

HEALTH PROMOTION QUARTERLY

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DR. JERAL KIRWAN in action at the 2008 Annual USJA Judo Tournament, Knoxville, TN.

The Powerful Effects of Adding Rest and Relaxation to Your Life

By Elsie Goycoolea

We live in a world of extremes. Within the same country one can travel to a scorching and unbearable desert or to a freezing and numbing ice field. Some people suffer from weight related problems and rarely engage in any type of physical activity, and some people struggle to keep on weight as they live on stress and coffee. In the health industry, messages that encourage people to move more exist next to other messages that tell people to relax and slow down. Yoga has become a popular practice that has been adding balance and profound health benefits to many people's active lifestyles by encouraging them to add more rest and relaxation to their routines.

As a result of concerning statistics showing that more individuals are reaching obese indicators, health messages have focused on promoting the health benefits of moving more. The work environment has shifted toward more people occupying sedentary jobs at offices thus the amount of movement they get every day has reduced. Consequently, the focus was on making more people stand up. Thorp et al. (2014) state, "introducing intermittent standing bouts across the workday results in modest beneficial effects on postprandial glucose responses in overweight/obese office workers at increased risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease" (p. 2060). It is argued that people may experience positive effects from incorporating more standing in their routines.

However, active lifestyles need to be complemented with adequate rest and sleep (Helvig et al. 2006). As the need for more standing quickly became a health trend, those other messages that focused on calming practices started to lose the same exposure. If an individual already follows an active lifestyle, it may be more helpful to adopt other strategies that facilitate balancing overall health. Waters and Dick (2015) state, "The studies consistently reported increased reports of low back pain, physical fatigue, muscle pain, leg swelling, tiredness, and body part discomfort due to prolonged standing." Too much movement may be detrimental if it is not balanced with other regenerating practices such as Yoga.

Yoga flourished in the Indian and Pakistani region by the hands of Hindu philosopher Patanjali more than 5000 years ago (Jayasinghe, 2004). Today, this practice comprises a perfect balance between lifestyle, health, and spiritual concepts that people follow as they hold poses and focus on their breathing. Studies have demonstrated the effects of practicing Yoga on health and stress reduction. Jayasinghe (2004) states, "Reduced heart rate variability and baroreflex sensitivity are powerful and independent predictors of poor prognosis in heart disease. Slow breathing as in yogic practice enhances heart rate variability and baroreflex sensitivity by re-synchronizing inherent cardiovascular rhythms" (p.370). The focus on breathing brings beneficial effects on calming and eliminating stress, which can facilitate optimal body processes.



One of the most well-known poses in Yoga is shavasana or corpse pose. It is often performed at the end of a class for a few minutes. People will lie down horizontally on the floor with their arms and legs slightly open and attempt to completely enter a state of relaxation. It may appear to be a very simple pose but it is argued that having to spend a few minutes still and being present can turn out to be almost unbearable and impossible to quiet the mind.

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Strategies for Reducing Anxiety

By Dr. JoAnne Bullard

Although anxiety strikes individuals on varying levels it is actually considered part of everyday life (NIH, 2015). Some may experience anxiety before they make a presentation at work, when they meet a group of new people, while budgeting finances, or as they balance home and work. Prior to those experiences an individual may lose track of their thoughts and feel restless, irritable, tired, or tense (ADAA, 2015). Individuals that are able to recognize these symptoms may acknowledge anxiety as a warning sign and implement coping techniques to reduce anxiety (Grohol, 2015).

Learning to recognize these symptoms may take some time. It is important for individuals to realize that experiencing some degree of anxiety is normal and necessary. Anxiety signals your body that there is a problem present that needs to be resolved before it gets out of hand (Heitler, 2012). Some do an excellent job managing their anxiety by incorporating intervention strategies, whereas others may struggle to do so successfully. Being unable to cope with everyday anxieties could possibly lead into the development of additional types of anxiety, such as panic disorders, social anxiety disorder, and even generalized anxiety disorder (NIH, 2015).

