

Stress Management

Is there ever a more important time for stress management than the holiday season?

More and more is being discovered today about the relation between mind and body. Most people are aware that stress affects our emotions. It also affects our bodies. A report in a recent edition of Consumer Reports on Health (October 2008, Vol. 20, No. 10), German researchers studied the effects of stress on the body have found that there is truth to the expression “taking it to heart.” The researchers found out that heart-related visits to the emergency room “more than doubled during and soon after a stressful sporting event.”

The article states that “stress is now considered as much as risk factor as excess weight, lack of exercise, and smoking for heart attack and stroke.” Type 2 diabetes, depression, chronic pain, impaired immunity, gastrointestinal problems, worsening acne, and multiple sclerosis are also linked to stress according to research. The article goes on to point out that stress can result in behaviors such as overeating, alcohol abuse, smoking, and poor sleep.

It is no surprise that the economic uncertainty and fear of job loss currently being felt by Americans have caused increased levels of anxiety for many people. Other major sources of stress include job strain, rocky relationships, and daily worries, according to the article.

Further, although our 21st century world has brought many high-tech gadgets and modern conveniences, people have adopted a mindset of always needing to multi-task. Computers, email, and cell phones have surely made life easier in some respects but when people feel that they are “always on,” this creates a problem, and can affect their stress level. One might wonder if multi-tasking actually saves time and energy; there is something that can be said about doing one task at a time and doing it well the first time.

If you find yourself feeling increasingly worried, less patient with friends and family, experiencing unexplained headaches, stomachaches or fatigue, or having problems at work, perhaps you need to take inventory of the amount of stress in your life.

There are many stress-management programs in existence today, both in group and individual formats. Taking brief “time-outs” in your day can be helpful, practicing deep breathing, listening to peaceful or relaxing music can be helpful. Reading, writing, praying, exercising, or partaking in an enjoyable hobby can also create a peaceful state of mind. Take time each day to “de-stress”. Group exercises such as yoga or tai chi can also create mental peace as well as counteract the physical effects of stress.

If you are uncertain as to how to cope with difficult situations or challenges and talking with family or friends has not proven helpful, it might be wise to consult a professional such as a therapist who can help you navigate this time in your life.

GARY BREUER, MA, LPC



My private practice is located in North Scottsdale, within the offices of PsychArizona. I work with children (ages 6 and older), pre-teens, adolescents and adults. I work with individuals, couples and families with issues of anxiety, depression, trauma, grief and loss, career, academic and workplace issues, relationship issues, LGBT concerns, personal growth and spirituality.

I use various therapeutic approaches depending on the needs of the client. These approaches include developmental, humanistic, cognitive-behavioral, existential, family-systems, mindfulness-based, transpersonal, and EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). EMDR is a model used for the treatment of trauma, and has also been found to be successful in the treatment of various other disorders as well.

I have experience providing professional counseling in clinical, business, and school settings.

Apart from my private practice, I am also a Reiki Master and have a great appreciation and respect for alternative as well as conventional treatment approaches.

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