
Tips on Managing Stress

TIPS ON MANAGING STRESS

Contents

BASIC CONCEPTS

OPT FOR OPTIMISM	1
<i>How Positive Attitudes Defuse Stress</i>	
THE ART OF WORRYING	2
<i>Making Your Worries Work For You</i>	
BURNOUT	3
<i>What It Is And What You Can Do</i>	
THE BALANCING ACT	4
<i>"You First" or "Me First?"</i>	
FORGIVE AND MOVE ON	5
<i>Letting Go Of Resentment</i>	
BANISHING THE BLUES	6
<i>What You Can Do About Depression</i>	
THE STAGES OF GRIEF	7
<i>A Normal Life Process</i>	
NAMELESS FEARS	8
<i>Coping With Anxiety</i>	
DO TRANQUILIZERS REALLY RELIEVE STRESS	9
CIGARETTES, CAFFEINE AND SUGAR	10
<i>They Increase Your Stress</i>	
DRUGS AND ALCOHOL	11
<i>They Aggravate Your Stress</i>	

YOU HAVE TO HAVE FRIENDS.12
How Friends Help Buffer Stress

CHRONIC FATIGUE. 12
When "Tired" Means "Stressed"

HOW FOODS AFFECT YOUR MOODS. 13
Nutrition Tips To Lessen Stress

THE CHANCE TO CHANGE. 13
Doing Well During Life Transitions

TECHNIQUES FOR STRESS REDUCTION

RELAX YOUR STRESS AWAY. 14
10 Great Ways To De-Stress

TAKE A DEEP BREATH... 15
...And Relax

TENSION HEADACHES. 16
Self-Care Remedies

RELAX YOUR "STRESS TRIANGLE". 17
Exercises To Relieve Headache and Tension

DIFFICULT PEOPLE 18
You Can Deal With Them

COPING WITH DISAPPOINTMENT. 19
Learning To Enjoy Your Life

CRISIS HEALING. 20
Getting Through An Emotional Crisis

JOB TROUBLES. 21
Tips For Easing Problems At Work

MANAGE YOUR MONEY. 22
Facing Financial Troubles

TIPS FOR FEELING GOOD.....	23
Simple Suggestions That Work	

HOW TO NEGOTIATE DIFFERENCES.....	23
Communicate, Cooperate, & Understand	

STRESS & RELATIONSHIPS

COUPLES STRESS.....	24
Coping Skills For Happier Couples	

SUCCESSFUL ARGUING.....	25
A Strong Basis For Strong Relationships	

HOW STRONG FAMILIES FIGHT STRESS.....	26
Plan, Communicate, Cooperate	

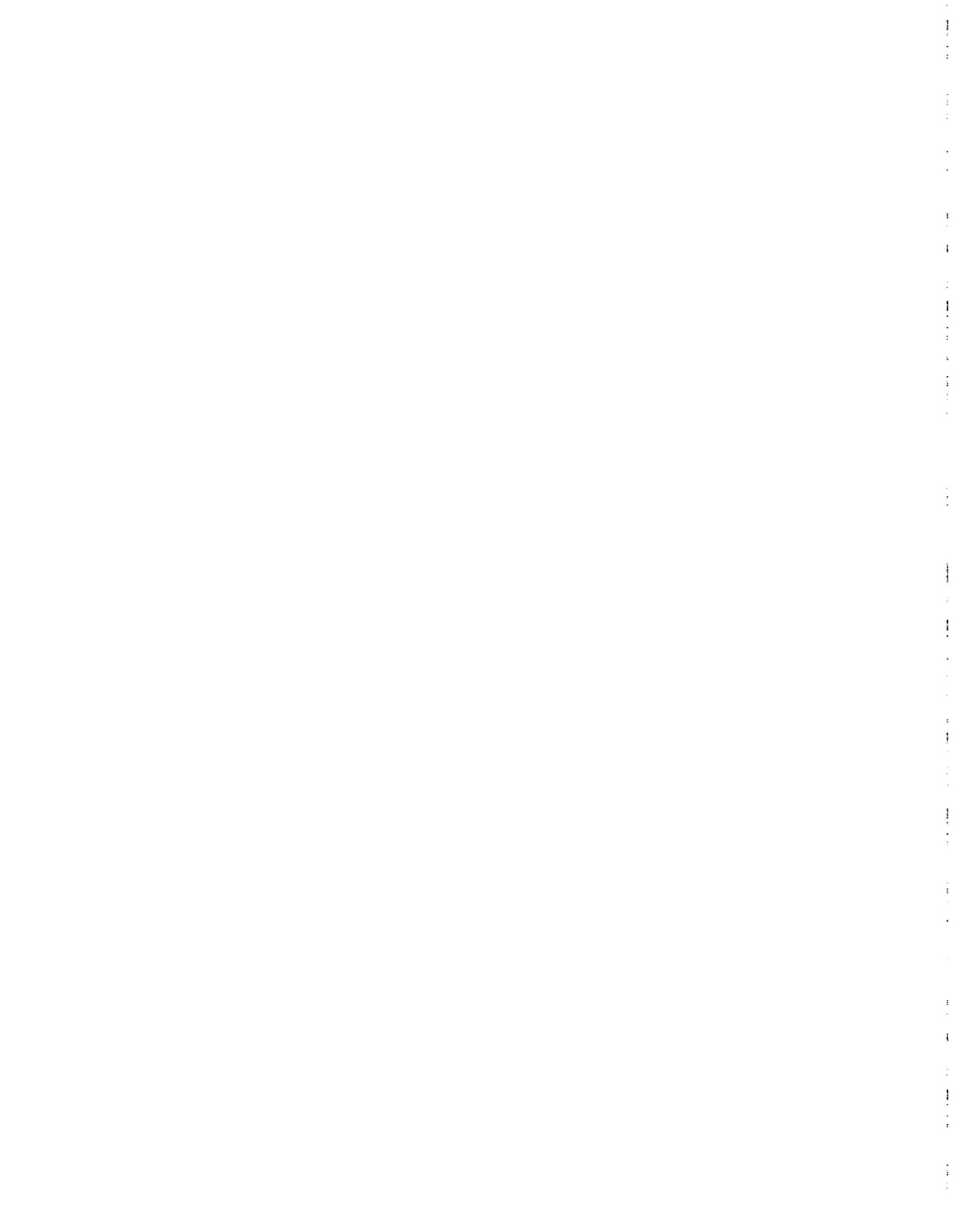
COPING WITH KIDS.....	27
Skills For Positive Parenting	

THE STRESS OF CHRONIC ILLNESS.....	28
Coping Skills For Caregivers	

DEALING WITH DIVORCE.....	29
Coping, Surviving, Thriving	

STRESS-PROOF YOUR CHILDREN.....	30
--	-----------

HELP YOUR CHILD THROUGH A CRISIS.....	30
--	-----------



OPT FOR OPTIMISM

How Positive Attitudes Defuse Stress

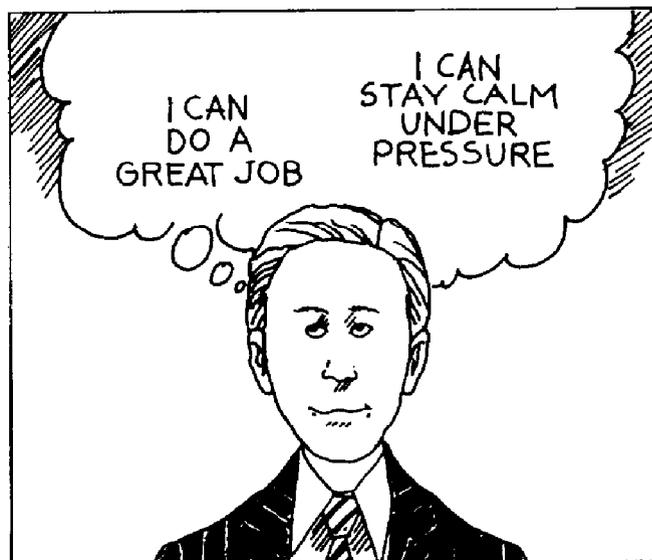
Research has shown that most illnesses, including headaches, backaches, and heart disease, can be caused or influenced by our feelings and stress levels. When we experience life changes—positive or negative—our bodies need time to recover. Having an optimistic attitude can help speed recovery and may even keep you healthier than someone with negative attitudes. By learning to “look on the bright side,” you can help counteract the negative effects of stress and improve your overall health.

Looking On The Bright Side

The classic definition of an optimist is a person who sees a glass as half full, while a pessimist sees it as half empty. Optimists *choose* to feel hopeful about how they see a situation. Optimists are positive thinkers who practice positive “self-talk.” They tell themselves “I can.” Optimism, or positive thinking, can help accomplish a surprising number of personal and work goals.



An optimist sees a glass as half full, while a pessimist sees it as half empty.



Optimists are positive thinkers who practice positive “self-talk.”

Become An Optimist

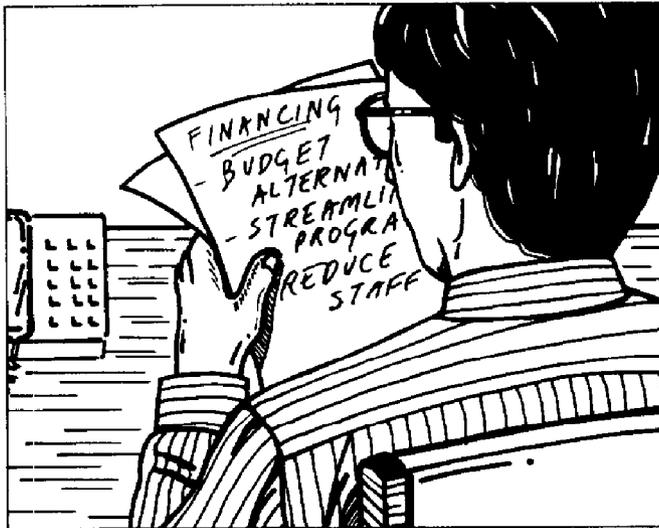
- 1. Find a role model.** Find someone who seems to make the best of any given situation. Find out how that person maintains that attitude, and copy the behavior. Chances are, even during difficult times optimism helps your role model get through it with fewer negative effects.
- 2. Practice positive self-talk.** Tell yourself positive things every day for a month (“I can do the job,” “I like myself,” etc.). Practice positive self-talk for at least one month before judging how it has affected your attitude.
- 3. Practice affirmations.** Affirmations are positive, motivating statements. Use short “I am” statements: “I am happy with my job.” Say the affirmation out loud several times, then imagine it happening.

Accentuate The Positive

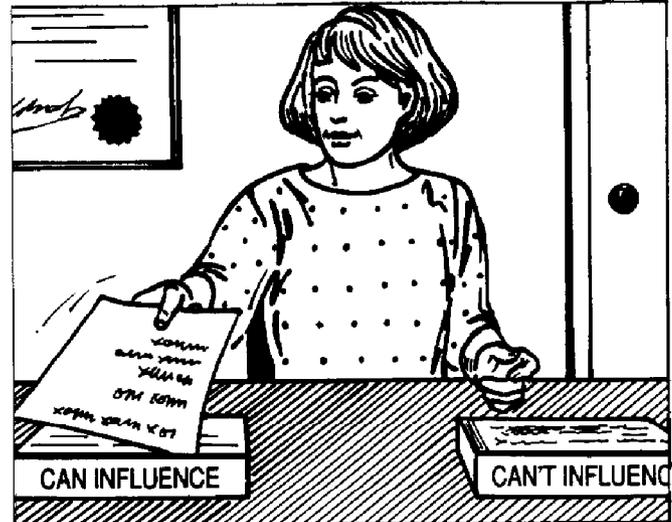
No one is optimistic all the time. But anyone can learn how to adopt a more positive, healthier attitude. When you practice being an optimist, you’ll be on your way to a happier, healthier body and mind.

