

Managing the Stress in Our Lives

by June Messana, L.S.W., Child, Adolescent and Adult Therapist



STRESS! Is there anyone who isn't dealing with it? In addition to life's daily challenges, we are all affected by some type of stress: it could be job loss, financial woes, problems in your marriage, a parenting issue. Whatever the cause, the effect is the same.

Stress can leave you feeling tired, down, sad, or angry. You might find yourself cranky, pre-occupied or scared. It is known to weaken the immune system causing health problems or making existing health problems worse.

Rather than finding places to "hide" from the symptoms of stress (such as using unhealthy substances, numbing out watching endless hours of television, shopping, unhealthy eating, overusing the computer) find ways to face the stress in order to beat it. At the very least, you might help yourself not only get

through it, but also learn from the experience and be more prepared to cope with stress in the future.

The first step is to recognize when you're stressed. Early warning signs could include: tension in your shoulders, back, neck or jaw, clenching your hands, anxiety, headaches, problems sleeping or changes in your eating patterns, upset stomach or high blood pressure.

Then, find time to be alone for reflection and reminding yourself of God's care and presence in your life. You may find prayer, reading your Bible or inspiration writings or just reflecting on the ways God has blessed you to be a calming influence. "Give things to God" that you cannot control.

A good verse to focus on is Matthew 11:28, Jesus says, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

Next, brainstorm with someone you trust to find other ways to cope. If you can, avoid what causes stress. If that is not possible, find alternative ways to respond, not react, to the stress.

It certainly won't be easy, but keep yourself from wor-

rying about things you can not control. Concentrate on areas you can do something about. Solve little problems. This may even alleviate bigger problems and give you confidence in knowing that your life is not out of control.

Strive to be optimistic. It is easy to lean toward the negative. Give yourself constructive affirmation; and stop the negative self-talk.

Prepare to face things that are difficult; accepting that even your best may not be what you want, but you can have satisfaction in knowing you did your best.

Resolve conflict with others, admitting that you can't transform anyone; but you can live with being the best you, you can be.

Set realistic goals. Learn to say "no" and feel justified in doing so. Take care of your health by eating foods that are good for you, exercising, and getting enough sleep. Make time to enjoy life even when it seems there is no time or money to do so. Sometimes you have to push yourself before you realize what you're doing is helping!

If you feel stuck and don't think you can overcome the stress by yourself, seek advice from a professional.

Tips on Managing Stress

- Recognize warning signs: tension in back, neck or jaw; clenching hands, anxiety, headaches, problems sleeping, eating problems, high blood pressure.
- Find time to be alone for reflection, prayer and Bible study.
- Brainstorm ways to deal with stress.
- Focus on solving "smaller" problems.
- Strive to be optimistic.
- Prepare to face difficult challenges.
- Resolve conflict with others.
- Set realistic goals.
- Learn to say "no."
- Take care of yourself - eat right, exercise.
- Have some fun.
- Get professional help if needed.

Even when that dark cloud seems to only be hovering over you, remember, everyone deals with stress. Some have just worked at finding healthier ways to handle it and so can you.

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Our Mission
New Leaf Resources promotes healthy relationships and personal growth through counseling, education, and consultation from a Christian perspective.

Special thanks to...

As God continues to call New Leaf Resources to care for the hurting, he blesses our mission with a giving and supportive constituency. We give special thanks to:

- **YOU!** Whether you prayed for our ministry, referred a friend or gave a contribution, it's because of your faithful dedication, New Leaf can continue to provide hope, help and healing. We are truly grateful for your partnership.
- Our **generous Annual Fund and Christmas Card donors!** Because of your gifts, clients in need can receive the financial assistance and peace of mind.

- All our **friends who submitted their favorite recipes** for our New Leaf Cookbook. Copies are still available at all three locations for \$10. Call Terri at (708) 895-7310 to reserve yours today! All proceeds benefit the Marty Doot Client Assistance Fund.
- Our **courageous clients** who anonymously share their personal stories, to encourage and uplift others who are hurting. If you are interested in sharing a written or videotaped testimonial, please contact the office or take the brief survey on our website at www.newleafresources.org/forms/survey.cfm.
- Our **Wish List supporters** who have replenished the supply of toys and stuffed animals for our youngest clients.
- The **dedicated and selfless Board of Directors** who give of their time and talents to further the mission of New Leaf.
- Everyone who did their online holiday shopping at **GoodShop** and those who use **GoodSearch**—those percentages and pennies do add up. Since using the web service, we've earned over \$100.
- **VerticleResponse**, which provides free email service to our non-profit ministry.

Recommended Reading Resources by Stephen Lanterman, Marital & Addictions Counselor



ego and a desperate feeling of emptiness? Do you vacillate between fear of being smothered or trapped and fear of being abandoned or "let go?"

