



Story/Segment Ideas

Workplace Stress-Numerous studies show that job stress is far and away the major source of stress for American adults and that it has escalated progressively over the past few decades. Increased levels of job stress as assessed by the perception of having little control but lots of demands have been demonstrated to be associated with increased rates of heart attack, hypertension and other disorders. In New York, Los Angeles and other municipalities, the relationship between job stress and heart attacks is so well acknowledged, that any police officer who suffers a coronary event on or off the job is assumed to have a work related injury and is compensated accordingly (including heart attack sustained while fishing on vacation or gambling in Las Vegas). Job stress is also costly, with an annual price tag for U.S. businesses of over \$300 billion due to increased absenteeism, employee turnover, diminished productivity, medical, legal and insurance expenses and Worker's Compensation payments. Put into perspective, that's ten times the cost of all strikes combined.

The sources, severity and consequences of job stress vary for each of us as do the solutions for these problems. An interview with Dr. Rosch and/or Dr. Kirsch will shed light on the severity and pervasiveness of the problem as well as offer some practical solutions and stress management techniques.

Economic Stress-The 2008 Stress in America survey released last October reported that 8 out of 10 Americans blamed the economy as a significant cause of their increased stress. With respect to specific symptoms, more people reported fatigue (53% compared with 51% in 2007), feelings of irritability or anger (60% compared with 50% in 2007) and difficulty sleeping (52% compared with 48% in 2007). Other complaints included lack of interest or motivation, feeling depressed, lack of motivation, increased headaches and muscular tension. There were significant gender differences for some of these symptoms as well as an increase in unhealthy coping mechanisms with respect to diet, alcohol consumption and smoking.

A more recent Gallup poll released in March also confirmed that Americans have become increasingly stressed out due to the current economic crisis. The survey, which was conducted daily throughout 2008 of over 350,000 people is the largest, longest and most thorough evaluation of how emotional well-

being is affected by changes in the economy. An Emotional Health Index or EHI was used to weigh negatives such as depression, worry and stress against the positive feelings that were experienced the previous day. Some of the major findings were that stress escalated in the fall and winter as the crisis worsened with the ten least happy days occurring in the last quarter. The most prominent influences were on days when the Dow lost the most and high unemployment rates were reported. The EHI of states correlated with heart disease death rates, which were highest in poorer Rust Belt states like West Virginia, Kentucky and Ohio, whereas others with a lot of sunshine or open space such as Hawaii, Alaska and Wyoming enjoyed fairly good emotional health during the same period. There were few racial differences although Hispanics, the nation's fastest growing minority had the worst emotional health throughout the year. Many Hispanics work as small-business owners dependent on Hispanic customers, who have lost work in this economic crisis as contractors, construction workers, painters or day laborers as the building market collapsed. In addition there is cultural shame from not being able to send money home to even-poorer relatives in other countries as well as not being able to provide for their families. Although women tend to have higher rates of depression than men, Hispanic women have the highest rates of all. The survey also showed that those 30 to 55 years old, which are often prime earning years, are suffering most from since many are also raising families and parents feel guilty and upset about how to explain economic hardships to their children.

Combat Stress/ PTSD/ Stress in Military Families: The tragedy at Fort Hood, TX is the tip of the iceberg-Soldiers are trained to fight. Basic training is a process designed to develop skills which will keep a combatant alive and fighting long after he or she might have given up under more normal circumstances. These patterns do not go away by themselves if they have been burned into the soul by a traumatic experience. There is no basic un-training.

War affects us all. Veterans develop survival skills which keep them from participating fully in family life yet prefer to think war didn't affect them. Families develop painful patterns of denial. At AIS, we believe it is okay to be bothered by trauma. We believe it is normal to be bothered by trauma. In the past people were blocked by the ignorance of how trauma affects the survivors and their families, but today we have a choice. When we let go of denial and work on acceptance of the normal consequences of war, we become able to learn from our experiences and to change and grow in healthy way that were not open to us before. Visit with Dr. Kirsch regarding the newest and best treatments for Combat Stress and PTSD.

Stress in Schools-No time for sleep, no time for playing games, no time for going to parties. You must get that six-figure job, you have to get an "A" in this class, and you must succeed. These days, it seems like stress levels are skyrocketing in school children, teens and college students across the U.S.

Besides worrying about their careers and activities, students also have to face the fast pace of life created by modern technology. Technology has made life more stressful, with e-mail and cell phones – they never get a break from it all.

One of the most serious consequences is that while students are so busy packing resumes, they are missing out on the great stress relievers – connecting with other people, having a rich and varied social life and cultivating hobbies and interests that are truly satisfying as opposed to “resume packers”.

Add to that the stress on many families due to the recent economic crisis and there is no doubt our Youth are more stressed than ever before.

AIS can provide interesting interviews and sound bites on each of these and many other relevant stress topics. Contact us at media@stress.org to see what resources we can provide to help develop your next news story.