THE ART OF WORRYING

Making Your Worries Work For You



Take one worry and think about where it came from, to help you find a solution.



Focus on problems you can influence.

Worrying means thinking with concern about a problem. It is a reaction to emotions such as fear. Worrying can be both harmful and helpful. It can work against you when you worry without finding solutions or when you ignore other activities. If you worry too much, you may even become depressed, anxious or irritable. But worrying can be helpful when it starts thinking that leads to problem solving and positive action. By learning why we worry, how to worry efficiently, and how to take action to solve problems, you can make your worries work for you.

Why We Worry Too Much

There are many reasons why we worry too much. Often, we talk ourselves into a state of mind where we can't think problems through to a solution. We become so involved

in this negative "self-talk" ("I know I can't do it," "I'll never get the job," etc.) that we find ourselves unable to take action. We may also worry too much when we feel as if we have little control over our situation; we may not even try to find a solution because we believe it will be useless. Some of us may also worry unnecessarily as a result of past experiences or habits. But these worries may not have any basis in reality today, and these habits may be too limiting. (Just because you were in a car accident five years ago doesn't mean you should prevent your teenager from learning to drive.)

Learn To Worry Efficiently

To make your worries work for you, practice listening to and evaluating your self-talk. Is it negative or positive? Are you

endlessly replaying one or two conversations? Take one worry and think it through to the end, coming up with a solution. (For example, instead of saying "I know I can't pass the exam," try saying "I can pass if..." and list steps—finding a tutor, forming a study group, etc.—that can help you reach your goal.)

Take Action

Write down all your worries, even small ones, and put them in one of two categories: those you *can* influence, and those you can't. Then focus just on those problems you *can* influence. Agree to let the others go; accepting that there are some situations that you cannot control is in itself a positive action. In some cases, a professional counselor may be able to help you uncover hidden causes that can relieve your excess worries.



BURNOUT

What It Is And What You Can Do



Step outside the situation to see what you can change.

“Burnout” is a term we hear often. Anyone can suffer from burnout—feeling seriously stressed and unable to cope. But burnout can be avoided when you learn about its causes and symptoms, how to recognize the problem, and ways that you can change your environment to reduce stressful situations.

Causes And Symptoms

Burnout is most likely in people who feel overworked and unappreciated. They become disappointed, and sometimes cynical. They may also feel guilty and ashamed.

The symptoms of burnout can include exhaustion, both mental and physical; hopelessness and helplessness; low spirit and self-esteem; frequent illness. Burnout happens often in helping profes-

sions such as nursing, but anyone doing very pressured (or even very boring) work can suffer burnout.

Recognize The Problem

The first step toward coping with burnout is defining the problem. Is the situation itself stressful? Is there something about your situation that you can change? For example, nurses who care for terminally-ill patients can be prime candidates for burnout. However, by accepting that the situation *itself* is stressful, they can reduce feelings of guilt and resentment.

Make Changes

Changes in both you and your environment can help prevent burnout. Analyze the situation. You may have more ability to change

your environment than you think. Then take positive action if possible. For example, if lack of appreciation on the job is damaging morale, coworkers can make a group effort to compliment one another on their accomplishments. Your environment will also change as you develop communication skills. Sharing your feelings and listening to others is simple, yet very important.

When you ignore your physical and emotional needs during a period of constant or severe distress, burnout may result. It's important to take time to recover and heal from burnout. Otherwise serious emotional and physical damage may result.

Use and develop skills such as risk-taking, reaching out to friends, and talking with others in a situation like yours. Ask someone you respect to look at your situation and suggest solutions. Use this chance to make burnout a first step toward greater satisfaction. 



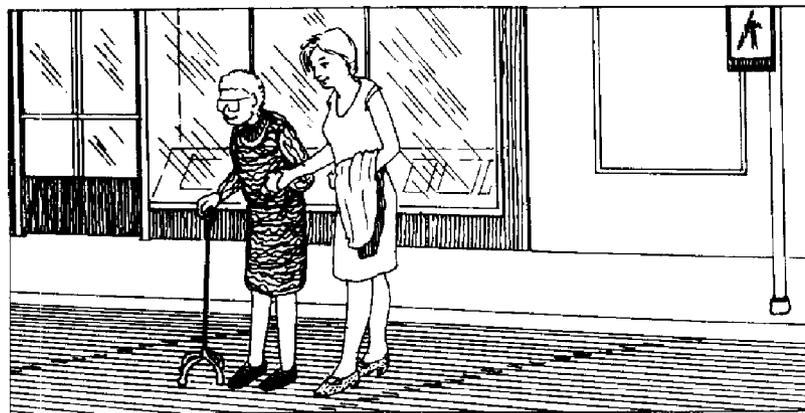
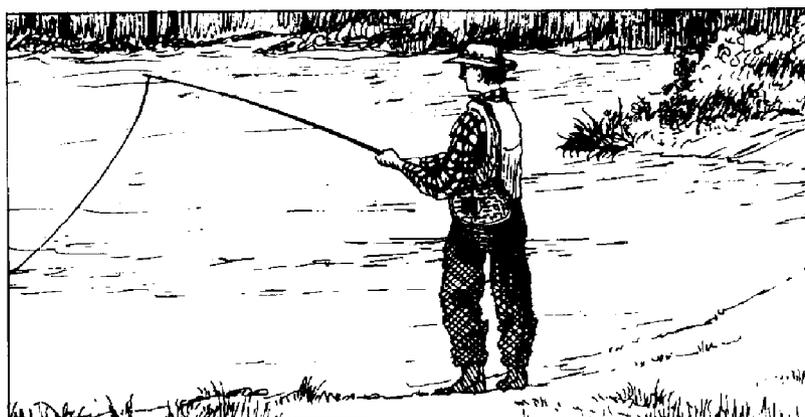
Symptoms of burnout include exhaustion, hopelessness and low self-esteem.

THE BALANCING ACT

“You First” or “Me First?”

Take time for yourself regularly in a quiet, restful place.

Most of us have many demands placed on our time and energy. Spouse, children, spiritual or community groups are important and make living worthwhile, but can make finding time for oneself a challenge. Balancing the time you spend on others with personal time for yourself can help you become happier and more productive.



Helping others can give your life great meaning and joy.

Look Inside

Take a moment to think about how well you take care of yourself—both physically and emotionally. Do you eat three moderate meals a day, drink alcohol only in moderation, avoid smoking? Do you exercise each week, and get a check-up once a year? Answering yes to these questions means that you take care of your body.

Now think about your emotional well-being. Do you regularly set aside “quiet” time for yourself, meditating, writing, thinking or praying? Do you make time regularly to enjoy nature or other quiet, restful places? All these activities can help you recover from life’s stresses.

Reach Outside

Reaching outside yourself can give your life great meaning and joy. Reaching out means sharing with others—your family, co-workers, friends, a non-profit organization—virtually everything that’s not you! Sharing with others takes time and energy, but the rewards are worth the effort. Your self-esteem and sense of purpose in life increase when you share a common goal or bond with others.

Find The Balance

Reaching outside all the time would leave you exhausted. Living only for yourself would leave you lonely and empty. Finding the balance between the two is the key to a rich and contented life. To find your personal balance, look at how you spend your time and energy. Write down your main activities each day for a week or two. Then add up the hours spent “for me” and “for others.” You might realize that you would like to give more to others, or take more time for yourself. When you are creating balance for yourself, you need to decide what is most important to you.

Adapt to Changes

Finding your balance is a day-by-day matter. If you are able to change as your life circumstances change, caring for yourself and others will make your life healthy and satisfying.



©1989 PARLAY INTERNATIONAL

FORGIVE AND MOVE ON

Letting Go Of Resentment

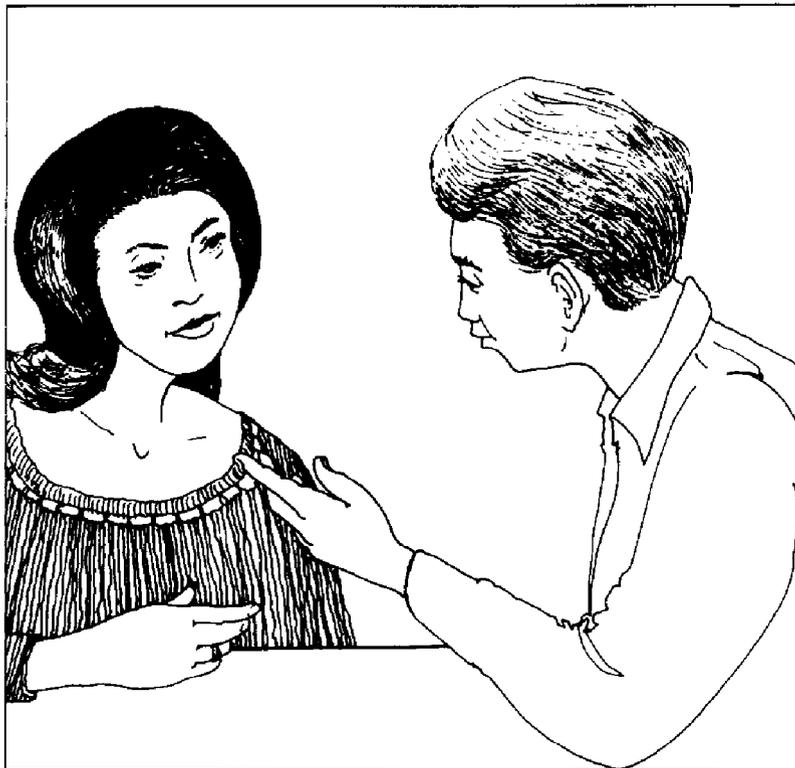
In the course of living, we are often hurt by others. Holding in hurt feelings over months, or even years, is very stressful and can cause minor and major diseases. Learning to forgive significant hurts and then move on is an important part of being healthy, in both mind and body.

The Forgiving Crisis

We can laugh or explain away small hurts. But some hurts are so unfair, and so deeply felt, that they cause "a forgiving crisis"—we can't bring ourselves to forgive the person who caused the hurt (even in cases where we *know* they didn't mean to hurt us). If you've been hurt, you probably feel anger, or even hatred. Holding in such feelings is stressful, and can also increase other stresses. When you face your pain (and the person who hurt you), you can end the "forgiving crisis" and lead a healthier, happier life.

Learn A Way To Forgive

Being hurt by someone you trust can be particularly painful. While it may be difficult, try to be open and accepting as you explain to that



If you reach out, the person who hurt you may be willing to try being friends again.

person what he or she did to hurt you so deeply, then try to imagine that the event had not happened. You may find that you are able to stand back and be objective about the person who hurt you. You may find that the person is weak, needy, or simply human, and needs your help. With new insights, your pain and anger may give way to forgiving and compassion. If you reach out, that person may be willing to try to renew your friendship.

The Nature Of Forgiving

Forgiving is part of healing, but it is not excusing, denying, hiding, or ignoring the event that caused the pain. Forgiving includes remembering, letting go of anger, recognizing what happened, and moving on. Forgiving is often a slow, confusing process. You can forgive and still feel some anger.

The Benefits Of Forgiving

Forgiving makes your life easier. It gives you greater peace of mind. You can get on with your life when part of you is freed from having to resent those who have harmed you.



Holding in feelings can cause illness.

BANISHING THE BLUES

What You Can Do About Depression

Everyone goes through periods of "the blues." But when it goes on for a long time, or has side effects that make even small things difficult to accomplish, you may be suffering from depression. Understanding the causes and signs of depression can help you or someone you care for seek appropriate treatment. Depression can be devastating, but help is available.