Here are a few strategies to implement in any setting to help confront anxiety:

1. **Get active.** Being physically active is an excellent way to reduce your anxiety, while having fun. Exercise has been linked with lowering stress levels, which will help you combat symptoms of anxiety you may experience (ADAA, 2014). Whether it is walking, running, playing basketball, or lifting weights, find something you enjoy and work on adding it into your day.

2. **Take a deep breath.** Diaphragmatic breathing helps to control your breathing rate and relax your body. This type of breathing can be performed at any point during your day. To practice, relax on your back with your knees slightly bent and place one hand on your chest and one hand under your rib cage. Inhale through your nose while extending your stomach. Exhale through your lips and allow your stomach to return to the resting position while keeping your chest still (Cleveland Clinic, 2016).

3. **See yourself being successful.** Visualization assists in relaxation, lowering stress levels, and seeing yourself accomplish goals (Martin, 2013). To perform a visualization exercise, find a quiet environment, close your eyes, and control your breathing. Imagine yourself being successful with overcoming something that is making you anxious, such as making a presentation. See yourself presenting in a relaxed manner, confidently and interacting with the audience. Replay that image over and over in your mind.

4. **Tense and relax your muscles.** Progressive muscle relaxation is a great method to connect your mind and body. Many times when we are anxious our muscles tense before we realize that the tension is occurring. This exercise assists in reducing overall tension of the body. Perform while in a comfortable position. Control your breathing and then work your way through your body traveling through your muscle groups by alternating tensing and relaxing for 5-10 seconds before moving to the next muscle group.

5. **Play some music.** Most of us can probably think of a song that helps us to relax, let go of stress, and feel good about ourselves. Music is an excellent tool to utilize in an effort to reduce anxiety levels and help us improve our emotional engagement through a use of distraction (Nauert, 2011). Turn up your music in your car, while you are cooking, and when you are at your desk.

There is no one size fits all approach since we are all unique in how our bodies respond. So, try a few of these strategies and see which one works best for you!



Laugh Your Way to Better Health

By Olivia Rastello

Laughing is fun, relaxing, and enjoyable. It provides the body with a huge amount of physical and mental benefits. It doesn't matter if you're laughing at your favorite slap-stick movie, or if you're chuckling with a friend about an inside joke that you share. Any situation that can give you a little snicker provides health benefits. This article will list why laughing is healthy, the health benefits of laughing, and offer you a variety of laugh prompting activities.

Health Benefits of Laughing

Laughing provides a large range of health benefits. Some of you may already know, and some may be completely new to you. Regardless, laughing is something that helps your health. Here's a list of immediate health benefits:

- Stress relief
- Soothes tension by improving circulation and relaxing muscles
- Increases intake of oxygen and helps your heart and lungs
- Increases endorphins
- Boosts heart rate. Heart rate has been shown to increase faster than if exercising.
- Burns calories. Laughing for 10 – 15 minutes has been shown to burn up to 50 calories.

Laughing frequently over time can benefit your future health as well. Some longer-term health benefits include:

- Pain relief. Laughing can cause the body to produce natural painkillers.
- Improve immune system. Positive thoughts have been shown to fight stress and other illnesses due to a chemical that is released.
- Improved mood. Laughter can help prevent or reduce depression or sad thoughts and make you feel happier overall.
- Improved sleep habits. It's been shown that ten minutes of laughter can help someone with pain sleep for multiple hours a night pain free.



Laughing helps your mind, your body, and your soul. Even if you only laugh a little bit a day, you can see health benefits from it. Use the laughter ideas below, or come up with your own ways to laugh daily, and you'll start feeling even better!

Activity Ideas to Make You Laugh

Be sure to pick and choose the ones that best suit you and your lifestyle. Try to think about when you can partake in these fun activities, and consider planning a set time everyday where you can sit down and laugh. Remind yourself that taking time to laugh is very beneficial for your health. After all – life is better when you're laughing.

- YouTube

YouTube is free and has hilarious videos for anyone to enjoy. Whether you love videos of funny cats, watching someone get pranked, or silly home videos, you will be able to feed your funny bone here. YouTube pleases a wide audience of humor seekers. It is accessible online and through smartphones through a downloadable application. For families with children, it is strongly recommended that you choose your video selection prior to showing your children. Adult discretion is advised toward families. YouTube has an excellent search engine, but it is recommended to begin searching with terms you like such as "funny cat videos" and explore from there.

