

TRINITY CENTER TIMES

PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL GROWTH FOR YOUR WORKFORCE

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Understanding Different Kinds of "Stress"

- **Eustress:** not all stress is negative. A certain amount of stress is needed for employees to remain motivated in their jobs. Eustress is positive and occurs when a person experiences enough stress to continually his/her work.
- **Distress:** this occurs when an employee experiences too much or too little stress. Distressed employees are less productive or miss work more often. They are affected negatively by this type of stress and respond in harmful physical or emotional ways.
- **Burnout:** distress must be managed to prevent burnout. There are three symptoms that are typical with someone suffering from burnout. **Exhaustion, cynicism and ineffectiveness** suggest that an employee has moved from distress to burnout.

For more information on Burnout, see page 3 of this newsletter.

STRESS – A COSTLY WORKPLACE EPIDEMIC

Layoffs, pay cuts and an uncertain economy have left many organizations with fewer employees to do the work. Not all of those employees are handling it well.

A Robert Half International survey revealed that nearly 50% of U.S. workers feel stressed out. They say they're sad, worried, distracted, burned out and low on morale.

These kinds of feelings lead to lower workplace productivity and can interfere with the physical and emotional health of employees. Nearly one million Americans miss work every day due to stress-related factors. For workers who show up at work, many don't feel well enough to work and are much less productive.

While the physical effects of stress in the workplace are often emphasized, the economic consequences are also alarming. Workplace stress costs employers an estimated \$200 billion per year in absenteeism, lower productivity, staff turnover, workers' compensation, medical insurance and other stress related expenses.

Everyone is under pressure in the workplace. Some stress is not a bad thing, helping people be more productive and creative. The natural pattern of human behavior is to experience a stress-causing event or situation, react to it with increased tension and then return to a normal, relaxed state. The problem occurs when stress is so overwhelming or constant that this pattern is broken. This type of stress takes its toll, causing a range of

physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual problems.

Common Causes of Stress at Work

There is no single cause of work-related stress. While stress can be triggered by sudden, unexpected pressures, it is often the result of a combination of stressful factors which accumulate over time. While each person is different, there are common workplace issues that affect people. It is important to recognize these stressors and take steps to reduce them where possible.

- Change, especially changes the employee did not initiate
- Communication/relationship issues with management or co-workers
- Understaffing and/or inadequate resources
- Bullying, harassing, or intimidation
- Lack of control over how work is done or assigned
- Excessively high workloads or insufficient workloads
- A blame culture where people are afraid to get things wrong or admit mistakes
- Lack of adequate training and opportunity to learn new skills
- Weak or ineffective management
- A poor physical working environment



Support of Trinity Center

Although 75% of the services Trinity Center provides are paid for by individuals, insurance or businesses in the same way they would be in any private practice, we are a 501(c)3 organization because of our commitment to provide 25% of our services to those with demonstrated financial need. There are a number of ways organizations and businesses can support Trinity Center in this vital service effort.

Cash donations are always needed to support our **financial assistance fund**. Gift-in-kind donations such as office supplies, break room items like coffee, or furniture, computers and telephones are also helpful.

Trinity Center can also benefit from volunteers who help us with yard work, painting, cleaning gutters and other "clean up" activities.

We are also interested in adding qualified individuals to our Board. We especially need people with financial and marketing experience.

Please contact us for more information about how to support our efforts!

Trinity Center Times is published by Trinity Center, Inc. to provide information to businesses and organizations. Our goal is to assist in the professional and personal growth of employees and make them more effective in the workplace. For more information, contact: Trinity Center, Inc. 640 Holly Avenue Winston-Salem, NC 27101 336-725-3999 Fax 336-725-7720 trinitycenterinc@bellsouth.net

Signs of Stress in Employees

Individuals suffering from stress often display a range of signs that can affect how they behave and perform at work. Some of the more common symptoms include:

- Tiredness and irritability
- Reduced quality of work
- Poor memory, trouble concentrating
- Loss of sense of humor
- Excessive tiredness
- Loss of energy and motivation
- Increased sick leave
- Physical illness such as headaches, nausea, aches and pains
- Feeling anxious, helpless or afraid
- Changes in appetite and weight

Chronic stress can cause or worsen a range of health problems which can severely affect the quality of life and work performance:

- Asthma
- Psoriasis
- Ulcers
- Digestive disorders
- Depression
- Alcohol or drug use

How to Manage Stress in the Workplace

There are many steps that can be taken to reduce stress levels in the workplace. Management can provide valuable assistance to employees by establishing effective stress management techniques. Employees can take certain steps to reduce the stress they are experiencing.

Employer Stress Management Techniques

- Set realistic goals and priorities
- Encourage good time-management techniques
- Share information with employees to reduce uncertainty about their futures
- Allow employees to participate in decisions that affect their jobs
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities
- Provide opportunities for career development
- Provide opportunities for social interaction among employees
- Set up employee recognition programs
- Praise good work performance verbally and institutionally

- Establish a zero tolerance policy for harassment
- Provide benefits for family and sick leave
- Provide adequate resources to complete tasks

Employee Stress Management Techniques

- Take care of yourself-exercise, diet, enough sleep, avoid excess alcohol and tobacco
- Don't over-commit yourself
- Learn to plan
- Plan regular breaks
- Delegate responsibility
- Change negative thinking to can-do actions
- Talk out your troubles
- Recognize and accept limits
- Learn a systematic, drug-free method of relaxing, like yoga or meditation

Stress is an inevitable companion to our working lives. Without challenge and pressure, work would lack sparkle, but we all have the capacity to be overwhelmed by work-related stress and to experience its debilitating effects. The goal is to manage stress in the workplace by becoming aware of the causes and having both the employer and employee address these causes and create a less stressful environment.



