



ISMA-USA NEWSLETTER

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ISMA-USA NEWSLETTER is published twice a year. We invite all members of ISMA-USA and ISMA members from other countries to submit articles for publication in our newsletter. We will also accept articles with

information of interest to ISMA from nonmembers. It is the newsletter's policy to include contributions with various points of views; however, these do not necessarily represent the views of ISMA or ISMA-USA Branch. Announcements of services or programs do not imply an endorsement. We reserve the right to edit any material that is received. Deadline for receiving copy for the Fall 2003 issue is October 15, 2003. Send to [Serena Wadhwa](#) or [Betty J. McGuigan](#) via e-mail attachment.

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NEWS

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF STRESS MANAGEMENT UPDATE

As Editor John G. Carlson reported in the *ISMA-USA Newsletter*, fall 2002 issue, The American Psychological Association is now publishing ISMA's *International Journal of Stress Management*. The first issue for 2003 is in press and may arrive in the mail later this month or in June. There is a possibility that the second issue will arrive at the same time or shortly thereafter. The following is a list of upcoming articles:

Editorial: A New Beginning for the Journal

Editorial: What Will the 21st Century Bring? An Emphasis on Health Care

A Multi group Analysis of the Job Demands–Resources Model in Four Home-Care Organizations

Type-A Behavior—Components and Outcomes: A Study of Canadian Employees

Occupational Stress in Australian University Staff: Results From a National Survey

Brief Papers:

The Effect of Music in Managing Preoperative Stress for Chinese Surgical Patients in the Operating Room Holding Area: A Controlled Trial

The Relationship Between Voluntary Employer Changes and Perceived Job Stress

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ISMA-USA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2003

End of year 2002 elections resulted in the following new board of directors and officers for ISMA-USA. Our congratulations to each one who brings a wealth of experience and talent to these position. We are appreciative of their generosity and dedication to serving our association. Contact them with your suggestions and questions.



James C. Quick, Ph.D.
Past-Chairperson
Professor of
Organizational Behavior,
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Organizational &
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Wesley E. Sime, Ph.D.
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Camille A. Frey, Ed. D.
Secretary-Treasurer
Licensed Professional
Counselor
Louisville, KY

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ISMA-USA MEETINGS

Chairperson Dr. Wesley E. Sime and Secretary-Treasurer Dr. Camille A. Frey met with ISMA-USA members at the annual Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback (AAPB) meeting in Jacksonville, Florida, on March 29, 2003. International Board of Directors Chairman Laurie van Someren joined them in a discussion on the next ISMA international conference and on stress management credentialing. Read the details in Dr. Sime's column.

Past-Chairman Dr. James Campbell Quick held a luncheon meeting with ISMA-USA members Dr. Kathleen M. Kowalski, and doctoral student Norma Juma. International ISMA President Lennart Levi and Dr. Ana Maria Rossi, President of ISMA-BR, joined them in a discussion on the healthy workplace initiatives in Europe and North America. All were participants at The Fifth Interdisciplinary Conference on Occupational Stress and Health (APA/NIOSH) in Toronto, Canada, on March 20, 2003.

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LETTERS

LETTER from CHAIRMAN Dear ISMA-USA Members:
Wes E. Sime, Ph.D.



Professor,
Department of Health & Human
Performance, University of
Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE

On April 29th, 2003, ISMA-USA held an informal discussion at the AAPB meeting together with the Education Section of that organization. Laurie van Someren, Chairman of the International Board of Directors for ISMA and from the United Kingdom, gave an eloquent description of the development of the UK Branch of ISMA culminating in the ISMA-7 Conference on *Stress in the Work Place* held in the summer of 2002. Camille Frey was in attendance at that meeting having presented the results of her doctoral dissertation, that is, an evaluation of web-based verses traditional classroom teaching of stress management in a college setting.

At our meeting we discussed the opportunity to host an International Conference of ISMA sometime in 2004 or 2005. If it were to be held conjointly with AAPB which ISMA-USA has done several times in the past few years, the site would be Colorado Springs in March of 2004. If we were to wait until 2005 for a conjoint meeting with AAPB, it would be held in Albuquerque near the end of March. There are substantial advantages to

hosting a conjoint meeting instead of a "stand alone" event. Cost is a big factor. AAPB is willing to handle registration and will negotiate with us regarding conference fees for either or both ISMA vs. AAPB program days. Paul Lehrer, member of ISMA-USA, is the current president of AAPB, and is very willing to accommodate to our interests and needs. That is a very strong argument for doing the international meeting during the 2004 program year. Your thoughts and opinions about the upcoming meeting considerations would be appreciated though we may not be able to satisfy everyone's wishes.

