

Important to identify and combat our stress

By Hadley Koltun

Mental Health and You is provided as a service of the North of Superior Community Mental Health Program.

These articles will appear every two weeks and will cover a variety of mental health issues.

We invite feedback from the community at large by writing the *News* office.

Any opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the management of the North of Superior Mental Health Program.

In this article, we will look at how we can identify our own stress and what to do to help ourselves.

As a first step, it is advisable to speak to a professional about your plan to identify and combat stress.

Your physician will be glad to help you identify and control stress.

Dr. Peter G. Hanson, M.D., in his book *'The Joy of Stress'* has identified several telltale signs of stress.

Some of them include sleep problems, a bad diet, obesity, unrealistic goals, the wrong job, financial distress and unstable home and social support. I will now expand on each of them.

1. Sleep problems

It's easy to see that if we do not get enough sleep every night, then we will not awake refreshed and we will not be in good shape to withstand the stresses of everyday living.

Some things that interfere with sleep include thinking too much about unresolved issues (i.e. money problems), too much caffeine, alcohol, a large meal before bedtime and a snoring spouse.

We must also consider that some of us might need less sleep than others. As we get older, we require less sleep, sometimes as little as four to five hours per night. That's three more hours to do...whatever!

2. Bad diet

'Diet' does not simply mean a way to lose weight. The word really means 'what we eat all the time'.

Therefore, a bad diet means any diet which does not include a balance of the four major food groups: proteins, fats, carbohydrates (i.e. starch, breads), and fibers.

A bad diet can be harmful to your blood pressure and may lower your resistance to stress.

Consult your physician or a dietician if you need more information about how diet controls stress.

3. Obesity

The body, when stressed, has a natural tendency to lose weight. However, when we were young, we learned that to 'stuff' something in our mouth always made us feel better.

So, every time we feel stress, we may eat. Sometimes we overeat and then we may become obese. I will write an article on obesity in the future.

However, if you would like more information, you should consult your family physician, dietician or speak to someone at your local Weight Watchers chapter.

4. Unrealistic goals

When we are continually unhappy because we cannot meet unrealistic goals, we feel stressed.

Eventually, we may even feel susceptible to more stress, which weakens us even further.

We develop unrealistic goals by our contact with television, radio and the newspapers about our future lifestyles.

Yet, we may be quite unprepared to realize the amount of hours of work and training required to achieve the rewards that we seek.

This leads us to feel frustrated and disappointed, which leads us to experience more stress.

5. Wrong jobs

One should choose the job that best matches his personality and abilities. That means you must look at what you are interested in, as well as what you are good at.

However, many of us do not plan this way and we may have a job in which we feel unhappy and unsatisfied.

Further, lack of job satisfaction

brings on lower self-confidence, brooding, moody behaviour and often more family tension at the dinner table. All this encourages stress.

If you find that you are unhappy with your work, perhaps talk it over with a trustworthy friend or a counsellor.

Also, there are self-help books on helping you to choose the right job; one such book is *'What colour is your parachute'* by Richard Bolles.

6. Financial distress

We feel distressed when we see our pay cheque disappear *before* payday.

It seems that many of us just can't save any money after we have paid our rent (or mortgage), groceries, heating bill, financing for cars and whatever other bills have come our way.

Sometimes we find that we lack perspective and organization to manage our money (i.e. money just slips out of our fingers).

This causes stress as well. A good financial advisor, such as an accountant or credit counselling agency is often of great help.

In our area we have some agencies that look after financial planning and counselling. May your budget always balance!

7. Unstable home and family support

This does not necessarily mean that your kids run away and that there is abuse.

It could be that major changes or problems are causing stress at home.

These include change in work habits, change in living conditions, trouble with boss, change in residence and in fact, change of anything.

The worst thing you could do is to keep quiet about it. Rely on your family and friends to get out of stress because you can help them too. Remember, they have the same problem you have because they live with you.

These are some of the telltale signs of stress. If you feel that any or all of these factors are affecting you to the point where you feel 'stressed' and tired, perhaps you should see your family physician. You should also remember that smoking and excess caffeine and alcohol cause stress as well.