- TV/Movie Subscription Sites

Subscription sites, such as Netflix, are relatively low-cost and have a wide variety of TV shows and movies, both...

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What Health Means to Me...

Dr. Karen Ivy
Assistant Professor,
Forbes School of Business

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Dr. Charles Holmes
Assistant Professor,
College of Health, Human
Services, and Science

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Cultural Awareness, Cultural Sensitivity and Cultural Competence: The Road Map to Cultural Capacity

By Dr. Eszter Barra-Johnson

Cultural awareness, competence, and sensitivity all contribute to improving one's cross-cultural capacity (cecp.air.org, 2001). This statement is true for both personal and professional environments, among those, for academia. If one would interview instructors and students about their cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence, most would probably respond that they know just exactly what these terms mean; however, in my experience, these three different concepts are often confused for one another and are used interchangeably, even by professionals (Fleming, 2001, as cited in acog.org, 2013).

Let's take a look at how each of these three terms are defined. Much has been published about multi-cultural tolerance, but not about the components or the connection among the components of cross-cultural capacity. I propose that one should think of the first two terms, cultural awareness and sensitivity, as leading up to, or being elements of, cultural competence which is the basis for cultural capacity. Cultural awareness is defined as the understanding of both traditional cultures and the behavioral manifestations of these, in an identifiable cultural group (e.g., a certain ethnic group). The National Center for Cultural Competence defines it as, "being cognizant, observant, and conscious of similarities and differences among and between cultural groups (Goode, 2004, revised 2006)."

In his book entitled *Cultural Awareness, Sensitivity and Competence*, Winkelman (2005) described cultural awareness as a collection of values, beliefs, judgments, and influences one obtains through working in a professional environment. According to Winkelman (2005), cultural awareness has six main components; (1) Having a firm grasp of what culture is and what it is not; (2) Having insight into intracultural variation; (3) Understanding how people acquire their cultures and culture's important role in personal identities, life ways, and mental and physical health of individuals and communities; (4) Being conscious of one's own culturally shaped values, beliefs, perceptions, and biases; (5) Observing one's reactions to people whose cultures differ from one's own and reflecting upon these responses; and (6) Seeking and participating in meaningful interactions with people of differing cultural backgrounds.

Cultural sensitivity is defined as "developing sensitivity and understanding of another ethnic group. This usually involves internal changes in terms of attitudes and values. Awareness and sensitivity also refer to the qualities of openness and flexibility that people develop in relation to others" (Adams, 1995). Although this definition is somewhat older than other sources I could have used, I prefer this one because Adams actually used the term sensitivity in the wording. It is then easy to understand that, while cultural awareness could be viewed as a cognitive processing of cultural diversity, cultural sensitivity adds an emotive portion to our overall processing of any and all information inherent in cultural diversity. When I got to this point in my literature review for my research, I thought it would be interesting to see whether the psychological construct of emotional intelligence (EI or EQ) plays a role in one's cultural sensitivity, because EI is not only about emotion processing, but also, about picking up signals from one's environment, many of which could be culturally conditioned or rooted. Alas, this could be a topic of a different article. Since people do not live in a vacuum, it can be assumed that cultural sensitivity is also about exchange, just like item (6) in the definition for cultural awareness above, but perhaps at a more intensive or more complex level, due to the emotion processing component.

Lastly, cultural competence is defined as the ability to "understand, appreciate, and interact with persons from cultures and / or belief-systems other than one's own" (McGraw-Hill, 2002). Looking at this definition, it becomes apparent that cultural competence includes an evaluative and / or attitude related segment, which is represented by the word appreciate. Logically, a person who harbors strong positive or negative cultural bias cannot claim to have cultural competence, even though he / she may exhibit signs of having cultural awareness and sensitivity.