Understand The Causes

Depression can be caused by overwhelming losses such as the death of a friend, severe illness, or divorce. Some people have difficulty facing the sadness, anger, shame, or remorse that can go along with such an event. They become depressed as their feelings numb.

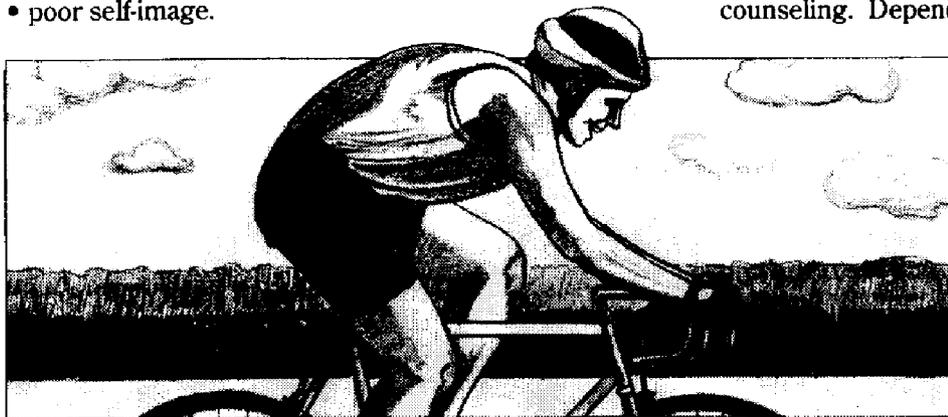
People who feel powerless over a situation often feel depressed. For example, those with very high standards may feel especially bad when they try hard, yet fail to meet their goals. If someone dies, they may be certain they could have prevented it. If they're fired from a job, they may blame themselves again and again, rather than let go of their disappointments.

Loneliness and lack of affection can cause depression. Turning anger inside, which is more common for women than for men, is another cause. Expressing anger in a healthy way can help relieve it. Physical conditions such as hidden food allergies, poor diet, or low blood sugar can also cause depression.

Recognize The Signs

Someone who is depressed may show signs such as:

- loss of interest in home and work;
- frequent crying;
- change in eating habits: eating too much or too little;
- unexplained nervousness or grouching;
- poor self-image.



Regular aerobic exercise can help relieve some types of depression.



Professional counseling can help you work through depression.

Treatment Can Help

When someone is depressed, life loses its sparkle and meaning. Spending time with a special friend can help. But sometimes, the depression hangs on stubbornly for weeks or months. If you or someone close to you is experiencing this kind of depression, seek professional counseling. Depending on the severity of the condition, treatment may include:

- aerobic exercise, such as running or swimming;
- practicing positive self-talk;
- scheduling activities throughout the day;
- eliminating foods from the diet to which the person is allergic;
- vitamin B6, folic acid, and/or niacin supplements;
- eating a sugar-free diet;
- medication, if indicated.



©1989 PARLAY INTERNATIONAL

THE STAGES OF GRIEF

A Normal Life Process

At some point in our lives, each of us faces the loss of someone or something dear to us. The grief that follows such a loss can seem unbearable, but grief is actually a healing process. Grief is the emotional suffering we feel after a loss of some kind. The death of a loved one, loss of a limb, even intense disappointment can cause grief. Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross has named five stages of grief people go through following a serious loss. Sometimes people get stuck in one of the first four stages. Their lives can be painful until they move to the fifth stage—acceptance.



The support of friends and loved ones can help you recover from grief.

sadness and mourning have tapered off. The person simply accepts the reality of the loss.

Five Stages Of Grief

1. Denial and Isolation.

At first, we tend to deny the loss has taken place, and may withdraw from our usual social contacts. This stage may last a few moments, or longer.

2. Anger.

The grieving person may then be furious: at the person who inflicted the hurt (even if she's dead), or at the world, for letting it happen. He may be angry with himself for letting the event take place, even if, realistically, nothing could have stopped it.

3. Bargaining.

Now the grieving person may make bargains with God, asking, "If I do this, will you take away the loss?"

4. Depression.

The person feels numb, although anger and sadness may remain underneath.

5. Acceptance.

This is when the anger,



Anger is a common, healthy stage of grief.

Grief And Stress

During grief, it is common to have many conflicting feelings. Sorrow, anger, loneliness, sadness, shame, anxiety, and guilt often accompany serious losses. Having so many strong feelings can be very stressful.

Yet denying the feelings, and failing to work through the five stages of grief, is harder on the body and mind than going through them. When people suggest "looking on the bright side," or other ways of cutting off difficult feelings, the grieving person may feel pressured to hide or deny these emotions. Then it will take longer for healing to take place.

Recovering From Grief

Grieving and its stresses pass more quickly with good self-care habits. It helps to have a close circle of family or friends. It also helps to eat a balanced diet, drink enough non-alcoholic fluids, get exercise and rest.

Most people are unprepared for grief, since so often, tragedy strikes suddenly, without warning. If good self-care habits are always practiced, it helps the person to deal with the pain and shock of loss until acceptance is reached.



NAMELESS FEARS

Coping With Anxiety

Anxiety is a vague sense of fear or tension about something that may or may not happen. Often, we are unable to name what it is that's causing our tension. Fortunately, by understanding what anxiety is, how to identify your real concerns, and where to get help, you can learn to "let go" of anxiety.

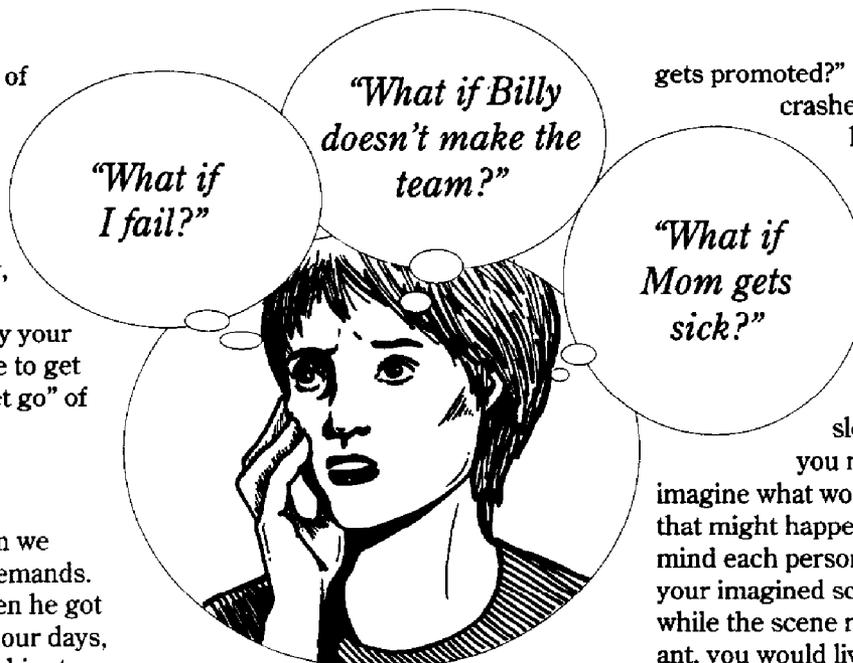
Recognize Anxiety

Anxiety is common when we experience conflicting demands. (Bob was exhausted when he got home after working 10-hour days, but his wife Jane wanted him to spend more time with the children. He began to feel anxious.) Some people only feel anxious around certain situations. Others have "performance anxiety" when they think they need to live up to others' expectations, as in a job or relationship. Unresolved stress can also lead to feelings of generalized anxiety.

Stomach ache, headache, irritability, and muscle twitches can all be signs of anxiety. Usually, you'll feel tense without knowing why. If you close your eyes and try to calm your mind, you will probably notice a stream of worried thoughts.

Confront Anxiety

There are many ways to confront anxiety. You can begin by trying to identify what is causing it. For example, your present anxiety might be caused by expectations



Anxious people often have a stream of worries going through their minds.

family members had of you in the past. Writing down your fears or talking to a trusted friend can also help you identify why you're anxious. Then, try "listening" to the thoughts in your mind. They may be extreme "what if?" questions, such as "What if he never



Anxiety is common when we experience conflicting demands

gets promoted?" "What if the plane crashes?" Learning to hear these statements can help you gain a more realistic perspective.

"What if Mom gets sick?"

When you feel yourself becoming anxious, take several deep, slow breaths to help you relax. Then,

imagine what would be the worst that might happen. See in your mind each person and emotion in your imagined scene. In most cases, while the scene might be unpleasant, you would live through it. This can help you become more realistic about your fear. You can also try imagining that the thing you fear is happening to someone else. What could you tell them that would put them more at ease? Write it down and read it to yourself.

Counseling by a trained professional can also help you identify and alleviate your anxiety.

Identify And Let Go

Once you identify your anxieties, you may realize that there are steps you can take to relieve your fears. You might also recognize that the situations you're worried about are beyond your control. If so, stepping back and learning to accept what you can't change can greatly relieve anxious feelings. Letting go of anxiety can take time, but the freedom and relief you'll feel are well worth the effort.



DO TRANQUILIZERS REALLY RELIEVE STRESS?

For years, people have turned to tranquilizers to help relieve the effects of too much stress. But do tranquilizers really work? In some situations, tranquilizers can be helpful. But continued reliance on tranquilizers can actually be harmful to your health and even increase the negative effects of stress. If you wish to discuss the issue of tranquilizers with your physician, the following information can help you make an informed choice.

What They Are

Tranquilizers are medicines that temporarily calm you down. During short-term, stressful situations, tranquilizers may be helpful. If your doctor suggests a tranquilizer, ask about possible side effects such as drowsiness and poor muscle coordination. You will probably be advised to avoid or limit your alcohol intake, and avoid driving or operating machinery. All medicine should be treated with respect. Never take a dosage more than your doctor prescribes. Don't take someone else's medication, or



Prescription tranquilizers *may* be helpful in some short-term stressful situations.

let anyone take yours. Always throw away any medicine past its expiration date.

Tranquilizers can reduce fears and sleeplessness during stressful times. But they do not treat the cause of someone's problems. Unless you work on the problems causing your stress, you will probably find that when you stop taking tranquilizers, any unpleasant feelings or symptoms return.

Natural "Tranquilizers"

There are many ways to relax that are natural, free of charge and have no negative side effects. Try one of these next time you feel stressed.

- Listen to calming music.
- Take a warm bath.
- Take 10 slow, deep breaths. Count to 5 slowly as you inhale and exhale.
- Drink herb tea.
- Spend time in nature. Sit quietly for 30 minutes, allowing yourself to listen to the sounds, see the trees and shrubs, and relax.
- Ask yourself what feeling you wish would go away. Then wait as your response emerges.

What You Should Know

If you or your doctor feel that you need to take tranquilizers for an extended period of time, you should think about what is *causing* your problems—perhaps it's time to make an important change at home or work. Remember that tranquilizers can relieve the symptoms of stress, but they cannot "cure" the causes of stress. If you can't relieve your stress through relaxation techniques and other natural "tranquilizers," seek the help of a professional counselor who can help you get to the root of the problems causing your stress.



Try natural "tranquilizers" to soothe the effects of stress.

CIGARETTES, CAFFEINE AND SUGAR

They Increase Your Stress



The combination of caffeine, cigarettes and sugar can increase both physical and emotional stress.

Cigarettes, caffeine and sugar all increase your stress levels. Yet these substances are so much a part of our lives, we are often unaware of their effects. When you learn how each of these substances can affect stress, you may find that it's time to take a healthy step and kick the habit.

Cigarettes Stimulate You

When you smoke, you feel stimulated, as your heart rate, blood pressure and hormone levels increase. Your body needs more of certain vitamins and minerals to cope with this stimulation, which is a form of stress. Cigarettes are expensive, highly addictive, and cause major and minor illnesses. The costs of cigarettes (up to \$700 per year, plus extra medical, dental and cleaning costs) can add to your problems. Trying to quit is difficult for most people. All these factors add up to physical and emotional stress.