The second issue of serious concern is that of the developing process toward credentialing in stress management. I continue to hear requests from aspiring professionals seeking both training and credentialing in the field. ISMA-USA can and should fill that need. At the same time, I hear from esteemed academic professionals about the burgeoning interest in stress management that seems to pound out scads of people portraying themselves as

experts without either degree or credential. Once again this is a crying need which I believe ISMA-USA must fill. Camille Frey and her colleague Elizabeth Brown Lawler have set up a communication network wherein we will be debating the pro's and con's of various approaches to credentialing and the most expedient and effective methods of providing the necessary training for those who do not meet "grand fathering" criteria. More information on how you can participate in this dialogue will be forthcoming.

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LETTER from EDITOR

Serena Wadhwa

Dear Members:

Spring has always been a favorite time of the year for me. It is a season that brings new beginnings. It is abundant in its sights from green grass to the breath taking blue of the once snow covered Lake Michigan. The mouth watering scents from the grill and the sweet fragrances of flowers fill the air. Juicy summer fruits provide ambrosial and sensational tastes. Spring is rich in the textures of warm sand, silky petals of flowers, and cooling layers of soft cotton. Finally, spring is full of the sounds of upbeat music, laughter, and children lost in fun activities. Nature begins anew each year and it inspires me to look internally at how I can do the same. What attitudes, goals, expectations, thoughts or beliefs am I willing to exchange or let go of for something refreshing? Although not an easy task to take, I remind myself that nature does not accomplish its beginnings overnight. It does take time. What am I willing to spend more time on? What am I willing to give up in order to succeed at my choices? Nature makes this process so easy at times, that it does seem overwhelming when we look at ourselves. Yet, looking at what the end result is, watching how this process unfolds, reminds me that it is not always the destination that is important. As I notice the bulbs of tulips blooming into these bright, beautiful and fragrant flowers, I am reminded that the journey is equally as important. It strengthens us against unexpected turns and defeating trials. Despite the fact that it may turn cold, rain, snow or sleet, the tulip still maintains its course. It still emerges. That is truly what spring is about.

My challenge to you is to think about what beginnings you would like to see happen in your own life. What are you willing to struggle through to get to your final goal? For this newsletter, one new beginning I would like to see is to have a theme for each issue and you, the readers, contribute your thoughts, articles, and information on this. We always welcome your comments, and I encourage you to submit yours.

Warmest Regards,

Keep us informed on your new stress management publications.

Both the readers of this newsletter and the visitors to our web site welcome this information.

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FOCUS on STRESS MANAGEMENT

TEACHING CHILDREN TO ADAPT TO STRESS

Karen Sullivan

Author, *Kids Under Pressure* (Piatkus Books)

In previous *ISMA-USA NEWSLETTER* articles we have looked at some of the many causes of stress in children today and examined the physical and emotional and physical impact. Because many of the causes are undoubtedly societal and others the product of an increasingly stressful lifestyle for adults and children alike, it does make sense to encourage children to adapt to stress, rather than find ways simply to cope or avoid it.

From a parental point of view, the most important things to offer any child are security, tolerance,

encouragement, approval and, above all, time and love. These are the foundations upon which a child's emotional health is built, and they ultimately establish his or her ability to adapt to stress. Above this foundation, are the other bricks that will ensure a healthy resilience and an ability to shoulder what life throws at them.

A healthy diet

At no other time in their lives do humans grow and develop more quickly than they do as children. Everything children eat contributes to that growth and development. Nutrition affects their emotions, their ability to concentrate and learn, to prevent illness, to play sports, to grow and to develop into happy, healthy adults with a successful future. In addition, stress can play havoc with both digestion and the intake of nutrients, as well as robbing the body of key nutrients that your child actually needs to grow and, ultimately, to cope.

If your child is in optimum physical health, he will be more likely to deal successfully with stress. The mind-body relationship is incredibly strong, and when children do not feel well, their emotional status is also affected. The key is to improve our children's diets – replacing processed foods with natural, unrefined alternatives. Our children need to eat more fruits and vegetables, whole grains, pulses, lean meats and low-fat dairy produce. This will make a dramatic difference to their overall health.

Reduce or remove anything with artificial chemicals, in the form of additives, preservatives, flavors and anything else. All of these put strain on the body, in particular the liver, which is so crucial for the stress response. Additionally, these chemicals are a form of environmental stress, which will raise your child's stress load, even if other aspects of his life are going well. Offer lots of nutritious snacks. Keeping blood sugar levels stable throughout the day will help your child to cope with stressful situations more efficiently and lower the stress response significantly. Eating little and often is the key to keeping levels stable but try to make sure that a child gets at least three good, healthy main meals every day as well.