Do your moods go way up, only to come crashing down? Is your life high on drama, but short on happiness and fulfillment: in your marriage; in your family; in your relationships and friendships; in your career; with your finances?

Got Self-Esteem? Do you feel a quiet sense of peace of mind and self-satisfaction? Or, do you ricochet between an inflated

Discover yourself and some answers to your life's most important questions in these books, all available at Amazon.com. Good Reading!

Bradshaw on: The Family A Revolutionary Way of Self-Discovery
by John Bradshaw

When He's Married to Mom
by Kenneth M. Adams, Ph.D.

Facing Codependence
by Pia Mellody

Facing Love Addiction
by Pia Mellody

The Intimacy Factor
by Pia Mellody

The Intentional Family
by William J. Doherty, Ph.D.

See more listings on our website at www.newleafresources.org.

Teenager is Now Looking Forward

A former client recently shared how her experience at New Leaf Resources has given her hope, help and healing.

“(Therapy) calmed my nerves and temptations because I knew someone was always there for me to talk to. It’s a good place if you need help.

No one judges you and they (the therapists) really do care.

I’ve learned to accept what happened to me and deal with my problems in a healthy way instead of bottling them all up.

I use the skills and advice I’ve gained to help my friends. Some of the advice helps and

since I’ve gone through it too, they’re quicker to listen.

Now, I look forward to my future career and hopefully a loving husband with a great family.”

- 16 year-old female, in therapy for drinking, suicidal thoughts, rape victim.



What’s “New” at New Leaf Resources

We are excited to announce the addition of three new Board Members - **Donna J. DeGraff**, **Carol Moxey**, both of Dyer, and **Deb Koster** of Tinley Park.

Donna is a former Board President of Volunteers for the Bible League. Currently, she is a “mentor mom” with MOPS and leads a Grief Group at Faith Church in Dyer. She and her late husband, Butch, have four children, 9 grandchildren and another on the way.

Carol is the Education Administrator at Crown Point Christian School in St. John and a member of Faith Church. Besides following Christ, her most important role is enjoying her five grandchildren.

Together with her husband, Rev. Steven Koster, Deb leads marriage retreats and seminars through their minis-

try Family Fire. She is a registered nurse and working toward her masters in counseling psychology. Deb & Steven have three teenage children and attend Faith CRC in Tinley Park.

Thank you to **Lisa Hooker** who is retiring from the Board. Her time, dedication and service is greatly appreciated.

Welcome aboard part-time Associate Therapist **Darrell Franklin**. Darrell has a Master’s Degree in Child Development and Family Studies from Purdue University Calumet and he is currently a full-time Psychology Instructor at Ivy Tech Community College in East Chicago.

Specializing in parenting skills, family dynamics, and anger management, among other issues, Darrell will see clients in the Crown Point office.

Also joining the therapy staff is Marriage and Family Therapist **Jean Trammel**. A resident of Rensselaer, Jean will see clients in the Crown Point office for depression, anxiety, OCD, trauma and all aspects of relational issues.

With a Master’s Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy, Jean teaches courses at Purdue Calumet and she has been published in the American Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy.

Congratulations to Administrative Support Staff member **Shannon Heim** and her husband **Dan** on the birth of a son, **Brian Patrick**.

Best wishes to Child Psychologist **Angie Valente** on her recent nuptials. Angie wed **Corey Thompson** in November. And kudos to **June Messana**, L.S.W., who also was married last year to **Rusty Bruns**.

“I’ve learned to accept what happened to me and deal with my problems in a healthy way...”
- a former New Leaf Resources client

Church Resources

As a community resource, New Leaf offers educational services, prevention programs, training and support to area churches:

- Guest speakers or training for Elders, Deacons, Stephen Ministry, etc.
- Bi-weekly Pastor’s Support Group.
- Phone consultation for pastors dealing with a difficult situation.

For more information, call Terry at (708) 895-7310.

Save a tree

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Save the Date!

Annual Celebration Banquet
Thursday, May 5, 2011
The Center for Visual & Performing Arts, in Munster, Indiana

Featuring
the comedy & testimony of
Jeff Allen

**Enjoy dinner,
fellowship & fun!**
RSVP by April 26 -
(708) 895-7310 or

banquet@newleafresources.org or
www.newleafresources.org

Interested in hosting a table? Sponsorships?
Please call Terri for more information.

New Leaf Resources is...

A **professional mental health agency** which provides counseling services to individuals, families, couples, children, churches, schools and businesses.

A **ministry** which brings the best possible care to those we serve, striving to reflect God's grace and love to all who seek help.

A **community resource** offering educational services, prevention programs, training, support and coaching.