Caffeine Speeds You Up

Caffeine is also a physical stressor. It speeds you up for as long as 20 hours. Its effects are different in different people. For example, for some people it causes headaches, and for others, it relieves them. Caffeine can cause symptoms such as sleeplessness, upset stomach, increased blood pressure, and in women, breast lumps. Many people become "hooked" on caffeine in coffee, chocolate, soft drinks and medicines such as painkillers. Withdrawal can include severe headaches, nervousness, grouchiness, and rapid heartbeat.

Sugar Gets You Nowhere

For most people, any kind of sugar (white, brown, honey or fructose) gives a quick boost of energy, then leaves you with less energy, which can make you feel depressed. Many

sugary foods contain little food value. Yet eating them leaves you less hungry for nutritious food. Then your body lacks important vitamins and minerals. Sugary foods such as desserts, candy and soda pop can contribute to weight control problems. When you gain weight and don't want to, you can feel depressed, anxious or unhappy, adding to your stress level.

Take A Healthy Step

Cigarettes, caffeine and sugar increase your physical and emotional stress levels. The combination of any two or all three of these substances can make you feel unstable. If you decide to take the healthy step of quitting smoking or reducing your intake of caffeine and sugar, you'll probably discover that you can manage stress more easily and feel better all around. 



Find support for quitting through a group or program.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

They Aggravate Your Stress

Our bodies and emotions sometimes need help in recovering from stressors such as illness, divorce, a new baby, or a promotion. Unfortunately, many people turn to alcohol and other drugs to help relieve tension and pressure, failing to realize that these substances actually make stress worse. If you or someone you know uses alcohol or other drugs to "calm down," consider the following information, and think again.

Understand The Effects Of Stress

Common responses to stress are fatigue, depression, grouchiness, and sadness. People are more likely to become ill or have difficulty concentrating during or after a stressful period. This is true whether the stressor is positive or negative. If you're promoted, you might feel excited about the challenge and extra pay. But your body will still need to recover from the added strain.

Know The Effects Of Drugs And Alcohol

Drugs and alcohol are poisonous to our systems, and can cause serious damage over time. Drug and alcohol addictions are progressive: that is, they tend not to stop on their own, but they get more and more troublesome. People find that one drink no longer has any effect, and even when drunk, they don't feel happy. Or the drug that helped them forget now forces them to focus all their energy on getting more drugs.

How Drugs And Alcohol Affect Stress

Some drugs speed you up. Alcohol slows you down. But all these substances share one thing in common: they put additional stress on the body. So using drugs or alcohol as a way of getting rid of stress is counterproductive: it prevents what you're trying to accomplish. It's like trying to do situps with a 2000-pound gorilla on your chest.

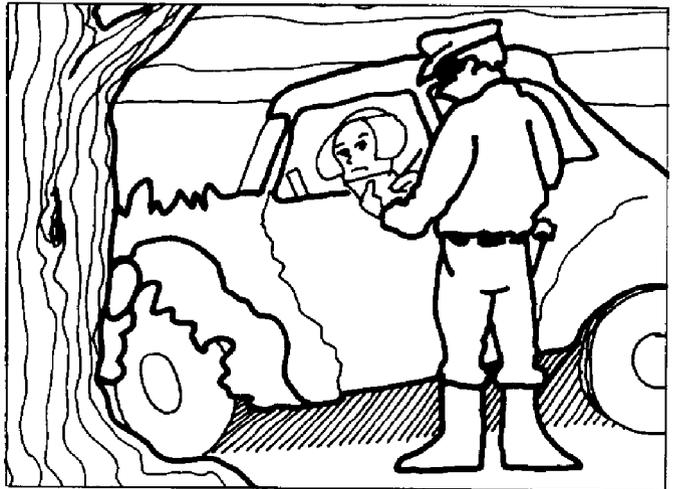
As poisons, drugs and alcohol can harm your immune, circulatory, and nervous systems. Since drugs and alcohol can make functioning properly very difficult, other problems can arise which cause new stresses, such as losing a job, destroying a marriage, or causing a car accident.



Using drugs or alcohol to get rid of stress is like trying to do situps with a 2000-pound gorilla on your chest.

The Message Is Clear

It's a clear message: drugs and alcohol can't help get rid of stresses, and in the long run will only make them worse. Seeing a counselor, learning stress reducing techniques, or reaching out to friends are all more helpful and healthy for you and for others.



Drugs and alcohol can cause new stresses.

YOU HAVE TO HAVE FRIENDS

How Friends Help Buffer Stress

Everyone goes through periods of distress. One of the best ways to get through these periods is turning to trusted friends for support, comfort and help.

Turn To Friends For Support

- ➔ Friends can support you by listening to your feelings, offering solutions, or simply spending time with you. Friends know your history, concerns, and inner circle.
- ➔ Friends can give you practical support. When George and Ann had their baby, their friend Tom offered to walk their dog—a small gesture that meant a great deal to them. But don't wait for a friend to offer his or her support. The nature of

friendship is being able to *ask* for help when you need it, too.

- ➔ Friends can give you both physical and emotional support. When Martha's father died, her good friend Sharon hugged her as she cried. Human touch is an important part of the healing process.

Identify And Make Friends

Family members, coworkers, members of your church or synagogue, even the store clerk can all become friends, if you make the effort. Reach out to others when you can. Then, in times of trouble, you will have people to turn to. People who are close to others stay healthy and live longer than those who stay isolated.



©1989 PARLAY INTERNATIONAL

CHRONIC FATIGUE

When "Tired" Means "Stressed"

If you feel exhausted even after a good night's sleep, your fatigue may be caused by too much stress. Learn the symptoms of chronic fatigue. Then you'll be able to take steps which bring you fresh energy.

The Meaning Of Chronic Fatigue

"Chronic fatigue" is when you're tired all the time and you can't seem to recover. Unlike the exhaustion you feel after doing something very strenuous, chronic fatigue doesn't always seem to have an obvious cause. If any of these statements is true for you, your exhaustion may be due to stress:

- I'm undergoing intense personal or work change;
- I'm under financial, job, or marital pressure;
- I'm bored or dissatisfied much of the time.

Should I See A Doctor?

Chronic fatigue can be a sign of illness. It's wise to see a doctor to rule out anything serious. Ask your doctor if

Being tired all the time can be due to stress.



your exhaustion might be due to stress, poor diet, lack of sleep, prolonged physical activity or disease. In any case, don't ignore your fatigue. Don't drink caffeine or take stimulants to cover up the symptoms. In the long run, it will harm your body.

Find New Energy Sources

If your fatigue is due to stress, try stress reducing ideas such as taking time off, learning to meditate, getting exercise, or practicing greater self-expression. You might find that you have energy to spare!



©1989 PARLAY INTERNATIONAL

HOW FOODS AFFECT YOUR MOODS

Nutrition Tips To Lessen Stress

It may be no surprise that coffee picks you up, and alcohol slows you down. But many other foods and beverages can and do affect your moods. You can improve your mental and physical health by understanding how foods affect you, and how you can eat well to manage stress.

Vitamins and Minerals

Most people can get all the vitamins and minerals they need by eating properly. If they don't, their moods can be affected. Without enough **B vitamins** (found in tuna, peanuts, and kidney beans), you can feel depressed, grouchy, nervous. Without enough **iron** (found in molasses and spinach), you can feel grouchy, nervous, or forgetful.

Thiamine (found in soybean products) helps you feel calm, sleep well, and fight depression. **Vitamin B12** (found in tuna fish) gives you energy. If you don't have enough B12, you can feel grouchy or depressed, and have problems sleeping.

Carbohydrates, Fats And Protein

Different types of food affect you in different ways. Carbohydrates (including wheat, pasta, bread, sweets) tend to calm you down. Low-fat proteins (including meat, fish, low-fat dairy products) give you energy. Fats slow you down and can make you feel sluggish.



A Healthy Diet

It's important to eat a balanced diet, especially when you're under stress. A healthy diet includes low-fat protein (meat, fish, beans), complex carbohydrates (vegetables, fruit, whole grains), and small amounts of fats (olive, safflower or other vegetable oils). Avoid sugar, caffeine and alcohol, which add to your stress burden. Understand how foods affect your moods, and you'll improve your physical and emotional health.



© 1989 PARLAY INTERNATIONAL

THE CHANCE TO CHANGE

Doing Well During Life Transitions

Life changes are stressful, but they are also opportunities. The list below can help you identify the most common life changes. Use the following tips to manage your feelings, and you'll be glad you had the chance to change.

Your Personal Changes

All change, positive or negative, affects you. Check each true statement below.

My work is changing:

- new boss
- new position
- layoff, retirement, fired.

My home life is changing:

- divorce or marriage
- new baby
- financial status (more or less money)
- move.

I am changing:

- stopped an addiction (such as alcohol, drugs, smoking, or food)
- change in health (positive or negative)
- change in personal goals or awareness.

Even just one check above means you are going through significant change. You need time to adjust to all new situations.

Change Comes In Stages

When change first enters your life, you must let go of what was. You may feel sad or angry. Then, things feel uncertain as you begin to accept the change. Finally, the new situation is part of your life. Even if it's unpleasant, you feel used to it.

Use Good Coping Skills

Good coping skills help during change. Reach out to others, set goals, take time off, and take care of your body. You'll take this chance to change in stride, and feel better about yourself.



© 1989 PARLAY INTERNATIONAL

RELAX YOUR STRESS AWAY

10 Great Ways To De-Stress

Your shoulders are tense, your back hurts. You feel grouchy and know it's all due to stress. What can you do? The relaxation techniques described below can help relieve both the physical and emotional tension that often follows stressful situations.

Relax Your Body

The next time you feel the effects of too much stress, try some of the following ways to help you relax.

- 1. Deep Breathing.** While sitting, lying down, or standing, close your eyes and breathe in slowly. Let the breath out for a count of 5-10 seconds. Take ten of these super-relaxers any time you feel tense.
- 2. Stretching.** Practice simple stretches such as the "neck stretch": stretch your neck by gently rolling your head in a half-circle, starting at one side, then dropping your chin to your chest, then to the other side.
- 3. Exercise.** All kinds of physical activity—hiking, running, bowling, walking, etc.—help to reduce stress.
- 4. Take a bath.** Ask household members to allow you at least 30 minutes of uninterrupted time.
- 5. Get a massage.** A massage is a wonderful way to get rid of physical tension. Professional masseuses generally take 30 minutes to an hour, and will work on specific areas of tension, such as lower back or neck.
- 6. Eat Well.** Reduce caffeine (in coffee, black tea, chocolate) and alcohol intake. Find out if your diet is well-balanced, and take steps to eat healthily to help reduce stress.

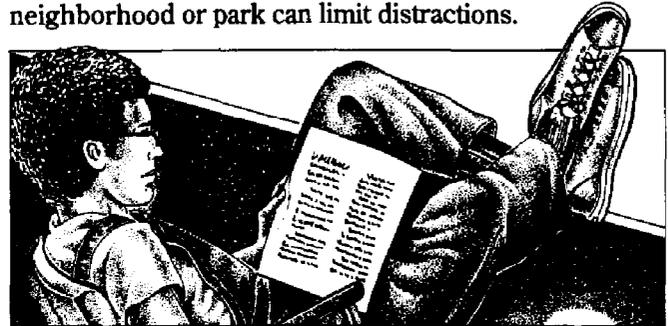


Limiting caffeine can help reduce stress.

Relax Your Emotions

Relaxing your emotions can be just as important as relaxing your body in relieving stress.

- 1. Talk.** Take the time to talk with a friend, mate or child. Express feelings you might have been holding in. Listen carefully to your partner. Walking in a quiet neighborhood or park can limit distractions.



Reading is a great escape.