One supplement in particular that can make a big difference to a child's ability to deal with stress is the EFA group (essential fatty acids), found in flaxseed oil or pumpkin seed oil, for example. There's exciting new research showing that they can affect children's behavior and their ability to learn. A shortage of EFAs has been linked to stress: a deficiency exacerbates symptoms and makes it harder to cope with stressors, while stress itself sets up conditions in which your child's body actually requires more.

The mineral zinc is also crucial for children under pressure. It's needed for cell repair, efficient digestion, immune function and emotional health. Zinc is also required for the production of the adrenal hormones, which means that what little your child gets in his diet will probably be zapped up by the stress response. About a third of all children do not get even the minimum suggested amount of zinc.

Watch caffeine intake. A new study shows that caffeine increases stress levels. Although the findings are based on adult consumption, mainly in the form of coffee, it's important to consider these findings in relation to children. Many children drink a great deal of cola, tea and even coffee, and caffeine is also found in chocolate, "energy drinks," headache medication and painkillers. Not only are children's bodies smaller, but their systems are not yet mature and can cope less well with the effects of caffeine. Researchers from Birmingham University's Dental School found that one in eight teenagers in the UK now consumes more than 22 cans of cola every week and three-quarters of all children drink it regularly. There are two issues here: one is that children are choosing unhealthy pick-me-ups in an attempt to cope with feelings of fatigue and loss of concentration caused by stress, and the second issue is that it is a habit that compounds the stress response. Caffeine over stimulates the adrenal glands, which might appear to help stress levels, but in the long term will reduce a child's ability to cope with pressure. Even a moderate amount of caffeine raises levels of the stress hormones, adrenaline and cortisol, to levels higher than those normally produced during a stress reaction.

Exercise

Not only is exercise crucial for overall health, but it dramatically affects well being and stress levels. Given the number of health risks associated with stress, it's even more important that we counterbalance these ill-effects by ensuring that our children take part in activities that will strengthen their bodies and mind, and increase their resilience. Some recent studies show that during periods of high stress, those who reported exercising less frequently had 37% more physical symptoms than their counterparts who exercised more frequently. In addition,

highly stressed people who get less exercise report 21% more anxiety than those who exercise more frequently. Exercise works by using up the adrenaline that is created by stress and stressful situations. It also creates 'endorphins', the feel-good hormones that improve mood, motivation and even tolerance to pain and other stimuli.

Sleep

Children of all ages need sleep, and lots of it, in order to grow, develop, interact, learn and adapt to their environment. A sleep deficit will exacerbate feelings of being out of control – in fact, all of the emotional symptoms of stress – but it will also compromise immunity and the efficiency of your child's body, which will exacerbate the stress response.

Stress has an enormous effect on sleep patterns, and most children have real trouble waking in the morning as a result. Not only do they need more sleep, but they need to reduce their stress load. Notice how difficult it is to waken a child during the school term and how early they rise on weekends and holidays! In a stress-free environment, children sleep better, perform better, waken naturally, and have energy and enthusiasm to face life.

Environment

The aim here is to create a healthy environment for a child, which places as few demands as possible on his growing body. Remember that the toxins to which a child comes into contact in his daily life are now considered to be stressors – a form of environmental stress.

There are many things you can do to make your child's environment positive and healthy, from choosing household cleaning and personal care products that have the least impact on your child's body to ensuring that the atmosphere is conducive to happiness and well being.

Leisure

Over the past few years, the importance of leisure has become increasingly recognized, and many adults now choose to spend more money on leisure pursuits than they have in the past, probably in an attempt to balance the effects of an extremely stressful lifestyle. Children also need leisure time, and they need lots of it. The problem is that the average child gets very little quality leisure time, and activities traditionally associated with leisure are now the focus of intense competition, performance and parental expectations, all tightly squeezed into a highly organized schedule.

What percentage of leisure time do your children have in relation to planned activities, school, homework, instrument practice and other obligations? How many of their activities are genuinely relaxing and fulfilling? What activities actually add to their stress load? Parents must establish or encourage a healthy leisure/work ratio if children are to cope with stress successfully.

The quality of leisure time is also important. If a day filled with activities ends with two hours in front of the television, your child will not actually be relaxing or gaining anything fulfilling or satisfying from his activities. The same goes for games consoles and computers, many of which artificially stimulate the senses and create a reaction similar to the stress response.

