes too long, swap your espresso for a glass of milk. It will boost your levels of feel-good hormone serotonin to beat the office blues.

Maastricht University

6. Stay at your desk late to beat heart problems. People who take work home with them are 20 times more likely to suffer.

Johns Hopkins University



7. De-clutter your desk to de-clutter your mind. Working in a clean environment helps free up your mind from unnecessary distractions, promoting productivity.

Wendy Hearn, Business Coach



8. Count to 10 in a foreign language. It distracts your mind quickly and efficiently enough to deal with sudden increases in your stress levels.

Will James, Psychologist



9. If you feel like you're about to boil over take a 15-minute break where you leave your work station and do some simple stretches. This has been proven to make you calmer and more productive.

American Journal of Industrial Medicine



10. Play a game. 'Casual' video gaming can reduce stress and have other mood-lifting effects. This does depend on the game though, a leisurely round of *Let's Golf!* (£1.79, iTunes) will potentially see a more positive response than a hardcore session of *Call of Duty: Black Ops*.

University of East Carolina





How Do YOU Relieve Stress?

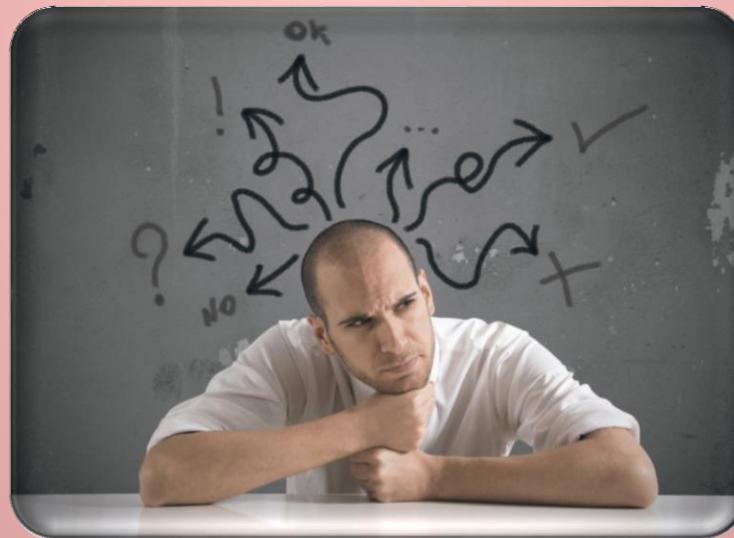


Expanding Your Comfort Zone

Improvisation Game

- Stand in two lines facing each other
- The people in the line that I designate begin telling a story, real or imaginary, when I say go
- The other person imitates all words and gestures at the same time that the story is being told
- When I say stop, people in the designated line move to the next person in the second line. The end person moves to the top of the line
- The exercise continues but now, people in the second line tell a story and their partners imitate them

What Did You Learn?





- **Staying focused in a listening posture**
- **Being comfortable making mistakes**



- **Stretching into the uncomfortable**
- **Making a different kind of connection**



**What Other Strategies
Work for You?**



TRUST

Who's
Got the
Dollar?



**Creating an
Atmosphere of Trust**



How Does Someone Build Trust with You?



**How Do We Help Staff to Feel
Comfortable in Engaging
Humorously with Residents?**

TRUST

...your guide to measurement...

Golden Rule

...words will always infer what actions will be observed...

Align Words & Actions

...demonstrate that you are sincerely interested...

Connect & Care with People

Admit & Correct Mistakes

...the test is how to respond...

Have Fun
...people-centric...

Be Consistent

...establish a baseline for expectations...

Celebrate
...an expression of what you value...

Encourage Ideas

...actively listen and observe...

Be Fair

...practices are sensible for all parties...

McIntosh, Frank. "Relational Leadership and Employee Retention - A Match, Part 2 (Segment One) - StrategyDriven." StrategyDriven RSS2. StrategyDriven Enterprises, LLC, 22 Oct. 2010. Web. 03 Feb. 2015.