- 2. Laugh.** Go to a comedy club, see a funny movie, or spend time with a funny friend.
- 3. Cry.** Crying can be as good a release as laughing. If you haven't cried in a long time, try listening to sad music, watching a sad movie or writing about a sad experience.
- 4. Read.** A good book is a great escape. Reading a tear-jerker or comedy can help release pent-up emotions.
- 5. Do something you love.** When you enjoy yourself, whether it's gardening, going to the beach, or seeing friends, you relax your emotions.

Create Stress Reducers

These are just a few stress reducers you can try. You can create your own healthy stress reducers (without alcohol or drugs), or use those listed above. You'll feel better and stay healthier if you do.



©1988 PARLAY INTERNATIONAL

TAKE A DEEP BREATH...

...And Relax

When you're under stress, your muscles tense, and your breathing becomes shallow and rapid. One of the simplest (and best) ways to stop this stress response is to breathe deeply and slowly. It sounds simple, and it is. Most of us, however, do not breathe deeply under normal circumstances, so it may help to review the mechanics of deep breathing and how it helps us to relax.

Breathing Under Stress

When prehistoric humans were in danger of attack, their muscles tensed and their breathing became rapid and shallow, as they prepared to run or fight. Their high level of tension was a means of preparing their bodies for optimum performance. Today, the causes of our "stress" are different, but our stress response is the same. However, since we're not running or fighting, our tension has no release and our stress response builds. One way to counteract the stress response is to learn how to breathe deeply and slowly—the opposite of how we breathe when under stress.

How Deep Breathing Works

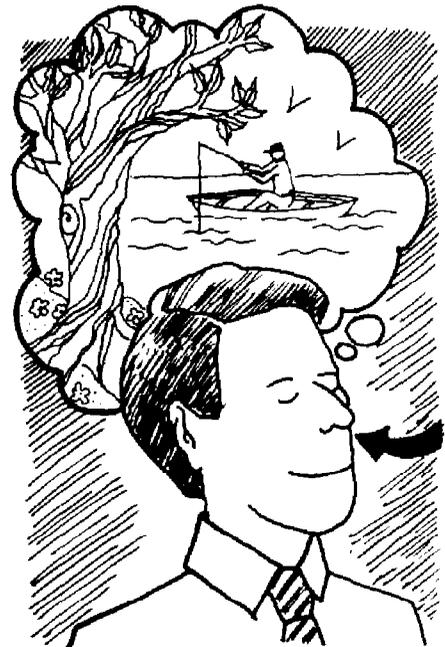
Deep breathing is not always natural to adults. Watch the way a baby breathes: the area beneath the chest goes in and out. Most adults breathe from the chest. This is shallower breathing, so less oxygen is taken in with each breath. As a result the blood is forced to move

through the system quickly so that enough oxygen gets to the brain and organs. Higher blood pressure results.

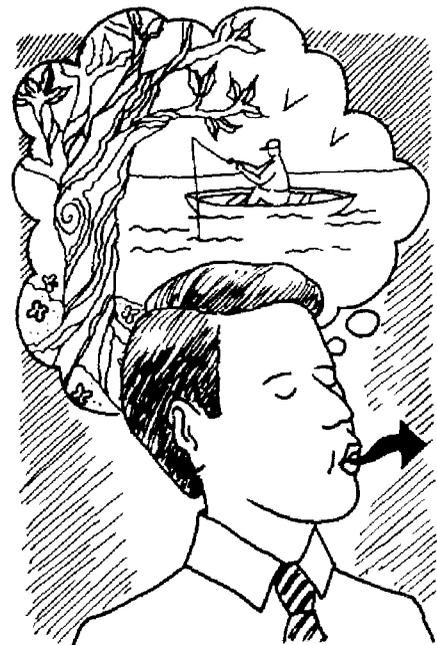
Deep breathing can reverse these effects. Take some time to practice this kind of breathing each day, especially when you're under stress. You can be sitting, standing, or lying down, but it helps to wear loose, comfortable clothing. Begin by breathing in through your nostrils. Count to five, silently saying the word "in," and let your lower abdomen fill with air. Then count to five, silently saying the word "out," as you let the air escape through pursed lips. Do this deep breathing for two minutes or more each time. With practice, you will be able to count slowly to ten or higher. You can increase your relaxation if you imagine breathing in ocean air, the scent of flowers or forest air.

Effects Of Deep Breathing

By helping you let go of tension, deep breathing can relieve headaches, backaches, stomach aches, and sleeplessness. It releases the body's own painkillers, called endorphins, into the system. It allows blood pressure to return to normal, which is good for your heart. Deep breathing can also allow held-in emotions to come to the surface, so your emotional health benefits from deep breathing, too. Use deep breathing any time, anywhere. It's one of the best techniques for relieving stress. 



Slowly breathe in through your nostrils, imagining a peaceful scene.



Slowly exhale through pursed lips, then begin the sequence again.

TENSION HEADACHES

Self-Care Remedies

There are many kinds of headaches, but the most common variety is caused by tension. Fortunately, tension headaches are also the easiest to take care of by yourself. The following tips can help you recognize the symptoms of tension headaches and what you can do to relieve your discomfort.

A Typical Tension Headache

A typical tension headache can be mild, or very painful. The neck, face and scalp muscles get tense due to stress. It may feel like pressure on the head or neck, or a tight band circling the head. If nausea, vomiting, or blurred vision occur, it is wise to consult your physician to rule out the possibility of migraine headaches (see below). Tension headaches come on when deadlines threaten, traffic is terrible, or you're simply feeling stressed.

Migraine headaches are different; they usually begin with symptoms such as numbness or extreme sensitivity to light. When the pain comes on, it is intense, and can last for hours or days.

Self-Treatment

For occasional tension headaches, aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen can help relieve pain when taken as directed. But if you suffer from frequent tension headaches, you may benefit by trying the following drug-free treatments:

- **A warm shower** or bath, or damp heating pad.
- **Lying down** in a dark room with feet up and a cool wash cloth over

your eyes.

- **Ice packs** applied to the back of the neck.
- **Massage.** Do it yourself or ask someone else to deeply massage your neck, shoulders and scalp.
- **Relaxation training.** It teaches you to tense, then relax different muscle groups. After going through each body part, you finally relax your whole body, and your headache is relieved.
- **Restructure your thinking.** First, imagine the stressful situation. Then, imagine practicing your own successful response to it. This teaches you to change your habitual responses to stressful situations.
- **Biofeedback.** This approach, which you can learn in many clinics, uses a machine that measures your perspiration or temperature (which change with your level of tension), and then makes a buzzing sound when you are tense. Over time you can

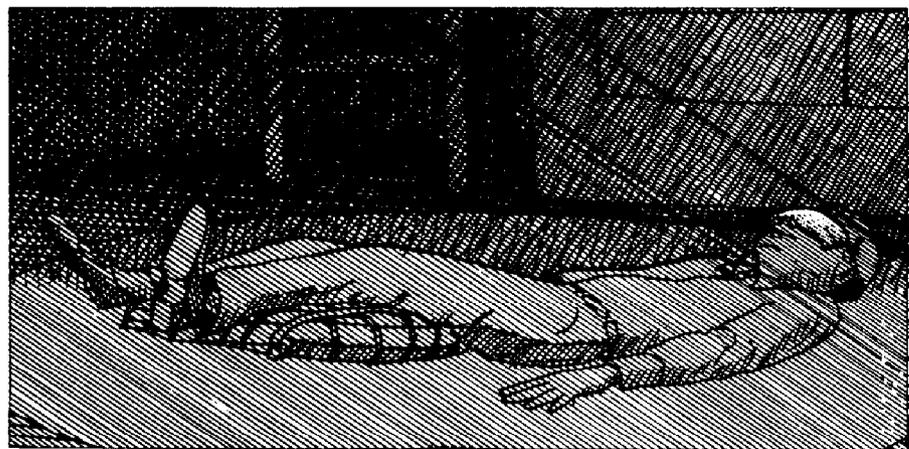


Massaging your head, neck and scalp may relieve your pain.

avoid the buzz and learn to relax.

Self-Care Feels Good

The self-care tips provided here not only help to relieve headache pain, they're good for your health, too. Remember, though, if your headache pain is severe or is accompanied by other symptoms (fever, blurred vision, etc.) see your healthcare professional.



Relieve tension headaches by lying down in a dark room with your feet up and a cool wash cloth over your eyes.

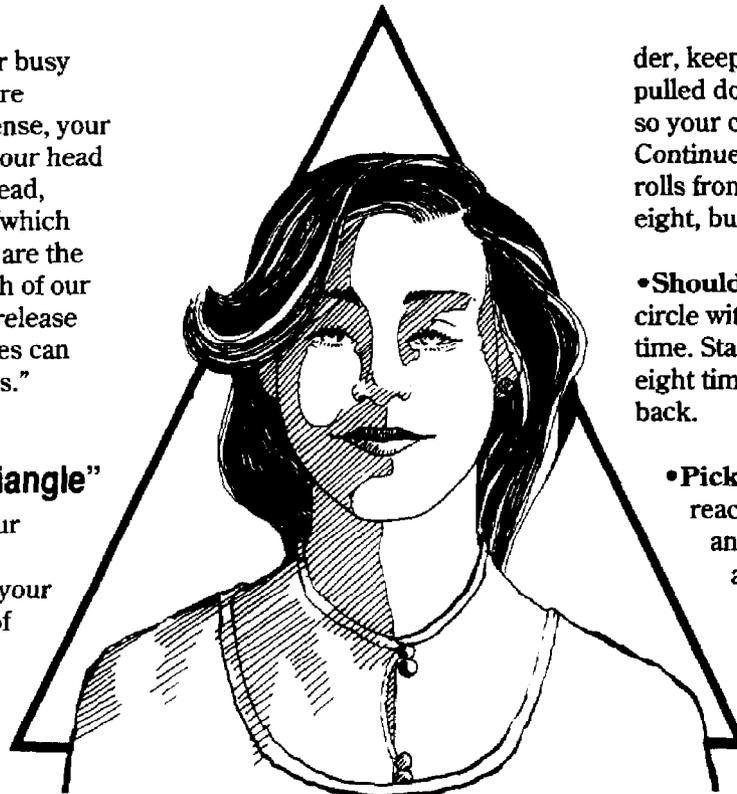
RELAX YOUR "STRESS TRIANGLE"

Exercises To Relieve Headache And Tension

Traffic gets worse. It's your busy season at work. The kids are arguing. Your shoulders tense, your neck aches, you feel as if your head is gripped in a vise! The head, neck, and shoulder areas (which form the "stress triangle") are the places where we hold much of our tension. Learning how to release the tension in these muscles can help us relax and "de-stress."

Find Your "Stress Triangle"

Place your left hand on your right shoulder. Move your fingers halfway in toward your neck. You're at one point of the triangle. The second point is the same place off your left shoulder. The third point is on your forehead, between your eyes. This "stress triangle" is where we hold much of our tension.



Your "stress triangle" includes your shoulders, neck and head.

Why Tense Muscles Hurt

Your muscles tighten to protect you. That was important to your prehistoric ancestors, who needed to fight or run. But usually, you don't need that protection. When your muscle shortens, and then holds that position, "metabolites" (the waste products from muscle activity) get trapped, causing pain. The pain is released when the muscle regains its natural length.

Stretch Away Tension

These simple stretches and rolls can help relieve tightness in your "stress triangle."

•**Neck roll.** Stretch your right ear to your right shoulder,

keeping your left shoulder pulled down. Roll your head down so your chin is on your chest. Continue on to your left side. Do rolls from side to side. Begin with eight, build up to 16.

•**Shoulder shrug.** Draw a big circle with your shoulders, one at a time. Start with four, build up to eight times, going forward, then back.