Stress and relaxation are opposite sides of coin, and each is required to counterbalance the other. The problem with today's children is that they are actively discouraged from being "lazy," "lying around" or not making the best use of their time. And because they are so continually stressed, they will actually find it difficult to unwind and relax. Living on adrenaline, they choose exciting activities that stimulate them and blot out any concerns or worries that they would rather not address. Once again, plopping in front of the television might require little effort and appear restful, but true relaxation and rest involve contemplation, peace, reflection, interaction, exuberance, play and an opportunity to let off steam in the process of having fun. While many of these factors may seem contradictory, your child's choice of relaxation will reflect what he needs. He may want a quiet daydream in the corner or a rollicking good pillow fight with his Dad. Whatever the case, let your child choose. As long as it doesn't involve more competition, take up too much of his free time, or involve distraction-leisure activities only; any way your child chooses to relax will be right for him.

A little peace

In every day, your child should have some time alone with no distractions and no noise. This probably sounds idealistic in a busy household, but you can aim for a sense of quiet by establishing periods when radios, televisions and everything else are unavailable. Noise is a stressor and an environmental pollution, and everyone needs a respite. Time alone and in peace gives children a chance to reflect, to plan and to think. We cannot expect our children to make reasoned decisions or to become self-aware if they are never given a moment to stop and contemplate. Your child may choose to read, to draw, to daydream or even to chat quietly with a family member. If there are many distractions in your household, your child is unlikely to remember important thoughts and worries, which become drowned by the general chaos, and he will also be less likely to communicate. It's amazing what things come out when the world is turned off. Give your child an opportunity to form thoughts and express them. Give him a sanctuary where he will feel free to do so.

Giving children an outlet

Today's children are expected to conform at a much earlier age. They attend school earlier, their lives are packed with activities, and they have much less time for play and relaxation. Not surprisingly, this can cause an enormous amount of stress in a child, and it can be reflected in his overall health, well being and behavior.

We offer little opportunity for children to be children. They are expected to conform to an ideal – not making a fuss, not interrupting, concentrating at school, on the sports fields and on their homework,. They are expected to eat their dinner and get dressed without a murmur, bathe quietly, and go to bed, where they are expected to fall asleep immediately and sleep through the night.

Where is the outlet? At what point are children offered the opportunity to express emotion, to unload tension, to let off a little steam, to be children with a natural buoyant energy and spirit?

Don't expect the rigid routine of school to be followed by an equally rigid routine at home. Certainly a routine will help your child to feel secure, but time has to be allowed and, indeed, encouraged, for fun, high spirits, laughter, shouting, cheering, crying or just lying about. If your child is exhibiting signs of stress, he does not have an appropriate outlet, and you will need to create one.

Emotional support

According to Karen DeBord, Ph.D., a child development specialist in the US, parents have an important role to play in helping children to cope with stress. She says, "Just as children's reactions are each different, so are their coping strategies. Children can cope through tears or tantrums or by retreating from unpleasant situations. They could be masterful at considering options, finding compromising solutions, or finding substitute comfort. Usually a child's thinking is not developed fully enough to think of options or think about the results of possible actions. Children who live in supportive environments and develop a range of coping strategies become more resilient. Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from stress and crisis. For many children, a supportive environment is not present and many children do not learn a set of positive coping strategies."

She believes that families can help their children by

- developing trust, particularly during the first year of life.
- being supportive family and friends.
- showing caring and warmth.
- having high, clear expectations without being overly rigid.
- providing ways for children to contribute to the family in meaningful ways.
- building on family strengths.

What a child need most from his parents is unconditional love and acceptance, which gives him the courage and strength to explore, take risks, challenge, attempt and achieve the things wanted in life. Do you offer emotional support to your child? If so, in what way? Do you accept the good with the bad, the failure with the success? If your approach to parenting focuses too heavily on discipline, behavior, achievement, performance and fulfilling expectations, your child will not have the support he needs to deal with stressful situations, and he will not have the communication channel he needs to express concerns, learn from failure and, ultimately, know that there is someone, somewhere, who will love him no matter what he does.

The importance of praise

Praise is essential for well being and for self-esteem, both of which create the emotional foundation your child needs to be happy and fulfilled. Most children are extremely busy and rushed through daily activities. There is little time to stop and appraise or, indeed, to praise. What tends to happen is that achievements are praised rather than effort, which can be daunting for children who need encouragement in order to succeed. Good marks are applauded, as are results on the sport's pitch, passing a music exam or making a team, while all the effort that goes into these successes passes largely unnoticed.

The impact of this can be devastating for children, who will develop an unhealthy focus on winning and succeeding, rather than simply doing their best. Given the nature of the stress that already exists in their lives, this creates an extremely harmful balance, where the winner takes all, and the ones who have tried their best and reached their own personal goals are disregarded.