Stress is a big topic in our communities, now that we all feel the squeeze of a depressed Northern economy.

The layoffs at Kimberly-Clark have got us all worried. Remember, 'talking out' your frustration, anger and sadness will help you during these difficult times.

You can talk to your family or trustworthy friend. Keeping it 'bottled inside' makes you feel more frustrated, angry or sad.

Also, talking about it to someone who is on the outside makes it easier to find a plan of action, because that person is detached from the situation.

Creativity and action occur through talking about what troubles us!

Also, use your recreation centre and do some form of exercise, whether it is aerobics or a game of squash.

I have recently started cross-country skiing as my form of exercise (in my case- cross-country falling).

Anyway, talking about your concerns and exercising are two ways of alleviating stress. In the last article on stress, I will write about what you can do to help yourself feel less stress.

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Business decline

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while groups such as Pollution Probe and Greenpeace have made the public aware of the problem, they have done a great disservice by focusing solely on Kimberly-Clark and not the other mills. Our members also indicated they are in favor of government assistance to small business."

Municipal Governments

Members of the Aguasabon Chamber of Commerce feel that "local governments need to take a more active role in economic development. It is our suggestion (the chamber's) that an Economic Develop-

ment Committee (EDC) be organized and an (EDC) Commissioner be hired.

Chamber

Chamber members have expressed they would like the chamber to "take an active role in assisting both new and existing businesses with various programs. Public meetings should also be held..."

Chamber members have also expressed that the impact of Winston Lake mine will be a positive one but will not offset the loss of jobs created by the Survival Plan. (See related stories in this issue).

Engineering meeting set

Northwestern Ontario Chapter, Canadian Society of Safety Engineering

The regular monthly meeting of the Northwestern Chapter of the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering will be held on Thursday evening, March 12, at 5:30 p.m. at the New China Tavern, 470 S. High St., Thunder Bay.

Students in Business or other programs with an interest in safety are invited to attend to learn about the safety responsibilities they will face when entering the workforce.

A special student rate will apply. For further information, please call Marion Muldoon at 345-2121, ext. 671.

TERRACE BAY RECREATION COMMITTEE PRESENTS MARCH BREAK ACTIVITIES

Day	Time	Activity
MONDAY MARCH 16th	11:00 am- 1:00 pm	Youth Shinney Hockey (Helmets Required)
	1:00- 2:00 pm	Public Skating
	2:00- 3:00 pm	Open Bowling (6-9 years)
	2:30- 3:30 pm	"Learn to Play" Squash (Ages 16 & up)
	3:00- 4:00 pm	Open Bowling (10-15 years)
TUESDAY MARCH 17th	10:30 am- 11:30 pm	"Learn to Play" Racquetball (10-15 years)
	11:00 am- 1:00 pm	Youth Shinney Hockey (Helmets required)
	1:00- 3:00 pm	Public Skating
	2:30- 3:30 pm	"Learn To Play" Squash (10-15 years)
WEDNESDAY MARCH 18th	1:00- 2:00 pm	Public Skating
	2:00- 4:00 pm	"Hang On" Video Challenge (13 years & under - .50 entry fee, 1st & 2nd Trophies to be awarded)
	6:00- 8:00 pm	Regular Open Bowling
	7:30- 8:30 pm	Public Skating
THURSDAY MARCH 19th	10:30- 11:30 am	"Learn to Play" Racquetball (16 years & up)
	11:00 am- 1:00 pm	youth Shinney Hockey (Helmets must be worn)
	1:00- 3:00 pm	Public Skating
FRIDAY MARCH 20th	3:00- 4:00 pm	Open Bowling (16-19 years)
	1:00- 2:30 pm	Open Skating
	2:00- 4:00 pm	"Hang On" Video Challenge (14 years & up .50 entry Fee 1st and 2nd Trophies to be awarded)
	2:30- 4:00 pm	Youth Shinney Hockey

These activities are "FREE" except the "Hang On" Video Challenge

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