Some of the Trust Building Blocks to Develop Collaboration



Isaac Chernotsky
Executive Director

Pharrell Williams
(never too old to be) HAPPY



Meadowbrook Senior Living at
Agoura Hills, Agoura Hills, CA

Copernicus



Hints for Your Residents

- **Learn what's funny to them**
- **Tap into their stories**
- **Keep it light**
- **Inject laughter and upbeat behavior**



Hints for Staff

- **Create an environment which encourages spontaneity**
- **Be aware of cultural differences**
- **Recognize the value of a smile**
- **Lead with laughter**

Foster Infectious Fun...It's Contagious!



Copernicus

Loading up with ideas – Try it out!

For Residents



Tell a Group Story

People Poker

- Each person gets a playing card
- I'll call out the hand that I want you to put together
- As quickly as you can, find people that can make the hand, collectively
- The first group to make the hand wins a prize





Implementing a Humor Program

For Our Residents

- **Humor activities assessment**
- **Humor corner**
- **Joke swap**
- **Humor photos.**
- **Movies, television and radio programs**



- **Story writing and reminiscence**
- **Funny entertainers**
- **Telling a group story**
- **Charades**
- **Funny fashion show**

- **Humor bulletin board**
- **Comedy videos**
- **Improvisation**
- **joke and punch lines**
- **Bad joke day**
- **Humorous art**

For Staff

- Establish a fun committee
- Develop a humor first aid kit
- Create humor in the break room
- Create a tension release area
- Institute dress-up days
- Organize caption cartoon contests
- Open or close a meeting with a funny incident that happened at work



- Decorate meeting areas with funny posters
- Have a "pizza" complaint party
- Post childhood photos

- Put silly nose glasses in the restrooms
- Use humor to promote an upcoming event
- Add cartoons and funny quotes to meeting agendas
- Put a motto over your desk that helps keep daily hassles in perspective
- Foster an environment for employee skits

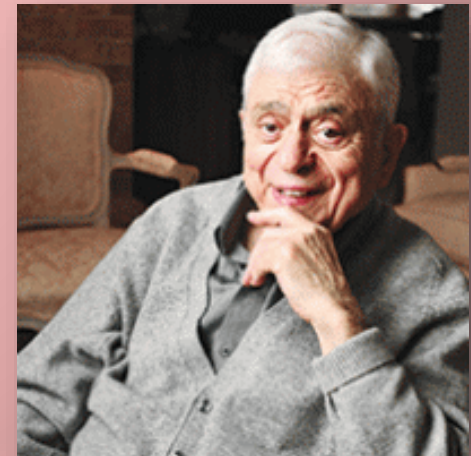
A Mistake

I received a call from a high school classmate in search of my legal services. The call was not unexpected since my classmate experienced unusual life occurrences, many times of his own making. He reminded me that he was a contractor who also did demolition work.

He explained that he had secured a contract to demolish a building and had walked through said building in order to give an estimate for its demolition. His quote was accepted and a date was set for the work to be done.

He told me that he talked to the tenants of the two adjacent buildings to inform them and to let them know that they would have to vacate during the demolition.

Soon after the demolition he was told, to his horror, that he destroyed the wrong building which is why he needed a lawyer. It took much longer to resolve the case than it did to blow up the building! My client was very relieved to learn that his insurance policy covered the loss. His response to me was, "I didn't know that insurance covered stupidity!"



Copernicus

Claudia S. Blumenstock, NHA PRESIDENT & CEO
407 Taylor Road, Honeoye Falls, NY 14472
p: 585.329.2071 | f: 585.624.3412
www.copernicusview.com | claudia.blumenstock@gmail.com



**"My memory is gone Mildred, so I changed my password to
"Incorrect." That way when I log in with the wrong password,
the computer will tell me... "Your password is incorrect."**

Thank You!