Resources: www.helpguide.org, www.fdu.edu, www.workershealth.com, www.stress.org, www.businessmanagementdaily.com

Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. It was designed with you, your business and your employees in mind. We hope you are finding it beneficial.

Much is being written about the stresses the economy is creating for businesses and their employees. Anxiety about finances and job security are not contained at work, but usually follow employees home. This distress flows through the family and can show itself in a number of ways.

This newsletter addresses the issues you and your employees have at work

and how to make your workplace more productive. Employee difficulties at home — marital discord, spouses or children showing anxiety or depressive symptoms — translate into lack of employee health and productivity.

Trinity Center's mission is to provide the kind of wrap-around services that can assess and provide help for these employee needs as well. Our services for adults and children, individuals, couples and work-teams can help transform difficulties into growth.

Please let us know if we can help you and your employees grow in 2010.

Sincerely, Ann Dixon Coppage

Preventing Employee Burnout

What is Burnout?

Burnout is a state of emotional, mental and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when an employee feels overwhelmed and unable to meet constant demands. As the stress continues, that individual begins to lose interest or motivation in tasks at hand.

Burnout reduces productivity and saps energy, leaving the person feeling increasingly helpless, hopeless, cynical and resentful.

The negative effects of burnout spill over into every area of life including home and social. Burnout can also cause long term changes to the body that make the employee more vulnerable to illnesses. Because of its many consequences, it's important to deal with burnout immediately.

The Difference Between Stress & Burnout

Burnout may be the result of unrelenting stress, but it isn't the same as too much stress. Stress involves *too much*: too many pressures that demand too much of you physically and psychologically. Stressed people can still imagine, though, that if they can just get everything under control, they'll feel better.

Burnout is about *not enough*. Being burned out means feeling empty, devoid of motivation, and beyond caring. People experiencing burnout don't see any hope for positive change.

Factors That Contribute to Burnout

- Expectation of greater workload and longer hours for an undetermined or lengthy period
- Loss of individual autonomy, over scheduling, loss of trust and respect
- Pressure to take on more risks as your business system demands decreased costs but increased "quality"
- Inability to balance personal and professional life
- Decreased company or peer socializing and collegiality

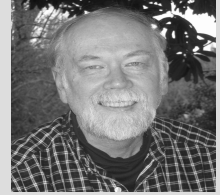
Helping Your Employees Prevent Burnout

- Encourage them to start the day with a relaxing ritual—reading, meditation, exercise
- Emphasize the need to adopt healthy eating, exercising and sleeping habits
- Allow them to nourish their creative side at work if possible
- Help them set boundaries and support those boundaries
- Provide workshops or individual counseling sessions
- Encourage employees to take time off to vacate or recreate

Burnout is costly and preventable. It takes a personal commitment by the employees, the management and by the company to take proactive steps to prevent or address early signs of burnout.

Resources: helpguide.org/mental, workplaces.com

Meet Some of Our Counselors



Patrick Sullivan

Pat has been practicing as a clinical psychologist since 1975. He specializes in the area of psychological and neuropsychological assessment. Another specialty area is working with families who have children with learning disabilities. He is bilingual.



June Foss

June works with individuals, couples and/or families on issues related to marriage and family problems, divorce, grief, depression, life transitions, and issues specific to senior adults. As an ordained minister June is also sensitive to spirituality and faith issues.



Ginny Mills

Ginny works with individuals, couples and families to address issues of personal growth, life transitions, alcohol and drug use, depression, trauma recovery, relationship problems, parenting, and behavioral issues and co-dependency.

STARTING THE NEW YEAR WITH LUNCH AND LEARNS

A simple yet very effective way to help your employees reduce stress, take a break from the daily pressures and learn about something that is of interest to them is to offer a series of **Lunch and Learns**. These Lunch and Learns can be structured so that each employee brings a brown bag lunch. Or if the budget allows, the company can provide a simple lunch of pizza or sandwiches. An expert or panel of experts would discuss timely topics during this lunch hour that benefit the attendees by providing them with relevant information that could help them in the workplace or at home.

Trinity Center has the experienced and credentialed staff to provide speakers for a Lunch and Learn program. With 13 clinicians who have a breadth and depth of expertise in a variety of areas, the topics for a series of Lunch and Learns are almost limitless. Here are just some examples of the programming that Trinity Center can provide:

- Dealing with divorce*
- Coping with a family member struggling with substance abuse*
- Coping with stress*
- Social skills for children*
- Parenting skills*
- Communication skills*
- Conflict management skills*
- Issuing independence to adult children*
- Improving leadership skills*
- Dealing with grief*
- Marriage enhancement*
- How to identify learning issues in children*



Contact Trinity Center to learn more about our Lunch and Learn program. We are here to help you start the New Year in a positive way that benefits your employees. Call us at 336-725-3999 for more information.

Trinity Center, Inc.
exists to foster
healing and
wholeness
through
counseling,
spiritual formation
& education.

TRINITY CENTER, INC.
640 Holly Avenue
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an ecumenical center for counseling,
spiritual formation, and education.



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