

Psychologist gives parents stress management tips

By SUE BOCK-KAZIMER

There are only two ways to handle stress, psychologist George Koblyk told a Milton audience at a Halton Board of Education-sponsored meeting Tuesday night.

"You can solve or reduce the stress, but if you can't change it you have to change yourself," he told the audience gathered at E.C. Drury School for a presentation called, "Coping With the Stresses of Parenthood."

Professor Koblyk said he and his colleagues teach what they call "psychology re-appraisal techniques" to help people cope with situations they can't change in dealing with their children.

"You train yourself to think differently. When the brain talks, the body listens, and that's why the blood pressure goes up and the stomach starts to churn."

One process he tried successfully to get his own son to cut the grass is called "thought control."

Professor Koblyk said he used to tell his son to cut the grass and by the time he got home from his job at Mohawk College, he'd worked himself up by thinking his son wasn't going to be doing it. When he found he was right, they argued.

He began using thought control and when thoughts of his "lazy son" cropped up on the drive home he told them to, "stop, bug off and go away."

"By the time I got home and the

grass hadn't been cut I was still able to talk in a normal tone of voice and my son was quite willing to go out and cut the grass after his television program was finished. I found he cut it twice as much without me asking after that, so now I pay him \$5 each time he does it. I now have the best cut lawn around."

He said thought control can also work with a crying, whining child in a supermarket check-out.

"Now, I know a trip to the supermarket is no trip to Hawaii and you are certain the stores put those candies right out there deliberately. But try and remain calm and keep those nasty thoughts away. You reward yourself by having your level of stress go down and your child may even end up behaving better."

Professor Koblyk said that as the technique begins to work better, an individual "won't nag as often and you'll soon find things don't bother you as much."

"If you can't change them (your children) then you have to change you."

The second process he teaches is called "re-labelling" or "turning it around."

"Don't press the angry button right away. Try taking a bad situation and making it good. We can decide what an emotion is. Tell yourself that, 'I choose not to be in a flap' and it can work."

"If you sit down and decide not to

yell at your kids anymore, you really can do it," he added. "I did."

The third process he explained was called "role playing."

"We become what we are forced into. If you find yourself raising your voice you convince yourself that you are really angry because, 'look how I'm yelling at them.'"

But what Prof. Koblyk advises is to "role play or fake it." He said to take a step back and choose a better emotion, pay attention to the way your body is reacting and slow down.

During the question and answer

period, Prof. Koblyk said it is better to accept the fact that 60 per cent of toddlers will be going through the "terrible two stage."

"We treat babies very well, considering the fact you feed them at one end and it comes out immediately at the other end. We love them, change them and take care of their every need. Yet the minute they can talk or walk we make demands on them and treat them like midget adults."

"Imagine if this big giant came up to you and told you to go to the bathroom NOW. How would you

react?" He also warned against setting children up for situations in which they are bound to fail.

"If you must go to aunt Margaret's and she has that fine bone china collection, just be prepared to move everything up high because you have to know someone is eventually going to try and touch it."

Professor Koblyk's presentation is the first in a series being offered to Halton parents through the local board of education, organizer Anne Day said.

Dispute escalating . . .

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Mr. Elliot said if double-bunking has to be done at Maplehurst, prisoners involved "will have to be of a type that it's safe."

Both Mr. Klonowski and Local 234 president Bill Gillies support pension reform so that guards, who they say have a life expectancy of only 58 years due to job stress, can retire on full pensions after 25 years of service.

Mr. Elliot said, "I agree that should be available but it's got to be negotiated."

He drew a sharp distinction between job benefits, which the employer pays, and pension agreements, which are funded by contributions from both employers and employees. While receptive to the idea of earlier retirement for guards, Mr. Elliot pointed out that such an arrangement would mean both the guards and the province would have to hike pension contributions.

If the guards instead opt to pay less into the plan but still retire early, they must face the fact that pension income will be less, the MPP added. "The basic principle is it's an in-

surance scheme."

Stressing that Maplehurst correctional officers "are a very important part of our community and it's very important to me they're happy," Mr. Elliot nevertheless appeared slightly disappointed by the demonstration.

"Politically, there are two ways of operating. My way is to operate within a framework. My style is not a confrontational style. I've accomplished a great deal with the style I've used. The other approach is to go to the Opposition."