After exploring these definitions (and I hope not to have lulled the reader into sleep with all this nitpicking of definitions), let's take a look at the opening paragraph of this article, in which I claimed that cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence contribute to cultural or cross-cultural capacity (cecp.air.org, 2001). In my own words, I would define cross-cultural capacity as a potential to use a tool-kit that includes all the factors mentioned above with a strong emphasis of applied knowledge, understanding, acceptance, and support of cultural diversity. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have had a father who spoke 11 languages (most of those fluently). He grew up in pre-WWII Europe when computers were not even dreamed about, so he had to learn epic works in Latin and Greek. He exhibited high levels of cultural competence through his publications that included scientific research, as well as educational / pedagogical work about his passion for early talent discovery, so I had a great role model in

building my own cultural capacity. Yet, it wasn't until I had reached a more mature age that I understood the meaning and the importance of this term.

Next, I wanted to know whether cross-cultural capacity can be developed or improved by training or education; or is it something that relies on intelligence, that is considered to be innate? My brief search turned up an interesting find: there is an existing concept of cultural intelligence measured by CQ (cultural intelligence quotient), which is a term "used in business, education, government and academic research. Cultural intelligence can be understood as the capability to relate and work effectively across cultures. Originally, the term cultural intelligence and the abbreviation "CQ" was developed by Ang and Van Dyne (2008) as a researched-based way of measuring and predicting intercultural performance."

I have learned that Livermore (2009) in his book *Leading with Cultural Intelligence* explained that there is a strong correlation between the constructs of Cultural Intelligence and Cross-cultural Competence, although Cultural Intelligence is a more sophisticated concept, because it considers intercultural capabilities as a form of intelligence that is both measurable and improvable. Ang and Van Dyne (2008) defined cultural intelligence as "a person's capability to adapt as he / she interacts with others from different cultural regions," consisting of behavioral, motivational, and metacognitive components. Measured by either as self-assessment or multi-rater assessment, the authors postulated that a high CQ score is predictive of not only academic success, but leadership skills, as well. This brings us full cycle: In our educational institutions, we strive to train future leaders. Embedding into our courses more prominent cross-cultural concepts, then, seems to be the future in curriculum development.



To close with a fitting example, when I was in London many years ago, my host's wife ran out of eggs for breakfast and when she found this out, she became embarrassed and started to scratch her scalp uttering, "Rhubarb, rhubarb." Although my loving English teacher in my home country where I attended boarding school hailed from Edinburgh, Scotland, and she thoroughly discussed with us the nuances of both American and British English, somehow she never mentioned that one can use the word "rhubarb" for other things than strawberry-rhubarb pie. Thus I have learned vicariously that the term "rhubarb, rhubarb" in the U.K. means, "I am embarrassed."

This thus shows that, while language is a great way of getting insight into other cultures, the real proof of the pudding is, eating!

Continued from page 2 — The Powerful Effects of Adding Rest and Relaxation to Your Life

The act of lying down is the way that the Yoga practice culminates providing the body a chance to reset and recharge. For a few minutes, people are advised to stop worrying, stop thinking, and enjoy the connection with their body. It is a restorative practice and people may leave the class with a better mood and a clearer mind.

Yoga may be currently in the spotlight, but the truth is that it has been the subject of multiple studies across the scientific and medical field for potentially becoming part of the treatment for many health related problems. Santaella et al. (2014) state, “savasana relaxation has positive effects on cardiac autonomic modulation of hypertensive patients, and may be included as a strategy for the non-drug treatment of hypertension.” Stress has been claimed as a precursor of hypertension (Kurkani et al., 1998) thus many people experiencing the negative effects of living a stressful life can benefit from the practice.

When a recommendation, suggestion, or even claim is communicated to society there is a quick urge to want to jump on board as it becomes popular within society. That is what happened with the trend to replace sitting with standing. Healthy practices are spreading across the media, and people are being encouraged to follow them. It is true that some people may be sitting too much and that standing may benefit their health. However, it is important to equally adopt practices that contribute to a balanced lifestyle. Yoga is starting to spread quickly across the community as people are noticing the advantages of dedicating some time to lying still and clearing the mind. Just as standing became the trend to follow, it may well be that soon people will see the powerful benefits of lying down more.

Continued from page 4 — Laugh Your Way to Better Health

...old and new. You can find lots of comedies for both adults and children. It is accessible online and through a smartphone through a downloadable app. Like with YouTube, for families with children, it is strongly recommended that you choose your video selection prior to showing your children. Some sites have a dedicated kids section, so that can help choose the right content for your children to watch.