Not only does praise have to be directed, but it needs to be genuine and believable. If a child fails an exam, and you go on and on about how clever he is, he will know you are being duplicitous. If you choose, however, to praise his effort and point out how much he has improved since the last test, he will not only learn to respect your comments, but he will feel good about his own personal achievement. This is an important part of living life in the fast-lane. Every one is too busy to stop and appreciate or to comment on the little things that make us feel good about ourselves. If children learn to recognize and celebrate the milestones along the path to adulthood they will, as adults, have a much healthier self-image and the confidence to cope when things don't go according to plan.

Time and interaction

We have already established that children have far too little meaningful time with their parents, even in families who make a concerted effort to spend time together. Struggles over homework, rushing to activities, grabbing a quick dinner and scabbling to prepare for the next day do not produce a climate conducive to interaction and sharing. Children need to be encouraged to talk, and adults need to find or make the time in which to do just that. Asking the same questions of your child at the end of every day, in your half an hour of allotted "quality time" will not produce genuine and positive communication. Children will tune out or reluctantly recite the events that took place that day.

Converse with your child in much the same way as you would a friend, bringing up interesting situations or elements of your own day, or asking their opinion about a piece of news or even a new color for the sitting-room wall. Once the channels of communication are opened, you will establish the type of relationship where chatting, revealing and confiding are commonplace, and you will find that a certain level of trust is also established. Communication is one of the most important elements of stress relief, and the majority of children simply do not confide in their parents, either because they fear recrimination, or they never have a genuine opportunity to do so.

But the key denominator in this type of approach is time, and you simply have to be prepared to make it. If our children grow up never forming strong bonds with close family and friends, never sharing problems or working on solutions and coping strategies, they are unlikely to do so in adulthood, which is a very unhealthy situation indeed.

Researchers at Pennsylvania State University found that young boys are less likely than little girls to initiate conversations with their parents about their day-to-day experiences. This finding suggests that parents need to keep the dialogue going with their children about what they do in school and what they do with their friends.

Essential skills

A large part of a parent's job – or even that of a professional – is to help children develop skills or tactics to get through situations that present a challenge or a problem.

Children simply do not have the tools, the insight, the experience or the confidence to face every problem on their own. Part of life is learning how to deal with different people and situations, and parents and teachers need to be involved along the way to ensure that the little things are not becoming insurmountable issues. Give examples of similar experience that happened to you when you were a child. Ensure that your child feels that his situation and his response are absolutely normal. Never demand a brave face or suggest that he deal with it on his own. The

best way for children to learn to cope is by offering a variety of different suggestions from which they can choose the most appropriate. They will then feel in control and much more likely to ask your advice in future as well as feel much more confident about their coping skills in general.

What we are aiming for is resilience. Drs. Robert Brooks and Sam Goldstein founded the Raising Resilient Children Project to assist adults to raise, support and develop stress hardy children. They say, "Resilience embraces the ability of a child to deal more effectively with stress and pressure, to cope with everyday challenges, to bounce back from disappointments, adversity and trauma to develop clear and realistic goals to solve problems, to relate comfortably to others and to treat oneself and others with respect. Numerous scientific studies of children facing adversity in their lives have supported the importance of resilience as a powerful insulating force. Resilience explains why some children overcome overwhelming obstacles, sometimes clawing and scraping their way to successful adulthood while others become victims of their early experiences and environments."

Drs. Brooks and Goldstein also stress the importance of empathy in communication with our children. They believe that empathy is a starting point to help children locate areas of competence and success in their lives and to develop problem-solving skills, responsibility, compassion and a social conscience.

Personal freedom and power

Giving personal freedom involves allowing your child to do things that are appropriate for his age and his level of maturity. At some stage we all have to let go of our children – let them take that first walk to the shops on their own, take a bus ride or a bicycle ride by themselves, drive a car, light the fire, cook a meal, use a sharp knife. As parents we need to assess when the time is right and to offer our children some freedom. With freedom comes a sense of responsibility.

Like adults, children need to have some control over their environment to feel secure, to learn to make decisions and choices and to have the self-respect and self-esteem necessary to cope with the modern world. Childhood is a time of fun and experimentation, but it is also a "training ground" for adulthood. If children are never given any opportunity to make their own decisions, develop negotiating skills, plan their time and their activities, experience success and failure through experimentation and activities and feel that they have some control over their environment, they will never have the skills necessary to deal with life.

Dominating parents may be able to mould their child into the ideal person, complete with academic, sports, musical, dramatic and other talents and successes, but that child will be ill-prepared to cope with the outside world when he leaves home. Children, who are given no power and stifled by over-dominant parenting, are much more likely to rebel once they have left the nest, and they are also less likely to cope with independence when they finally get it. Over-controlled children have little sense of self and even less sense of the world in which we live.

