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COPING WITH STRESS

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Stress is a common part of our daily lives and how we deal with that stress will determine the quality of our lives. Being in charge of our stress is the key to not letting it control our life. Depending on the type, amount, duration and intensity of stress, we all reach a critical limit that differs for each individual.

When our limit is reached, we send signals to ourselves, warning us to slow down or change. We frequently either miss or ignore those signals until a crisis gets our full attention. We may blow up at a co-worker or family member or develop some sort of stress-related symptom. Hopefully, these symptoms force us to recognize and deal with the overstressed situation.

It has been suggested that stress overload may be present when the following changes occur:

- Hurrying everywhere, walking, talking, and driving faster.
- Feeling depressed, bored or apathetic most of the time.
- Feeling chronically dissatisfied with life.
- Different eating or sleeping habits.
- Becoming a slave to timesaving conveniences such as a car phone, day planner, etc.
- Valuing how much you get done rather than how well you do it.
- Having more accidents than usual.

Many ways exist to manage the stress in your life. If you catch yourself at stress overload, you might want to try some of these coping strategies.

- Say no when you mean no if your schedule is already full. Keep a file card in your desk drawer with the word NO printed on it in large black letters.
- Respond and act rather than react.
- Give up the victim role. Take responsibility for circumstances you can control.
- As Clint Eastwood says. "A man's got to know his limitations." Remember: You are human and have limits to your time and energy.
- Take good care of your machine. Eat, exercise and sleep in a healthy manner.
- Organize your time.
- Take "mini-vacations." Whether it's a ten-minute nap or a three-day getaway, taking a break can be incredibly refreshing.

Make these coping strategies part of your daily life can help you get on top of your stress, instead of letting the stress be on top of you.

The Counseling Team International provides classes on how to implement these and other strategies in the workplace. Please call (909) 884-0133 and ask for Darren Verbout at ext. 238 for further information.