- **Pinterest**

Pinterest is a free application available online and on your smartphone. It allows people to discover and save visual ideas for future use or planning purposes. Each item on Pinterest is a small visual image, it can be a picture, quote, or an idea. The user can save their ideas onto a board (category ideas such as humor) that can be shared publicly or privately, depending on your individual settings. Pinterest is a social network site, and it provides an internal search to find new funny ideas. The application also lets you follow other individuals that post funny items as well. This website is wonderful for collecting and saving funny images, quotes, and ideas to use for later. It can provide a quick image to make you laugh on the go if you're using the application on your smartphone, or it can help you plan activities that will make you laugh for hours. It is a great source of humor inspiration for activities and for quick humor.

- **Board Games**

Board games are a frugal way to get your family laughing. They can be purchased online or in store at local retailers. There is a wide variety of different board games available for both adults and children that are both humorous and can make you smile. There are games that are good for children, adults, or both. It's been shown that people laugh more when together, so board games can be a great way to get everyone laughing.

Continued from...

Purple Artichokes? Seriously?!

By Dr. Roxanne Beharie

Was I the only one who did not know that there are a variety of artichokes based upon size, color, and spine? So far, I have learned about the green color (big and medium sizes), the purple color (big and medium sizes), and the spine variety. Do you know of other varieties of artichokes? Interesting tidbit, in the 16th century, eating an artichoke was reserved only for men. Women were denied the pleasure because the artichoke was considered an aphrodisiac and was thought to enhance sexual power.

There are also a few legends linked to artichokes. You can read about some of these legends at <http://whatscookingamerica.net/History/ArtichokeHistory.htm>. I have also learned that what we call “artichokes” are actually the immature florets at the center of the bud of the plant, not the plant itself. So the next time I order spinach-artichoke dip, I will remember that I am consuming the fleshy lower portions of the triangular scales as well as the base (or heart) of the bud.



Fresh artichoke is an excellent source of many vitamins (B-complex group, Vitamin C, Vitamin K, etc.), minerals (iron, copper, calcium, potassium, etc.), and antioxidant compounds (silymarin, caffeic acid, ferulic acid, etc.). For example, about 17% of the recommended daily allowance of folic acid can be found in fresh artichoke.

While the nutrition provided by the artichoke is certainly important, it is also important to note what to look for when purchasing an artichoke. What’s Cooking America notes that artichokes should feel heavy for their size and the leaves of the globe should be deep green and in a tight leaf formation. The website also notes the importance of cooking time. For example, the larger the artichoke, the longer it will take to cook.

Given my new knowledge about (and appreciation for) artichokes, I will be trying Gretchen Roberts’ recipe from [Cooking Light](#). Try it and let me know what you think.

Artichokes with Roasted Garlic-Wine Dip

Ingredients

- 2 whole garlic heads
- 4 medium artichokes (about 3 1/2 pounds)
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup organic vegetable broth (such as Swanson Certified Organic)
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- Chopped fresh parsley (optional)

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400°. Remove white papery skin from garlic heads (do not peel or separate the cloves). Wrap each head separately in foil. Bake at 400° for 45 minutes; cool 10 minutes. Separate cloves; squeeze to extract garlic pulp. Discard skins. Cut off stems of artichokes, and remove bottom leaves. Trim about 1/2 inch from tops of artichokes. Place artichokes, stem ends down, in a large Dutch oven filled two-thirds with water; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 45 minutes or until a leaf near the center of each artichoke pulls out easily. Remove artichokes from pan.

Combine half of garlic pulp and wine in a small saucepan; bring to a boil. Cook 2 minutes. Add broth; cook until reduced to 1/2 cup (about 8 minutes). Remove from heat; stir in butter and salt. Pour mixture into a blender; add remaining half of garlic pulp. Remove center piece of blender lid (to allow steam to escape); secure blender lid on blender. Place a clean towel over opening in blender lid (to avoid splatters). Blend until smooth. Sprinkle dip with parsley, if desired. Serve dip with warm artichokes.