Time management

One of the greatest skills that any adult can learn is time management because it helps not only to ensure that activities are prioritized but helps to ensure that time is used most effectively, allowing space for essential leisure, relaxation and fun. Because children's schedules are now as quickly paced and packed as most adults, it's a skill that children will undoubtedly benefit from learning and one that will stand them in good stead in the future.

When children are fairly young, parents need to be heavily involved in planning and scheduling their children's activities with their approval and input. Planning a schedule also offers a good opportunity to discuss activities and priorities, and you can use this to find out areas where your child is most stressed, overworked or undertaking activities that he either no longer enjoys or that involves too much pressure. Although parents will usually have a good idea about what is best for their children, we are not always right, and most children will have a natural self-preservation mechanism which prevents them from doing too much. If you are talking about it constantly, you will be able to keep tabs on areas that could become problematic.

Older children and adolescents should be encouraged regularly to manage their time by developing schedules and by listing their preferences and priorities. The same system can be applied to children of all ages, but it's

important that you are involved at some stage, if only to gauge changes in your child's interests or to see areas of potential stress.

The art of pacing

Pacing has two components: learning to monitor stress and energy levels, and then pacing one's activities accordingly. It is about awareness and vigilance and knowing when to extend yourself and when to ease up. It is also about acting on the information your body gives you. The following important points will help you to understand this concept. This is a concept that all children need to learn. Not only will they learn to recognize signs of stress in themselves, but they will be in control and able to make changes. Pacing can, ultimately, make all the difference to children's stress levels, and it will teach them how to deal with stress and over scheduling both now and in the future.

Increased stress produces increased performance, initially. Once you pass a certain point, any more stress results in decreased performance. Trying harder at this point is unproductive or even counterproductive. The only sensible move is to take a break. We need a certain amount of stress to function well (healthy tension) - this is called eustress (good stress). However, stress becomes harmful (distress) when there is too much, when it lasts too long or when it occurs too often.

The other key to pacing is taking periodic time-outs. Too many children go far too long without breaks. It is not always convenient for children to take time-outs when they feel that they need a break, but they can aim to try! For example, in a stressful day, using their mid-morning break to do something relaxing rather than trying to get their homework done in advance, can make all the difference. In a busy schedule, it's healthy to take little regular naps, do some meditation or daydream, have some time with friends, take a walk or have a snack. The aim is to change to low-concentration activities, which can include listening to music or even doing some painting or drawing. Although time is at a premium in most children's busy lives, learning to use time effectively and positively can help reduce stress and increase productivity.

Forward planning

Learn to identify future potential problems. While this may seem like an alarmist strategy, it genuinely helps children to anticipate and plan for stress. Find out what could cause stress and plan ways to avoid it or deal with it. If you know that exams are coming up, and your child always responds badly to this type of pressure, talk it through well in advance. Develop some coping skills, study methods, stress reduction, rest and rewards. If children know what to expect, they are much better prepared to adapt.

Ultimately, it's important to learn that stress will always exist in some form or another throughout our children's lives. If they are given the tools to communicate the way they feel, to recognize and deal with the signs and symptoms themselves and to take steps towards redressing the balance by relaxing, adapting their schedules and setting realistic expectations for themselves, and to feel loved and valued as unique human beings, they will be much more likely to develop a necessary resilience.

When things do go wrong, and the stress load begins to have a negative impact on your child's health and well being, it's worth remembering that there are many treatments that can redress the balance. In the next issue of this newsletter, we will look at natural and conventional treatments of stress in children.

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PRONOUNCING "TAV" AN EXERCISE TO PROMOTE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE FUNDAMENTALS OF PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION

A. B. Frederick. Ph.D.

Director, Effort Management Clinics

Foreword - From time to time, I have spoken to groups about relaxation training in a normal classroom, for example, where lying down would be uncomfortable or impractical. I recall first using "TAV" at a Lion's Club

meeting. I have also given the “Exercise” to beginning classes in PR as an outside assignment resulting in some excellent discussion at the next meeting of the class. The exercise requires one to pronounce the syllable, “TAV,” in a number of ways. Students are asked to jot down some notes during the session. Such an exercise ordinarily appears later in training in classical PR. The goal, as in all early training, is to find a specific location, “tension spot,” associated with the task.

The “TAV” Exercise (1)

Step 1. Sit comfortably with both feet on the floor, forearms crossed and resting on the lap. When you are ready to begin, pronounce the syllable “TAV” to yourself.(2) As such, it is an introspective rather than an exteroceptive exercise. The task is to feel internal signals or events. Pronounce “TAV” as often as necessary and write down specific things you discover. It may be that you have nothing to report. That’s OK. Simply jot down whatever you associate with the exercise.