•**Pick fruit.** With one hand, reach up as if you were picking an apple from a tree slightly ahead and far above you. Go from one arm to the other, building up to eight times on each side.

•**Massage yourself.** Use your right hand to work on your left shoulder

and left hand on your right shoulder. Work your fingers gently but firmly, beginning with your shoulder blade, moving up toward the neck and including the scalp.

•**Standing body roll.** Let your head roll forward until your chin is on your chest. Keep rolling down as your knees begin to bend. When your hands are hanging near your knees, rest there a moment and slowly roll back up. Work up to ten times.

Welcome Release

At work, at home, or wherever you are, take a few moments to release stress. Use these exercises once an hour, if necessary. You'll feel better and prevent tension from building up in your body.



DIFFICULT PEOPLE

You Can Deal With Them

Everyone is irritable or indecisive at times. But some people are so difficult that they make others' lives and work a strain. Dealing with difficult people is easier when you learn to recognize some common personality types. Then you can develop coping skills for dealing with each without trying to change them!

Difficult Personalities

There are seven behavior types with whom most people have difficulty.

Bullies are hostile and angry, throwing tantrums to get their way.

Grippers complain about things they don't like, but rarely try to change their situation.

Silent types don't say much: you can beg, yell, or talk to them, but they don't say more than "yes" or "no."

Very nice people seem to agree with you, but won't do what they say they will.

Just say no types respond to new ideas with "That won't work."

I know better types think they know everything. They're condescending and full of themselves.

Stallers put things off until someone else takes over, or until the decision is made because of the delay.

How To Cope

These behaviors are annoying and upsetting. They keep everyone but the difficult person off balance. This can be true even though they may not be trying to control others. Coping balances the power between people. It helps everyone get things done without stalling at the roadblocks difficult people set up.

When someone practices difficult behaviors around you, try these techniques:

For *bullies*, stand up for yourself. Use phrases like "I believe" or "I feel." Don't try to fight them. Instead, make your point firmly.

Let *grippers* know you've heard their concern. Directly ask, "What is it you want?"

For *silent types*, ask questions that must be answered



Coping helps you maneuver around the roadblocks put up by difficult people.



Don't fight bullies, but make your point firmly.

by more than "yes" or "no." If you get no response, let the silent type know your plans.

Very nice people have a strong need to be liked; show them that you do. Then dig to find out what's really happening.

Don't argue with *just say no* types. Instead, suggest what won't work before they do.

For *I know better* types, have all the facts before you meet. Raise possible problems, and be ready to follow through.

Listen to *stallers*; find out what the real reason for the delay is. Help them, and ask them for help.

Worth The Effort

You can't always avoid difficult people. Learning to cope with them is worth the effort. You'll get more done and be less frustrated if you do.



COPING WITH DISAPPOINTMENT

Learning To Enjoy Your Life

Everyone has hopes, dreams and plans. When they don't work out, disappointment can be strong. Yet you can use disappointment to improve your life. It helps when you understand the meaning of disappointment and what you can do to avoid disappointment and enjoy life.

The Meaning Of Disappointment

The disappointment cycle begins when you expect or hope for something good to happen, and it doesn't. You may feel shocked, then disappointed. You may even refuse to believe the event has taken place. You feel a sense of loss. Eventually, you accept the loss and go on. You could avoid all disappointment by never expecting, risking or hoping for anything. But you wouldn't be able to plan your life, and you would miss out on much of what makes life worth living.

Expectations are only a problem

if they are unreasonable, if you are overly rigid about them, or if you are unwilling to do what's necessary to make them a reality. To avoid painful disappointment, you must see things as they are.

Kinds Of Disappointments

There are several kinds of disappointments. Simple disappointments can be small and easy to forget, or deep and painful. They can be the result of poor decision-making, bad luck, or unrealistic expectations. Chronic disappointments tend to be a life-style pattern— not learning from experience and having unreasonable expectations.

Life stages, such as middle age, can produce disappointments. If your life seems settled and secure, you may find yourself disappointed that "this is all there is." Movies and TV show us people whose lives are continually thrilling and satisfying. We're often disappointed our lives aren't like that.

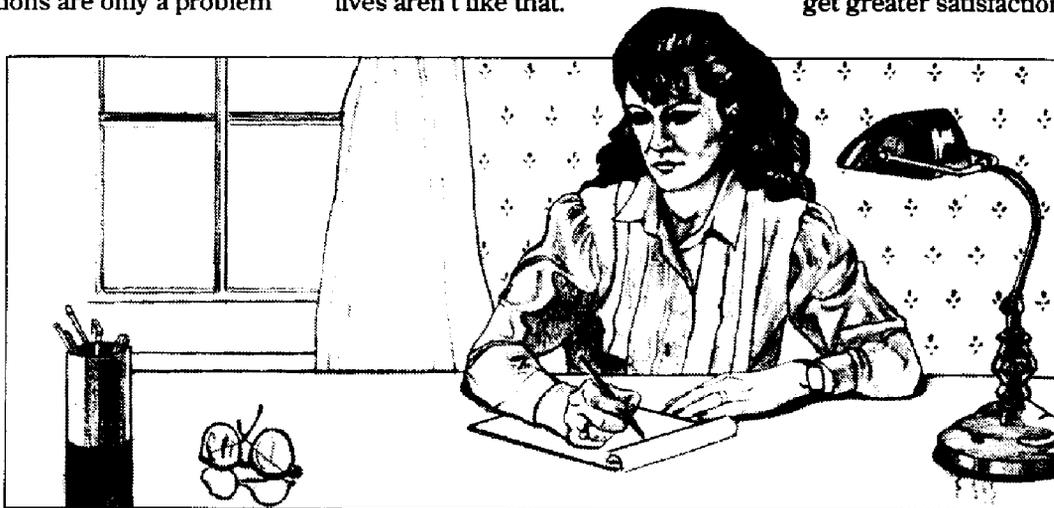
Reduce Your Disappointment

These suggestions can help reduce your disappointment.

- Be flexible in your thinking, to help you "roll with the punches."
- Look at your expectations, and make them realistic. Be willing to alter them.
- Choose different activities to make your life more satisfying.
- Recognize it when you are disappointed. Share your feelings with someone else or write them down.
- If you can't influence an event, accept that. If you can, work hard to make your dream a reality. Recognize that, even then, it may not happen.

Live And Learn

Learn from your disappointments. Change your expectations, and allow yourself to become flexible. Feel your disappointments fully and then use what you've learned and felt to get greater satisfaction from your life.



Writing down your disappointments can help you accept them, and then get on with your life.

CRISIS HEALING

Getting Through An Emotional Crisis

An emotional crisis can result from a sudden upset: losing your job, being diagnosed with a serious illness, being robbed. It can also result from steady, severe distress or major life transitions. When something happens to throw you into emotional crisis, knowing where to turn can help you get through this difficult period, and deal with and accept your feelings.

When Crisis Strikes

There are many signs of emotional crisis. Victims may have a hard time doing things that should be easy. They might forget things or have trouble focusing. Some will cry or become furious with no warning. Others will have attacks of panic, rapid breathing or heartbeat. They may have nightmares. Some may even feel suicidal.

The Stages Of Crisis

At first, victims may be frozen in fear, especially when the crisis results from a crime such as rape or bur-

glary. Then, they will act as if nothing has happened or as if what happened was not serious. Next, they may be unable to stop thinking about how they might have prevented it. Some people may be stuck in one stage, and will find that the effects of the crisis will hang on and on.

The Goal Of Crisis Therapy

The goal of therapy after a crisis is to start healing and to help the victim move through each stage completely. Crisis therapy is short-term, lasting about six sessions. Crisis therapists actively help people solve crisis-related problems, using a variety of approaches.

Know Where To Turn

Different kinds of crises require different kinds of emergency help. Use *hot lines* and *community crisis centers* for suicide, rape, assault, and burglary. When you're away from home, look under "Travelers' Aid" in the phone book for emergency

help in an emotional crisis. (Local *hospital emergency rooms* are best for physical emergencies.)

Depending on where you live, there may be a crime victim center. Get more information from National Organization for Victim Assistance, (202) 393-6682, 717 D Street N.W., 2nd Floor, Washington, D.C. 20004.

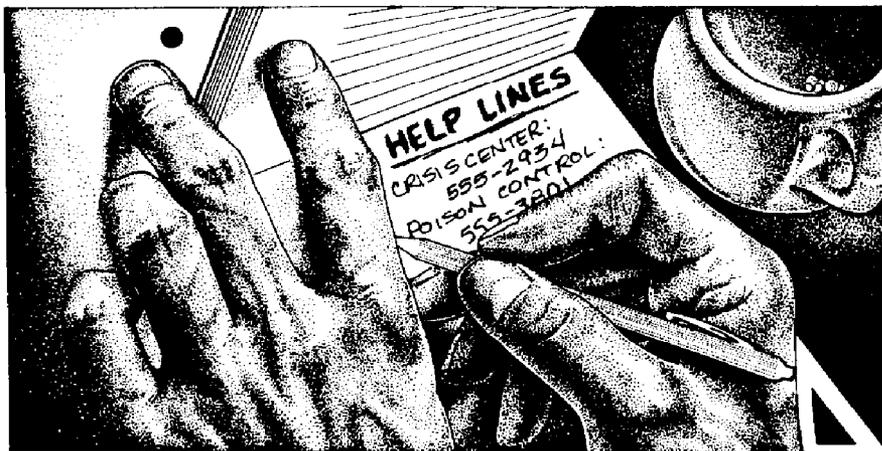
Take The Time Now

You never know when a crisis might take place. Take the time now to learn what help is available where you live or where you're going. It can make a big difference at a time when help is critical. 



Don't try to get through a crisis alone. Getting help can get you back on track quickly.

Prepare now—you never know when there may be a crisis.



JOB TROUBLES

Tips For Easing Problems At Work

Job troubles are common for everyone from executives to assembly line workers. Understanding what causes the majority of problems at work and what you can do to manage them can turn difficulties into opportunities.

Common Causes

There are many kinds of troubles found on the job. Number one has to do with relating to other people. A coworker who is always late, an insensitive supervisor, or a gossip can cause problems for everyone. But even something positive such as falling in love can cause serious problems when it's at work.

Job troubles can also result from environmental concerns. High noise levels, dangerous conditions, or difficult work such as constant lifting all can become problems unless you know how to manage them.

Emotional problems can also cause trouble on the job. If you don't feel appreciated in your job, or if your chances for promotion are small, you may feel frus-

trated. If the work is boring, you might not do as good a job as possible.

Managing Job Troubles

The following tips can help all of us ease job troubles:

- ❑ **Take care of yourself.** Get enough sleep, food and exercise. Avoid alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, caffeine and sugar. You'll be better able to handle troubles which come up.
- ❑ **See troubles as opportunities.** Someone who annoys you can end up a friend, if you let her know you'd like her help. A problem on the loading dock may turn into a promotion if you're the one who comes up with a solution.
- ❑ **Manage your time.** Your work load may seem heavy, but it could be that you do unimportant things before important ones. Your supervisor may be able to help you manage time better if you ask.
- ❑ **Speak up.** For example, if a coworker's behavior bothers you, ask him to stop. If you are unsure about your chances for promotion, talk to your supervisor.
- ❑ **Plan.** Planning increases your chances of achieving your goal. Perhaps you need more advanced training. Or, you may want to plan a strategy for changing departments or positions.
- ❑ **Get support.** Family, friends or coworkers can all be great sources of support. The stronger your connections with others, the more it will help you come up with solutions to problems.
- ❑ **Enjoy your leisure time.** If you do, you'll come to work in a good state of mind.



Learn to see troubles as opportunities.

Share ideas and feelings with others to help you feel good at work.



It's Your Choice

You can choose to try to make your work situation satisfying. If there are problems, you can choose to attempt a solution. There are many choices open to you. Which ones will you make?

