



EAP NEWS

On the Side

Taking Personal Responsibility for Stress Reduction

an excerpt from

The Stress of Organizational Change

Price Prichett & Ron Pound

Obviously, *prevention* is better than having to come up with a *cure*. But just the same, it makes sense to review the commonly accepted guidelines for reducing stress once it occurs.

15 Steps to Lower Stress

1. Invest thirty minutes in vigorous physical exercise, three to five times per week (assuming your doctor doesn't have a problem with that). Work up a sweat.
2. Learn relaxation techniques.
3. Cut down on caffeine.
4. Eat right.
5. Meditate. Get still. "Centre."
6. Develop better time management habits.
7. Play. Have fun. Recharge.
8. Get plenty of sleep.
9. Smile more. Laugh. Use humour to lighten your emotional load.
10. Count your blessings—daily. Make thankfulness a habit.
11. Say nice things when you talk to yourself.
12. Simplify.
13. Set personal goals. Give yourself a sense of purpose.
14. Forgive. Grudges are too heavy to carry around.
15. Practice optimism and positive expectancy. Hope is a muscle—develop it.

Response to Trauma

Melanie Steers, EAP Counsellor

Canadians have reacted to the terrorist attacks in the United States with a tremendous outpouring of grief and concern. While only a few Canadians have been directly impacted by these events, either as survivors or as families that lost loved ones in the World Trade Center, a majority of Canadians feel they have been emotionally affected and even fundamentally changed by the events. Why is this so?

Studies of the psychological response to disaster have shown that individuals not directly involved in a traumatic

event can still be significantly affected. This is called "vicarious traumatization" and its existence is proof of the scope that a disaster can have on a community or society at large. The constant recounting of events through the newspaper, and especially television coverage which provides strong visual images, create a sense of "having been there". This feeling is particularly strong the more you identify with the victims/survivors.

People who experience traumatic events either directly or vicariously describe feelings and symptoms

such as: difficulty sleeping, intrusive thoughts about the event, nightmares, feelings of "unrealness", loss of appetite, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, fatigue, depression, preoccupation with the incident, withdrawal or emotional detachment from others. Many individuals also describe changes in their thoughts. They begin reevaluating their life and are preoccupied with questions of how, and why it happened and who is responsible. Many losses are experienced: loss of faith in the goodness of mankind, loss of faith in God, or ideals. A loss of self-confidence, optimism or interests

may result in an individual grieving for what he/she was prior to the intrusion

The key is self-care.

of death and destruction. A loss of innocence in the safety of the world, trust in others and the order and meaningfulness of life can also be profound. If you have noticed any of these feelings and thought in response to the terrorist attacks, you are not alone.

In the face of these disturbing symptoms, people are often unsure of what they can do to lessen their negative impact, process the events and return to a more functional level in their day-to-day activities. The key is self-care. Self-care can include:



- * limiting television viewing of the events; you want to be informed but avoid endless watching especially before bedtime
- * seek out and use your support network: people have a need to “debrief”; to discuss the events and have their feelings and reactions normalized
- * consider taking steps to assist victims or the relief effort even in small ways; donating blood and making charitable donations, for example, can give people a sense of control, reduce feelings of helplessness and allow for positive change to take place
- * maintain your routine as much as possible
- * take part in activities that are health-promoting for you: relaxation, music, reading, meditation
- acknowledge emotions as legitimate, both to yourself and others
- * allow yourself time to think about the event but try to “contain” this thinking so as to minimize interference with your daily functioning
- * maintain a balance between work and leisure areas and avoid extra

- * commitments
- * take care of your body during this time of heightened stress through proper sleep, nutrition and exercise.

**To set an appointment call
613-549-5561
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS
FOR CHILDREN**

Children’s responses to trauma can be similar to those of adults. Some additional signs more specific for children include: acting out, aggressive or bullying behaviour; and increased separation anxiety. Strategies to consider in helping children cope include:

- ☺ Active listening - children need to have their feelings, especially fear, acknowledged and normalized.
- ☺ Provide age-appropriate information and gently correct any misinformation.
- ☺ Reassure where possible without minimizing the meaning of the event, for example geographical distance from conflict, relative safety of Canada.
- ☺ Use the event as an opportunity to teach children the importance of respecting

others, assisting those in need, and the concept of a global community.

- ☺ Maintain child’s regular routine of activities, chores and homework expectations.
- ☺ Keep your watching of television coverage to a minimum when young children are present. If children are determined to watch coverage, ensure you watch with them to explain, interpret and monitor their reactions.

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WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND PITFALLS OF TAKING OUT A LINE OF CREDIT?

Tim Utting, Credit Counsellor

Almost all financial institutions offer some sort of line of credit whether it is unsecured or secured by the equity in your home.

One of the main benefits of this type of loan is that it offers the convenience of being able to write your own loan. This enables an individual to purchase big ticket items such as furniture or to make investments, home improvements or even to pay for a vacation without having to reapply for a loan each time. Ironically this

convenience factor is also one of the main pitfalls of a line of credit. People often find this access to money too convenient and begin to rely on the line of credit rather than trying to save the money for these items. As a result, the line of credit is never paid off and is often kept at or near its limit.

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Often lines of credit, especially those secured by a mortgage or some other asset offer a very attractive interest rate. These types of lines of credit are sometimes used to consolidate other debts such as credit cards. It is especially important to be careful in handling these types of lines of credit as you may quickly become

overextended and potentially lose your home in the process.

Like any form of credit a line of credit can be a double edged sword so you need to be careful how you handle it. For more answers to your credit questions, please contact your EAP at **1-888-409-4499**.