Step 2. Once again, pronounce the syllable “TAV” but this time pronounce it aloud (overtly) enunciating carefully as if you were teaching a child a new word. You will, of course, be able to hear yourself and feel other external phenomena. Rather than noting these externals, repeat Step 2 until you can associate internal events, if any, that occur simultaneously with pronouncing “TAV.” These events may seem clearer in Step 2 than they were in Step 1. Jot down your findings and proceed to the next step.

Step 3. You will complete a series of “TAV” pronunciations during this step, that is, a progression.

- a. Pronounce “TAV” as in Step 2 or even a bit louder. Attend to the internals.
- b. Pronounce “TAV” once again but with less effort.
- c. Pronounce “TAV” several more times reducing the effort as you progress.(3) Continue to reduce the power with each repetition for a minute or so. (4)

Make a note of the “internals” you detect once again. You may go back as far as Step 1 or it may be that you can go a little further noting ever more subtle degrees of whatever you have detected previously. Note what is happening during the progression. Edmund Jacobson referred to the process as “Going Negative” in steps. Repeat Step 3 until you are confident about what you feel during the progression. This process is the essence of PR. If you are fortunate enough to have an experienced instructor to unscramble your notes, you may find that although you did not locate a specific sensation(5) of tension in one of the four prime muscle groups of the tongue you may have felt your tongue touching the roof of the mouth or was on its way there at some point. Your upper teeth may have brushed the lower lip You may also have noticed a sensation along the angle of the jaw(6) or near the tonsils.

Step 4. Again, pronounce “TAV” but eliminate one of the things you have detected. For example, if your tongue touched the roof of your mouth, pronounce “TAV,” or attempt to pronounce it, without the action of the tongue. You may feel the tongue trying to move and you may feel something else associated with that. Getting acquainted with miniscule tension in the muscles is the goal. If you are successful in your detection, you will be able to eliminate the sensation and relax. Again, jot down anything that you find associated with the task.

Afterword - The “TAV” exercise is an example of “Lesson One” described in Jacobson’s Lab Manual for teachers. (7) (See Diagram 1 for a typical instruction - bending the hand back.). While discussing the teaching of PR with Dr. Jacobson, he referred occasionally to the “Homunculus” (“Little Man”) of Wilder Penfield as an explanation for the introduction of relatively uncomplicated muscle groups earlier in training with extremely complicated muscle groups such as those of the speech apparatus and the hands presented later. (See Diagram 2).

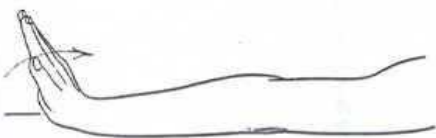
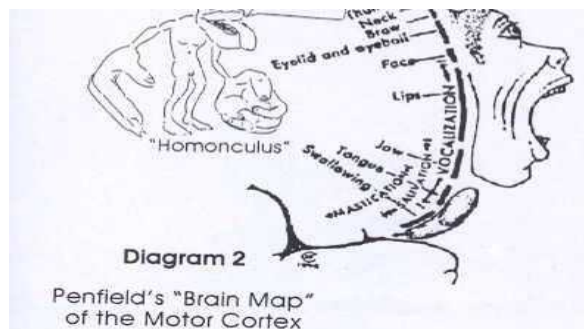


Diagram 1



Typical Beginner's Exercise in PR
"Bend Hand Back at Wrist"



In my own experience, if "Lesson 1" is thoroughly understood, students begin to get better and better at locating sensations of slight tension ordinarily ignored. When that phase of training is grasped, a student can proceed with other muscle groups on their own much as a body builder learns to recognize various muscle groups in controlled contractions. Body builders make good PR students as a rule since they simply stop contracting. They recognize tension much more easily than those without such training. It is vital that a student discovers the appropriate sensation of tension (tension spot) with little or no guidance from the instructor. There are some clever ways an instructor can move about a group and inform individuals about their success without disturbing others (e.g. a slight touch of the student with a foot).

Repeating "TAV" in inner speech may also remind one of meditation with a mantra. "TAV" is not a good mantra, however. When Herbert Benson, a Harvard cardiologist, devised what he calls the "Relaxation Response" he chose the mantra "ONE." The latter may be repeated in inner speech with much less effort than "TAV." Try it! Meditation with a bland mantra is excellent for stopping unwanted speech. It is a mind diverting strategy, however, bearing only a minimal relationship to PR and the task described in the "TAV" exercise.