MANAGE YOUR MONEY

Facing Financial Troubles

Money problems can be as upsetting as they are commonplace. By understanding how money problems affect us and what we can do to prevent them, we can relieve unnecessary stress and help take control of our lives.

The Trouble With Money

Money problems can cause a range of emotional and physical problems such as divorce, illness or ulcers. Money means different things to different people. Ask yourself, "How important is money? What does it mean to me?" For most people, it's associated with power, success, happiness and self-esteem.

If creditors are breathing down your neck, it's easy to see that you're in trouble. But you can still be under "money stress" if you use too many credit cards too often, have no savings, or simply don't know your own financial situation.

Common Causes

A common problem is misuse of credit (especially credit cards). It's best to limit your monthly debt payments, aside from housing, to 20% or less of your monthly take-home pay. Instead of charging purchases, stay on the safe side by saving for them. Use credit for large purchases, such as a car, that will last much longer than your payments on them.

Mismanaging money is another problem. Keep good records and make a budget, so you can see what you are able to spend on items such as entertainment, vacation or



If you are struggling financially, there are many confidential places to turn.

clothes. Set long term savings goals for items such as a home purchase or education for your children.

Crises such as divorce, fire, illness, or layoffs can happen to anyone without warning. Protect yourself by having a three-month emergency fund at all times. Shop carefully for insurance which will meet your needs.

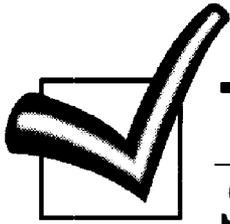
Where To Get Help

If you find yourself struggling financially, there are many confidential places to turn. At work, your

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or Personnel Department may have information and advice. The phone book usually lists many other advisors. Look in the white pages under Consumer Credit Counseling, a non-profit organization. Or check in the government section for a city or county agency, Family Service agency, Catholic Social Service, and Jewish Family Service. These organizations often provide free or low-cost financial counseling to anyone in need. They can make a big difference in your financial picture, now and in the future.



Make a budget, so you can see what you are able to spend on entertainment, vacations or clothes.



TIPS FOR FEELING GOOD

Simple Suggestions That Work

Everyone has ups and downs, good days and bad days. But, given the choice, who wouldn't prefer to feel good? By using the following techniques you can learn how to enjoy life more, and turn those bad days into good ones in no time.

Enjoy Your Body

A massage or eating a wonderful meal can be physical pleasures that make life worth living. Enjoy regular physical activity such as dancing, playing softball or taking walks, to uplift your spirits.

Create A Support Network

A support network is a group of people you can turn to for comfort, a sympathetic ear, or good ideas. A support network can include family members, friends, coworkers, or anyone who cares about you. Reach out and make your network wider; you'll be glad you did.

Make Time For Fun

Making time for fun is like taking extra vacations throughout the year. What are your favorite amusements? Movies, day trips into the country, going to a fair can all be fun. Get out of your chair and get going! You'll feel good before, during and after.

Help Others

Few things give more pleasure than helping others. Find out about some of the programs in your community that need your help. Try something unlike anything you've ever done. It will enrich your life with new ideas, information and feelings.

Get In The Habit

You can get in the habit of feeling good by being good to yourself and others. When you care about yourself, you'll find that life holds more meaning and pleasure.

©1989 PARLAY INTERNATIONAL 

HOW TO NEGOTIATE DIFFERENCES

Communicate, Cooperate, & Understand

When it comes to personal relationships, ultimatums rarely work. Instead, it helps to know how to give and take—to negotiate. Learning to effectively confront, cooperate, and understand are the most effective skills we have for successful negotiations.

Communicate Positively

In order to resolve differences or negotiate, you must be willing to face the other person. You don't need to be angry or accusing. But you *should* be direct. Positive communicating includes honestly saying how you feel and what you want.

Be Cooperative

"Cooperate" means "work together." To begin, suggest that each person state the problem or situation from his or her point of view. Don't defend your position, but listen. Ask questions if you don't understand the other

person's feelings. Next, each person can try to come up with a few ideas for solving the conflict. If possible, suggest solutions that are "win/win." Assume you share a common interest: the desire for a friendly outcome.



A "win/win" solution leaves both people feeling good.

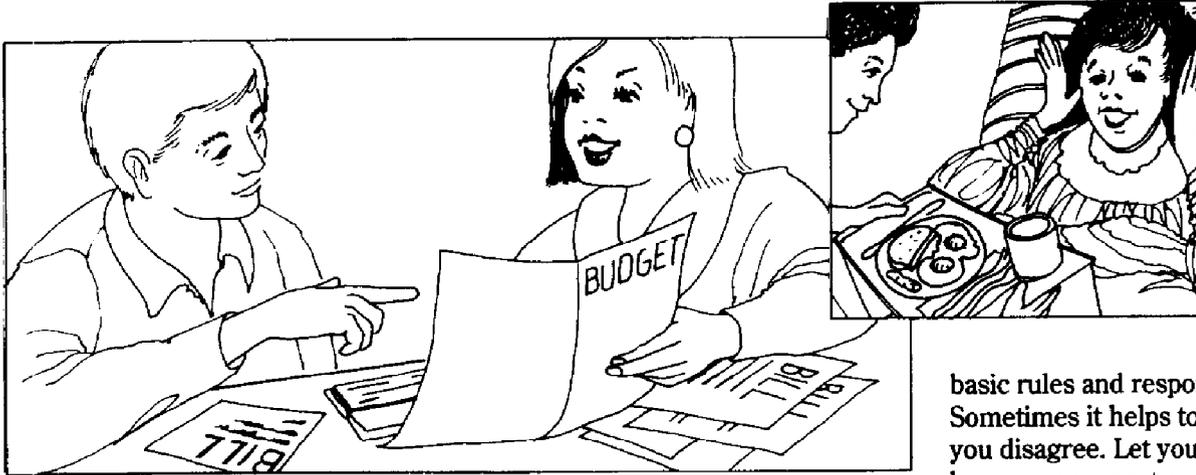
Be Understanding

To negotiate wisely, put yourself in the other person's shoes. What would satisfy him? What does he want? Avoid criticizing; when people feel inferior, they get angry. When they're angry, you're less likely to get what you want.

©1989 PARLAY INTERNATIONAL 

COUPLES STRESS

Coping Skills For Happier Couples



Conflicts arise less often when people feel appreciated and loved.

Begin resolving conflicts by talking about them.

There's no way to avoid all conflicts between two people. But developing listening and communication skills can strengthen a couple's relationship. By evaluating your problems, learning effective ways to resolve them, and knowing when to seek outside help, you and your partner can ensure that healthy, loving feelings continue long after your problem is resolved.

Evaluate Your Problems

Problems for most couples begin with differences in style, beliefs, or goals. For example, Joe keeps his feelings to himself, while Janet's style is talkative. Although at first she was attracted to his "strong, silent type," eventually she felt frustrated that he spoke so little. Her frustration led to a blow-up.

Beliefs can be about yourself, others, or the world around you. If you believe parents should be equal partners in child raising, and your partner believes traditional roles work best, conflicts can arise.

Goals can be short or long term. Bob and Sharon saved money for two years to buy a camper. When they finally had the money saved, Sharon announced that she would rather renovate the kitchen. Bob had been looking forward to his goal for a long time, and was upset at Sharon's change.

Learn How To Resolve Them

Conflicts arise less often when people feel appreciated, loved and respected. Compliment your partner each day. Tell your partner "I love you." When a problem does arise, begin to resolve it by talking about it. If the problem is money, sit down together to plan your budget. Talk about your fears and hopes, how your parents dealt with money. Go to the library for ideas about planning finances.

If your problem has to do with children, discuss what you feel is important in child-rearing. Agree on

basic rules and responsibilities. Sometimes it helps to agree that you disagree. Let your children know you support each other and them.

If the problem is sexual, it may be a reflection of other problems. Pick a time to talk about what else might be bothering you so resentments don't build. Sex can be more satisfying if you make dates with each other when you won't be interrupted by children or the phone.

Get Help For Serious Problems

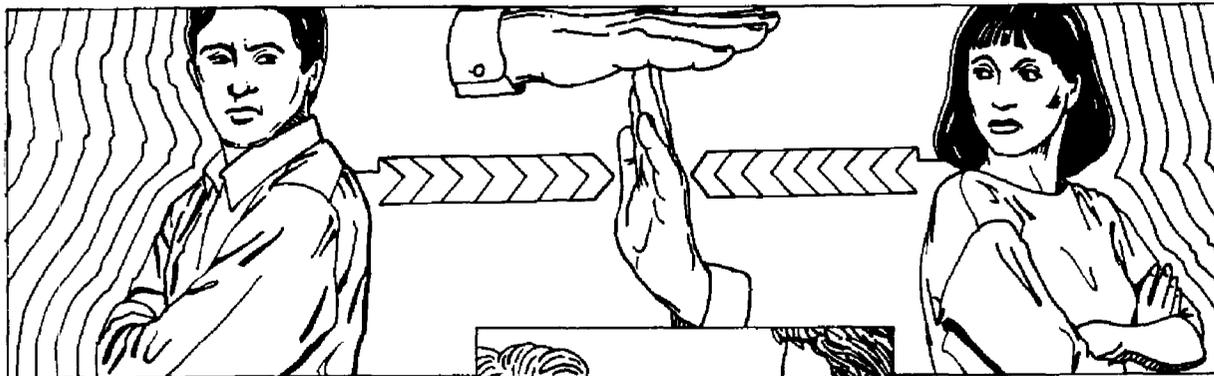
Physical abuse, verbal abuse, and chemical dependency (drugs or alcohol) are serious problems. Someone else's abusive behavior, drinking or drug use is NEVER your fault. There are many community agencies and self-help groups that have been successful in working with these problems. Don't put off getting help; things are likely to get worse. If your conflicts go on for more than a few months, it's also a good idea to talk to a counselor or therapist. You'll give your relationship the chance to get back on track.



© 1989 PARLAY INTERNATIONAL

SUCCESSFUL ARGUING

A Strong Basis For Strong Relationships



Take a 10-minute time out when a fight is building.

You may think that couples should get along all the time. But couples who learn how to argue successfully actually have better relationships. Arguments needn't be bitter or aggressive; in fact, the following tips can show you how to "fight right" and strengthen your relationship.

The Three Stages Of Successful Arguing

The happiest couples go through three stages during a disagreement:

First, they say what's bothering them using "I feel . . ." statements about specific behaviors. Say: "I feel upset when you slam the door;" not "You're so noisy!" Be positive, not negative. Say: "I appreciate it when you call me if you're going to be late;" not "If you don't tell me what time you're coming home, dinner will be burnt!" Each person listens to the other's feelings without commenting, defending, or disagreeing.

Second, the partners discuss the details of their disagreement. It's important that feelings about the specific issue come up, but not



Make a list of things you enjoy doing together to help remember why you like each other.

about old issues.

Third, the couple negotiates until they can agree. Sometimes all they can agree on is that they disagree. Negotiation includes give and take. It's not helpful for one person to say, "You're the one who wants the house clean. You clean it." Then there is no give and take.

Do's And Don'ts

One common mistake is denying the other person's feelings. Avoid statements such as "You don't feel...". Be honest. If possible, admit that you might be wrong or might have done the behavior you're discussing. You'll both feel

less defensive. Don't assume your partner is "out to get you." Assume your partner wants you to be happy. "Cooperate" means "work together." A spirit of cooperation helps you work together on solving a problem, not battling each other. Put yourself in your partner's shoes. What does the problem look like now? Many couples let their arguments build: "You interrupted me again!" "Well, you don't listen. What do you expect?" Stop and count to 10, or take a 10-minute breather. You can lower the tension level to help you focus again on the real issue.

