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Whether you need to talk, tackle some tough issues or just get some encouragement as you juggle multiple priorities and pressures as a resident, we're as close as your phone. The free, completely confidential Residents Assistance Program Hotline, **(813) 870-3344**, provided by Wood & Associates, P.A. can provide advice and resources to help you move forward in your career and personal life. You're not alone—we understand and we're here for you.

Vol. I No. 10 Residents Assistance Program Newsletter Sept. 2000

Professional Networking: An Essential Support System

When the going gets tough, the tough *start networking*.

While that may seem an unlikely strategy for time-starved medical residents, there's a lot of wisdom in it. Tap into a network of colleagues and you'll find people who understand exactly what you're going through. Learn new ways to interact with fellow physicians and ultimately your patients will benefit.

"Getting together with colleagues is one of our biggest challenges as professionals, a real Catch-22," says S. 'Jay' Jayasankar, M.D. "Our circumstances make it difficult to network with other physicians, yet networking can help us manage pressure and even manage our time more effectively."

Jayasankar, an orthopedic surgeon in Boston, chairs the Massachusetts Medical Society Committee on Medical Service. He is active in the AMA and is president-elect of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPIO). An advocate for physician collegiality in daily practice and through organized medicine, he

has presented programs on improving physician collegiality to district medical societies.

A Change of Perspective

When physicians do make time to interact informally or through organized medicine, the benefits can include a healthier mental attitude. "I think we need the networking," says Jayasankar. "Misery loves company, and sometimes we need a gripe session. It's good therapy to ventilate and talk things out. Interrelationships are essential for general well-being, and when you network with peer groups outside of work, you can learn how others organize their work and work relationships, and that will help you relate to your superiors and those who work for you."

He adds that it's helpful for young physicians to be able to talk with older physicians at medical society meetings or informally. These may be brief conversations or more long-term mentor relationships.

The perspective of another physician can help a resident see that there *is* life after residency, and that a balance

between one's work life and personal life is possible.

Another benefit residents will reap when they interact with their larger peer group is an understanding of the profession as a whole. "We often tend to focus on the little things, but we need to look far beyond our front bumper, to anticipate changes in the profession," Jayasankar notes.

Ultimately, Patients Benefit

Collegiality can be defined as a relationship of respect, trust and cooperation among professionals. But as residents

See Networking, column 2, on back



\$\$\$ Money

Q. I'm just beginning to plan my investment strategy. Should I be looking at growth investing or value investing?

A. There are reasons to consider including both growth and value stocks in your portfolio.

Growth investments are for investors who believe the vision – and the potential – that a company has to offer. These companies typically have solid growth in revenue and earnings. Investors are often willing to pay more for investments that offer such appeal and promise.

Value investments, on the other hand, cater to individuals who believe a company's full potential has not been recognized by Wall Street investors. These companies may be out of favor for a variety of reasons, and their stocks are often less expensive than growth stocks when measured by price-to-earnings ratios and price-to-book values. Value investors search for stocks that look inexpensive but are still fundamentally sound investments.

While there are thousands of mutual funds and hundreds of fund families, your choice generally boils down to growth versus value. Understanding how each type of fund pursues its objective might help you determine which investment style is most appropriate for your portfolio.

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Networking, continued

face the combined stresses of competition, educational debt, rapid changes in health care delivery, communications and technology, professional liability concerns and a host of other pressures, collegiality can get lost along the way.

In an article in the *AAPF Journal* ("Whither Physician Collegiality," Fall/Winter 1999), Jayasankar calls it "a tragedy" that in some parts of the U.S., physicians actively shun county medical society meetings because hostility has replaced collegiality.

"Increasing challenges to physician practices affect physician morale and our ability to communicate positively with one another," he states. "This affects the care and morale of our patients. We must learn and continually hone our communication, negotiation and team skills as we do our clinical skills."

When relationships between physicians are mutually respectful, rather than competitive, patients benefit.

"The patient-physician relationship is the very heart of healing," believes Jayasankar. "Collegiality is the very lifeblood of our profession—it nurtures patient care, teaching and research."

"We strive day and night to do the best for our patients by learning and serving, and we struggle to hold on to our professionalism and ethics against difficult odds. What more basic bond can there be? We need to tend to the bond and not let it fray while we preoccupy ourselves with all the distractions around us."

Residents who make time to network early in their careers will realize far-reaching benefits. By participating in medical societies, conferences and informal networking, young physicians can form support systems and develop skills that will improve their ability to relate to colleagues and patients.

And as Jayasankar urges, "We owe it to our patients and their families, and to ourselves and to our families, to learn those skills."

Six Effective Ice Breaking Questions

Even skilled professionals sometimes need a boost when it comes to networking. Here are some useful conversation-starters.

1. How did you get your start in your practice? Let them tell you their story.
2. What do you enjoy most about this profession? This question will elicit a positive response.
3. What advice would you give someone just starting in this field? Here's a chance to identify a potential mentor.
4. What one thing would you do in your practice if you knew you couldn't fail?
5. What significant changes have you seen take place in the profession through the years?
6. What do you see as the coming trends in this field?

Adapted from "10 Effective Ice Breaking Questions" by Nancy Roebke, Executive Director of Profnet, Inc., www.profnet.org