Endnotes -

1. This exercise/assignment first appeared in material I prepared for John LaPlace's, *Health*. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ; Prentice Hall, 1987). Prentice-Hall wanted an article on "stress," The much more meaningful terms: "Tension Control," "Relaxation," "Efficient Movement," "Effort" and others, needed clarification as well.
2. This is "Inner Speech" or "Covert Speech."
3. Progressive Relaxation!
4. Sometimes beginners slip into sleep stage one during this phase.
5. A location in your body where the contraction of a muscle or group of muscles is detected.
6. Read more about tongue muscles at <http://www.sfu.ca/~saunders/l33098/L4/L4_5.html>.
7. Jacobson, E. How to teach scientific relaxation. Chicago: Foundation for Scientific Relaxation, 1958.

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SPOTLIGHT on ISMA-USA MEMBERS

In this section, we want to focus on YOU, our members. We will introduce and welcome new members to our association, and we will report and congratulate members on their achievements and involvements. Please help us to connect with each other and to be informed about the great things you are doing by sending information to the editors either about yourself or another member.

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to these new members who joined ISMA-USA in the last few months:

Gayle Church, from St. Catharine's, Ontario, Canada, is a professional speaker, trainer, coach and co-author. Her agency, Gayle Church Stress & Wellness Consulting, offers classes, workshops and seminars on stress and wellness topics.

A. Bruce Frederick, Ph.D., is a retired educator who continues to conduct seminars. He lives in Wilmington,

Deleware, and is the director of Effort Management Clinics. He was involved with the early establishment of ISMA in the 1970s when it was AATC and specializes in Progressive Relaxation. See his article in this issue. **Kara R. Gade, B. S.**, a stress management specialist, coaches clients to create a balanced lifestyle. She is also an occupational therapist who works with children and their families in Scottsdale, Arizona. **Jae Kaplin, B. S.**, is an aromatherapist and stress management consultant for A Better Me, LLC in Gaithersburg, Maryland. His company offers stress management training in the Washington, D.C. area. **Michael G. McKee, Ph.D.**, is clinical psychologist for the Cleveland Clinical foundation in Cleveland, Ohio. **Ruth Reese, Ph.D.**, from Glendale, Arizona, has a counseling practice and is a professor at Arizona State University.

MEMBERS' MILESTONES

Our sincerest condolences to the family of **Mary X Grimes**. Mary, a long time member and strong supporter of ISMA, lived in Beaverton, Oregon. She died October 6, 2002.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFERENCES

June 10 & 11, 2003



ISMA-BRAZIL CONGRESS

The III Congress of ISMA-BR and the V Meeting on QWL will take place on June 10 & 11, 2003, in Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil.

Among many experts, the main presenter is Lennart Levi, M.D., Ph.D., ISMA International's president. He will give a lecture titled "Stress and Burnout – Option for Prevention at National, Work-Place and Individual Levels."

Contacts for additional information:

www.ismabrasil.com.br
stress@ismabrasil.com.br

October 10 - 12, 2003

THE 5TH MULTIDIMENSIONAL-MULTICULTURAL WELLNESS CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP

Pathways to Initiating, Nurturing, and Sustaining Intimate Relationships

Division of Psychology and Counseling, College of Education
Governors State University, University Park, IL. 60466
2003Psych 504 A (2 credits)
Instructors: Jagdish P. Dave, Ph.D., Psy.D., and Jaya Adiga, M.D.

This Conference/Workshop is designed to explore healing and wellness didactically, interactively, and experientially as understood and practiced by different cultures and spiritual traditions. You will learn how to shift negative energy to positive energy by powerful wellness modalities and strategies that can be integrated into your daily life. The Wellness Conference/Workshop is open to anyone interested in learning to add years to their life and life to their years. College students can take this conference/workshop as a 2-credit course.

Pathways to Initiating, Nurturing, and Sustaining Intimate Relationships topics will be conceptually and experientially explored by experts in their fields.

Balancing the inner and outer worlds

Conflict resolution

Falling in love and being in love

Effective communication: Is anybody listening?

Expanding the window of self

Harnessing emotional energy (anger, resentment, fear, guilt, and shame)

Asserting compassionately

Establishing boundaries and going beyond

Balancing energy by Yoga, Pilates, QI Gong, Breathing, Reflexology, Healing touch and Meditation

Celebrating diversity by music and dance

Wedding ceremonies from different spiritual traditions

Contact Dr. J. P. Dave for additional information.

Phone: at 708-957-4572

E -mail: jagdish_dave@hotmail.com

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POSITIONS AVAILABLE

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED.

ISMA-USA Web Site Librarian

This person would serve as a contact person for submissions to our on-line library, be a resource person to answer inquiries from visitor to our web site and search for new book titles to add to the existing list.

For further details contact [Betty J. McGuigan](#), web site editor.

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