If you know an Ashford student or faculty member (it could even be yourself!) who is making great strides in a health-related field, nominate that person for one of the following awards :

1. **Innovator Award** – presented to a student/faculty member who is making an impact on the field in new and innovative ways. *Only work between November 1, 2015 and October 31, 2016 qualify.*
2. **Community Service Award** – presented to a student/faculty member who is making an impact on their community's health through volunteering or other community service initiatives. *Only service between November 1, 2015 and October 31, 2016 qualify.*
3. **Something to Say Award** – presented to a student/faculty member who has made presentation (at health conferences, before congress on health-related matters, etc.) and/or published multiple health-related articles (in peer-reviewed journals, blogs, newsletters, newspapers, etc.). *Only presentations and publications between November 1, 2015 and October 31, 2016 qualify.*

All nominations must be submitted by 11:59p.m. MST on Thursday, November 1, 2016. The winners will receive an award in the mail and be highlighted in the January, 2017 issue of the HPQ newsletter.

Submit the following information for your nominee to healthpromotionquarterly@ashford.edu:

1. Name of nominee:
2. Degree Program of nominee at Ashford:
3. 4-sentence bio of the nominee:
4. Award for which the person is being nominated: (*Choose only one award*).
5. Reason for nomination: (*Only include information relevant to the award for which the person is being nominated*).

Let's celebrate the successes of Ashford's students and faculty! :)

April

- National Minority Health Month
- Alcohol Awareness Month
- National Child Abuse Prevention Month
- 4 - 10 National Public Health Week
- 7 World Health Day
- 25 - 29 Every Kid Healthy™ Week

May

- Arthritis Awareness Month
- Global Employee Health and Fitness Month
- Mental Health Month
- National Physical Fitness and Sports Month
- 8 - 14 National Women's Health Week
- 18 HIV Vaccine Awareness Day
- 31 World No Tobacco Day

June

- Men's Health Month
- National Safety Month
- 5 National Cancer Survivors Day®
- 13 - 19 Men's Health Week
- 19 World Sickle Cell Day

Conferences

26th Annual Art & Science of Health Promotion Conference

April 27-29, 2016 | Orlando, FL

Institute for Healthcare Advancement - IHA's
15th Annual Health Literacy Conference

May 4-6, 2016 | Anaheim, CA

2016 National Wellness Conference

June 27-29, 2016 | St. Paul, MN

The Powerful Effects of Adding Rest and Relaxation to Your Life

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On the front cover:

Dr. Jeral Kirwan, Program Chair, Master of Arts in Psychology and the Director of the Office of Research and Creative Scholarship

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References

Thanks!!

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Dr. JoAnne Bullard is an Instructor at Rowan University and an Associate Faculty member at Ashford University. She has her doctorate in sports psychology and performance. Her research interests include academic motivation, learning strategies, goal setting and sports anxiety with Division III student-athletes.



Olivia Rastello is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Health and Wellness. She has a long term goal of becoming a health and wellness professor and/or an employee at a health promoting non-profit organization. She is an advocate of volunteer work and is currently volunteering for the Crohn's and Colitis foundation.



Dr. Karen Ivy is Program Chair of the Bachelor of Arts in Business Information Systems in the Forbes School of Business at Ashford University. Dr. Ivy is an accomplished Senior Leader in the Information Technology Services industry. Her personal goal is to inspire others to achieve their ultimate goals in the educational arena and to explore their passions to the fullest!



Dr. Charles P. Holmes is an Assistant Professor in the College of Health, Human Services, and Science at Ashford University. He obtained a PhD and MSPH from the University of Illinois and a BS from Eastern Illinois University. Dr. Holmes' work primarily focuses on the U.S. health care systems history and improvement.



Dr. Eszter Barra-Johnson has lived and studied in the U.S. since 1996. She subsequently received three Graduate degrees, MS in Clinical Psychology, Ph.D. in Health Psychology and more recently, MA in Diplomacy with Emphasis on International Conflict Resolution. She has been teaching at Ashford University since 2007.



Dr. Roxanne Beharie is an Assistant Professor with Ashford University. Dr. Beharie earned her doctorate in Public Health from Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland. Dr. Beharie also earned a BS in Exercise Science from the University of Pittsburgh and an MPA in Health Services Management from Mercy College.

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

-World Health Organization



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