Remember Why You Like Each Other

Often children, jobs or other obligations leave couples little time together. They've forgotten how much they once liked each other. Make a list of things you enjoy doing together. Schedule a weekly date to do something on your list. Spending special time together will let you like each other more. Then you'll be less likely to argue and when you do, it will be friendlier. 

©1989 PARLAY INTERNATIONAL

HOW STRONG FAMILIES FIGHT STRESS

Plan, Communicate, Cooperate

Even the happiest of families have problems. But the strongest families are those who recognize their problems, communicate their concerns, and cooperate in resolving their conflicts. In short, "happy" families fight stress by working on their problems *together*.

Recognize Your Family's Problems

Recognize problems such as poor communication, children's behavior, time pressure, money conflicts, unequal workloads, overwork, and guilt. Most families have one or more of these problems. Lack of time makes all other problems harder to handle. Single parents may have even less time than couples. When people feel rushed, their communication skills suffer and other problems get worse. Guilt, exhaustion, and anger can build.

Plan

To handle time, money and other pressures, learn to plan, make priority lists, and talk about feelings and needs. When you work on the budget, for instance, include older children to help them learn about money and planning. Bring the family together to plan each week's and year's schedules, including vacations and visits from friends or relatives. Schedule in time when you'll all have fun together.

Communicate

Set aside time each week or so for the whole family to get together and talk about concerns. Listen to what every member wants and take it seriously. Never refuse an invitation to talk by a child, sibling, or spouse. If it isn't a convenient time, ask if you can get back together later that day (and keep your appointment!). If it's an important issue, forget about convenience and *make* the time to talk.

Cooperate

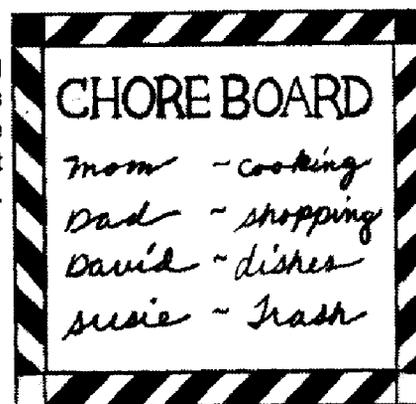
No one should be responsible for the entire family. Discuss ways of sharing emotional, financial, and household tasks. If the stress of working long hours or an exhausting job leaves an adult with little time or

energy for the family, discuss ways that the rest of the family can support him or her. If a child is struggling in school, other family members can help by assuming some of the child's chores or assisting with tutoring. The family can be the best place to be if everyone makes an effort.

Family Health

Getting exercise, eating well, limiting alcohol intake and other stress reducing habits can make a major difference in how well families get along. Whether single or coupled, everyone needs time alone. Couples also need to take time together, without children or other distractions. These habits are sometimes difficult to practice, but they can help keep stress manageable and make your family happier, healthier, and stronger than ever.

Sharing responsibilities can make the family the best place to be.



Bring the family together to plan schedules.



© 1989 PARLAY INTERNATIONAL

COPING WITH KIDS

Skills For Positive Parenting

No matter how old they are, children are testing limits. Unfortunately, testing their limits can often result in pushing your buttons. By learning how to resolve conflicts with children in healthy, productive ways, you can help your children grow toward independence while keeping harmony in your home.

Childhood Stages

Young children want to know how far they can go (and how far you'll let them go). Until they begin school, parents are usually their primary role models. Use a loving tone and touch to let your child know exactly where the limits are.

School-age children are actively involved in a wider social group. Other children and teachers influence them. School can be



Your best coping skills are talking and listening to your child.

exciting and scary. It's most important that children feel their parents' love, support and belief in them.

Teenagers may feel grown up, but their parents tend to see them still as children. Influence of friends is strong. Parents should set rules *with* and not *for* their teenager. It's important for teenagers to feel that their parents listen to and respect them.

Talk And Listen

Talking and listening are simple, yet often ignored as the most valuable skills parents have. Use talking to reward children. No matter what age, everyone wants to feel valued and loved. "It was great that you shared that toy with your friend." "I really appreciated your call to let me know you'd be late."

Listening is important because it makes us feel valued by others. Even small children need to feel heard. Their language skills may make it more difficult, so take time to listen until you understand how they feel. Listening also is the best way for you to learn about what's happening in your children's lives outside the home.

Work Together

Work with your children to help them set and achieve their own goals. If you set goals for them, they may become frustrated or resentful. Praise their small accomplishments. Focus on specific behaviors you'd like changed, rather than entire personality traits.



Focus on specific behaviors you'd like changed, rather than personality traits.

If You Need Help

Often parents have good intentions. But when conflicts get worse instead of better, reaching out for help is a good idea. You're not weak to ask for suggestions from a family therapist or self-help group. Health insurance often covers a majority of the cost. It's well worth it if it helps you and your kids get along better.

THE STRESS OF CHRONIC ILLNESS

Coping Skills For Caregivers

When you are taking care of someone who is chronically ill, you probably put your own needs on the back burner. After all, you're not the one who needs attention and help, right? In truth, being a caregiver can be very stressful. Use good coping skills to take care of yourself. You'll prevent depression, resentment, and burnout, and take better care of the patient.

Common Problems

In caring for a chronically ill person, you can face many problems. You may worry about medical advice and costs. If the person is elderly, you face the problems of aging as well as the illness. If the patient is a child, you face problems such as how to continue their education and social activities. Marriage and other family relationships may be strained. You have less time and energy to spend on them. You may still need to work in a paid job, which has its own pressures. You may have stopped taking time for yourself, or given up things you enjoy. This can make you feel tense, grouchy, or nervous.

Admit And Accept

Caregivers may not want to think about their own situation. At the beginning of caretaking, they feel hopeful that the situation will improve. If it doesn't, they feel depressed that there is no end in sight to the hard work. It can be hard for caregivers to admit negative feelings about their role. If the patient is angry or resentful, he or



It's not selfish to take time for yourself. It will keep your energy and spirits going.

she will probably take it out on the closest person: the caregiver, who often feels confused, guilty and resentful, too.

People who try very hard to meet everyone's demands still can feel selfish, inadequate, angry, sad and exhausted. Admitting and accepting these feelings will help the caregiver continue to give care. Holding them in will only continue them and lead to burnout.

Effective Coping Skills

Practice these coping skills whenever you can:

For yourself:

- Find support by talking with others in a similar situation.
- Take time for yourself. Exercise regularly and eat well.

- Ask for specific help from others.
- Let the patient and others know you need to feel appreciated.

For the patient:

- Find the best medical care you can. Get second and third opinions.
- Help the patient stay involved with past interests and relationships.

For everyone involved:

- Be realistic and honest. Discuss with the entire family each person's limits in the situation.
- Use available resources in your community.
- Give and receive love and appreciation whenever you can. This will sustain you.



©1989 PARLAY INTERNATIONAL

DEALING WITH DIVORCE

Coping, Surviving, Thriving

Divorce can be one of life's most stressful experiences. It also can be a time of creating new relationships, learning and growing. Understanding the emotional and physical stresses that often come with divorce is the first step in learning how to deal with them. When you accept your feelings, and learn ways to care for yourself during this stressful time, you'll find that you not only can cope with divorce, you can survive and even thrive.

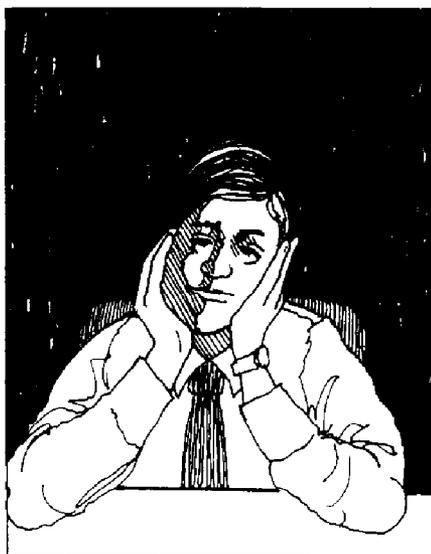
Emotional Stress

Separating from someone you had hoped would be your life partner is usually painful. You might feel like a failure. You miss the warmth, friendship, financial security, and sex you had or hoped you would have.

Your job as a parent is suddenly that much bigger if you now have primary responsibility for the children. You may have less time to spend with them, yet their needs are greater. If you did not want the separation, your resentment and anger may flare up around them, although it's not their fault. You and your former spouse may have conflicts about child support.

If you are a parent whose children are not living with you, you may feel guilty, lonely and resentful. You may worry that the children may forget you or be turned against you.

Divorce is especially painful if everyone you know is happily married, or if you get little support from your own family.



Recognize your feelings. It's normal to feel lonely, sad or resentful during a divorce.



Now's the time to try a new activity. It will help you meet new people and raise your self-esteem.

groups and therapists all can support you. A hug, phone call, or letter can mean a great deal.

- Take risks. Try a new activity. It will keep your mind off your problems and help you meet new people.
- Treat your body well. Cut down on alcohol and smoking. Eat healthy, tasty food. Take long baths and get exercise you enjoy.

Taking care of yourself and taking risks can have surprising benefits. Don't be surprised if eventually you are stronger, more confident and more content than before.

Physical Stress

As with any distressful situation, your body is affected. Ongoing stress can cause minor and major illnesses, including headaches, backaches, ulcers, flu, and asthma. Even if you feel relieved by the divorce, you may have physical symptoms.

Take Care

You may not be able to change your situation, but you can stay healthy during the transition if you take care of yourself:

- Recognize your feelings. It's normal to feel lonely, frustrated or even hopeless. Pound on a bed or yell in the car where no one can hear you to release your feelings.
- Reach out to others. Friends, relatives, support

STRESS-PROOF YOUR CHILDREN

We all want our children to be happy and healthy, able to meet the challenges of life. Stress in children can be a result of divorce, moving, classmates, pressure to achieve; the list is long. But you *can* help to "stress-proof" your children.



Children need to feel that parents listen to them.

Listen, Touch And Talk

When you spend time with your children, they become more confident and stress-proof.

- Ask your children what they think and feel. Then listen with your full attention. It lets your children know they're important.

- Touch your children. Gentle affection means as much as saying "I love you."
- Be consistent and honest. If changes will be affecting your children, tell them how. This helps them develop trust.
- Let them know that their efforts make a difference.
- Reassure them that some things are not their fault or responsibility.

Manage Your Children's Diet

Diet can affect stress levels dramatically. Read labels with your children. Avoid foods which include sugar, caffeine, or chemicals. Try snacks of fruit, juices, or whole wheat crackers.

Help Your Children Feel Loved

Show your love as often as possible through spending time, giving affection, using caring discipline and setting limits. When children feel loved, they can cope best with stress.



©1988 PARLAY INTERNATIONAL

HELP YOUR CHILD THROUGH A CRISIS

Helping children develop good coping skills during a crisis can mean a great deal to their happiness now and in the future.

Common Crises

Crises, while painful, are common. They include:

- > illness or accidents, especially if the child must be hospitalized;
- > divorce or separation;
- > death of parent, close relative or friend;
- > child abuse, including incest, violence or emotional abuse;
- > abuse of a parent, either physical or emotional.

What Parents Can Do

Children in crisis need extra attention, love and support.



Spend extra time talking, listening, and playing with a child who's going through crisis.

Spend special time with them, talking, listening, playing, and sharing physical affection.

Children's fears will decrease if they talk to others who've come through the same situation. Reassure them that it's not their fault. Be honest, yet still sensitive to their feelings. Let older children know what's likely to happen. Tell them their feelings are normal, and that a good cry is actually healthy.

Get Help For Abuse

When there has been physical or emotional abuse, get help from social service agencies or community groups. You and your children will be able to get through these painful situations sooner if you use available resources.



©1988 PARLAY INTERNATIONAL