Wednesday correctional officers had Progressive Conservative MPP Mike Farnan of Cambridge question the government on its handling of the labour dispute, Mr. Elliot said.

"What they have done is chosen to go a different route. I can have no part of that initiative."

Mr. Elliot was not surprised about the recruitment of Tory members.

The Halton North MPP was also optimistic a settlement is possible before the dispute degenerates into job action. "It's never over until it's over. A strike is the last course of action. That would be unfortunate."

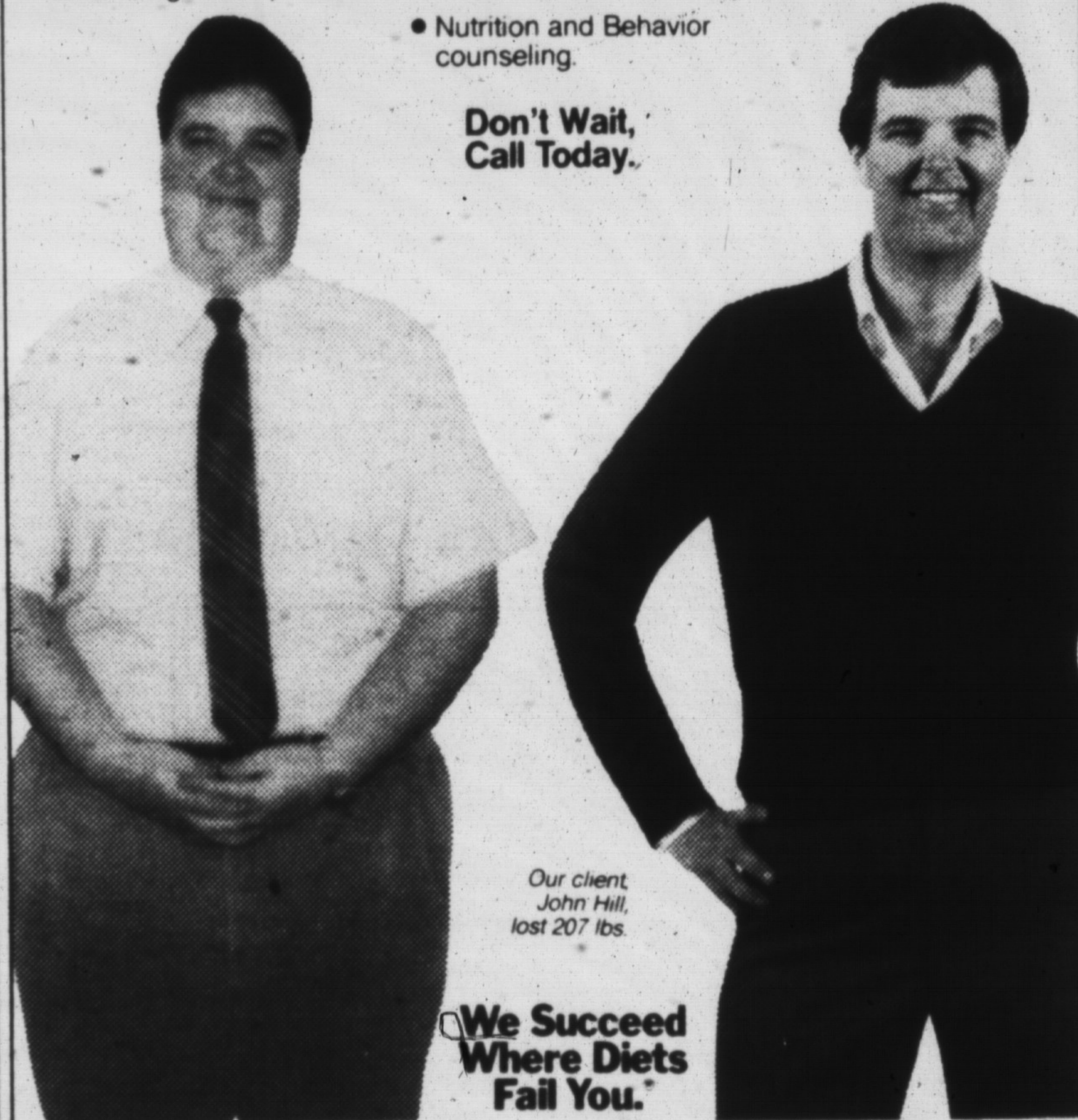
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