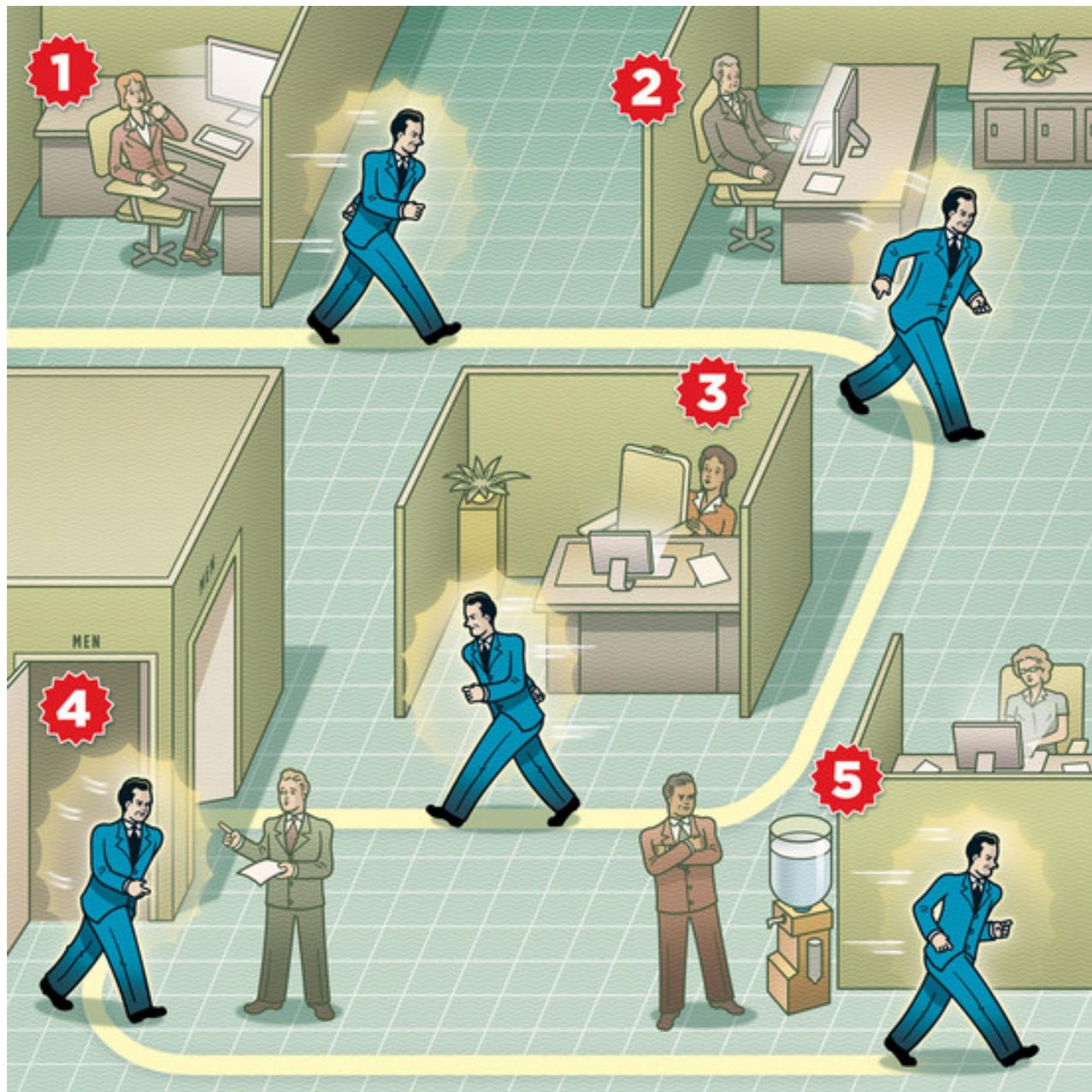




Resolved to stop stressing over things in 2014? What if stress is the "something" that is, actually, stressing you out?



*Peter Hoey*

Do you have someone at your place of work that is constantly rushing around the office and is seemingly busy 24/7? According to the Wall Street Journal this type of behavior can lead to "secondhand stress" and "[r]ushing blocks thoughtful communication and creates worries..." In today's hectic environment it can seem like we need to be constantly rushing and multi-tasking just to keep up; however, this may have a negative effect on openness and effective communication in a workplace. When you see someone going full speed around the office it may make you question yourself and your work habits. A vicious cycle

then occurs where the main reason for a person's stress is just that: stress.

Cally Ritter, LICSW an education and development consultant with AllOne Health Resources, who frequently presents on stress, spoke about her experience

*"...I always ask my audience 'what is causing them stress?' and a common response is 'other people's stress!' 'I'm not stressed, it's the others around me who are oozing stress out of every pore.'" Our tendency to do this is an inherent human trait, "We are born to emulate other people's behaviors and to also take on their emotional states, it's called social mimicry." Ritter said*

*"Social mimicry also allows us to be empathic, caring and communal by taking on the emotional state of the others around us. This is great if we are surrounded by happy, energized, motivated colleagues. However, social mimicry has a down side: we take on other's people's stress. Unfortunately, other's people's stress is contagious..."*

Prioritizing your time is the key to managing stress. A clear schedule that outlines exactly when and where you have to be and when you are available to meet goes a long way in keeping a work environment organized and stress free. The Wall Street Journal notes, "A calm, unruffled work style is still a mark of competency, management experts say." It is important to remember that being harried does not always mean work is being performed in an efficient manner. The Wall Street Journal mentioned a manager whose advice was to "understand the big picture and not get caught up too much in day-to-day details". Whenever a day can feel too hectic it can be helpful to step back and think about what really needs to be done at that moment to ensure long-term goals are achieved.

The next time you see someone hurrying around the office or you feel stressed, try to get to the source of the stress. Speaking about stress is something that is rarely done but being open about responsibilities and tasks will make your workplace a more team oriented environment.

Read the full Wall Street article, How Busy Colleagues Spread Secondhand Stress, [here](#). (printed December 10, 2013).

### **Cally Ritter, LICSW**

Cally Ritter is an EAP consultant with AllOne Health Resources and is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker. She has her BA from Bucknell University and her Masters in social work from the University of Pittsburgh. She has 20 years of clinical experience in a variety of settings including inpatient and outpatient services in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Providence, and Boston. Cally has been an Employee Assistance Professional Trainer for more than 15 years on a variety of personal and professional development topics. Her areas of interest include the multigenerational workplace, resiliency, and employee motivation. Cally regularly presents to Boston area colleges and universities and was a recent guest speaker for the College Board.

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