

of enough love is as lethal as the absence of food and water.

Which brings us back to Sharon and Kathy. Public health professionals have recognized there are elements of living a life that allow a person to live longer and be more satisfied. Although Kathy does well in her pursuit of personal health, it is possible that she has not done as well in tending to personal friendships and with her family.

"The health problems she has may be as dangerous as Sharon's," especially if she pursues her career she does it at the expense of nurturing meaningful relationships outside of work with friends and family. With the ends in mind, it makes sense to plan now, as you would for retirement, for those deep and meaningful relationships. How a public manager can proactively plan for that stage of life will be the subject of our next column. **DM**

END NOTES

1. The challenge of this situation will be a specific focus in an upcoming *Balancing Act* column.
2. See Chris Angello, *Flawed Advice and the Management Gap* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) for an excellent overview on how to assess any consultant's capacity to give actionable advice.
3. Joan Rothbart Trachtel, "Loneliness but Not Depression Linked to Alzheimer's," *Psychiatric News*, March 18, 2007; Joan Aronson Trachtel, "Depression Can Break Heart in Unexpected Way," *Psychiatric News*, March 18, 2007; and "A Reason to Keep on Going," *Stephens* (Oxford, June 3, 2008, New York Times Online).



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IT'S ALL IN THE QUESTIONS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 151)

- Ensure that reasons for variances between the formal plan and actual employee compensation (whether over or under) are clearly explained.

3. When assessing the adequacy of employee compensation, are employer benefit packages included in this assessment? Do we believe that our total compensation package is attractive enough to recruit competent individuals and retain them?

- Determine that salary and benefit projections are being developed by separating salary projections from benefit projections and applying individual calculations for each benefit factor (some benefits are based on percentage of wages while others are calculated as a flat dollar amount).
- Understand the impact of the total compensation package on employee recruitment and retention (variances may be exacerbated by excessive turnover or long recruitment periods).

After the manager has evaluated the responses and looked at the analysis, it's easier to see whether these assumptions of fiscal health are present.

- Identify where resources have been regularly allocated for one-time or cyclical costs, and eliminate ongoing resource allocations where possible.
- Identify possible causes of revenue variances and trends that need to be monitored.
- Ensure that expenditures related to multiyear capital projects are budgeted in the years in which costs will be incurred; this prevents large unplanned appropriations (carry forwards).
- Eliminate unnecessary contingencies maintained in department budgets.
- Develop a salary-benefit projection tool that budgets employee compensation costs more accurately and aids in analyzing the impact of vacancies. **DM**

The article continues with more questions in the October issue of PM.



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