CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR POSITIVE CHANGE: A WORKSHOP MODEL FOR STRESS REDUCTION UTILIZING ART THERAPY

by

Gretchen Y. Hurlbut

A Master’s Research Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree Master of Arts

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Has been approved

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APPROVED:

Donald J. Iron

Accepted:

Frederick Poole
ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of stress on individuals experiencing change in the corporate environment. Through the use of descriptive research, effective interventions were identified as currently used by leaders in the field of organizational development in stress reduction workshops. The benefits of adding art therapy exercises was also researched and resulted in the creation of a one day workshop model that embodies a traditional psychoeducational stress management training format and includes three art therapy exercises specifically designed to reduce stress, enhance well-being, and develop creative problem solving abilities.

Five areas impacted by work related stress and career transition were identified and researched. These areas include: 1) employee satisfaction, 2) understanding the effects of stress on mental and physical health, 3) development of effective interventions, 4) locus of control and 5) increasing productivity through creativity.

The benefits of using art therapy in a stress management training were explored. Three art therapy exercises were selected for inclusion in the model based on the need to develop trust, remove barriers to the creative process, and identify and resolve specific problems related to stress.

Recommendations for testing the model for effectiveness are proposed for future research projects.
Acknowledgements

In gratitude to the educators who helped bridge the gap from theoretical concepts to practical application of knowledge. To Victoria Gamber for her frequent support and excellent example of spirit. To Barbara Bagan and Carolyn McDonald who helped give birth to a new generation of Art Therapists, and who diligently worked, supported and believed in my efforts. To Daniel Eckstein who believed in my ability to co-facilitate, and treated me as a peer during the process. A special vote of thanks goes to my family for their support in this process, particularly to my mother, Bernice Hurlbut, and my daughter and son-in-law, Heather and Geoff Hadfield who were ever-encouraging, and to my grandchildren who taught me never to forget to be playful in the process.
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CHAPTER 1
THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Unprecedented social, political and technological changes have occurred during this century and more profound changes lie ahead. The structure and nature of work since the industrial revolution continues to evolve as society moves further on towards a technological and information age. Increased use of technology leads to career and job transition for many people. Cost effective strategies are needed to support employers and employees through these changes which include financial instability and emotional upheaval as stress factors.

Development of the Problem

The turn-of-the century workplace depicted in Upton Sinclair’s 1906 novel “The Jungle” demonstrated that employers barely paused when a worker swooned from overwork (Shellenbarger, 1998). The non-functioning worker was just replaced. As the year 2000 nears, employers are trying with growing intensity to erase this uncaring attitude and encourage increased satisfaction, commitment and loyalty in workers. Employers believe that improving employee satisfaction will have an indirect but important effect on profit. Data are being collected to measure links between employee
satisfaction, customer satisfaction and revenue. People’s response and ability to cope with the stress of change has major implications on employee satisfaction. Consequently, there is an increased interest among corporations to identify and develop effective modalities for reducing stress and thus increase employee well-being and productivity. The preferred interventions should be brief, cost effective, and have long term benefits.

People no longer can expect the stability of a single career within a single organization that was the norm in past years. The contemporary workplace provides a less secure place for employees than in previous decades. Individuals and organizations must be prepared to cope with transitions, both externally and internally. There have been and will continue to be wide-ranging effects as the industrial society continues to evolve into the information age. Transnational corporations now control global resources, labor pools and markets, which distance the employees further from those who control their careers and security. Additionally, we are being swept up into a powerful new technological revolution that will lead to greater social transformation (Holmes, 1997).

In a survey of 350 U.S. business executives across all major industries it was found that eighty percent of all major industries expect to go through a major change within the next few years. Economic globalization, worldwide competition, technological revolutions, new products and techniques, value shifts among managers, workers and consumers and other trends are creating a global economy that is both highly productive and incredibly unstable. In 1982, Peters and Waterman cited 43 companies that were examples of excellence, meaning financially successful. Five years later, according to Richard Pascale in his book ‘In Search of Excellence,’ reported that about
28 of the 43 companies were in moderate to serious trouble, while only 14 were still measurably superior to their competitors (Anderson, 1998, p. 36). Corporate downsizing eliminates jobs. Although some new jobs are being created, they are typically in the low-paying sectors including temporary or part-time jobs. Companies are also eliminating middle management positions. Better jobs are being created for a fortunate few at the top levels of management, but men and women in middle-management jobs are lost through corporate reengineering and the introduction of the new technologies (Holmes, 1997).

Helping organizations change and helping individuals within organizations cope with these radical changes has become an important consideration in big business. Companies are turning to leaders in the field of Organizational Development such as Stephen R. Covey, Center for Creative Leadership and others for guidance through these processes.

The effects of personal change in the work environment can be stressful or problematic. Job loss can cause emotional and physical stress, feelings of grief and loss, feelings of isolation, decreased sense of self esteem, inability to cope, and an inability to make effective decisions. These factors contribute to a greater risk of physical and psychological illness such as high blood pressure, strokes, cancer and reduced resistance to infection which costs corporations in terms of reduced productivity and increased absenteeism and insurance claims.

The Need for the Study

There is a need for an efficient and effective method for reducing stress and increasing well-being among employees enduring change in the corporate environment.
Such a method could be in the form of a one day workshop designed to assist participants as they learn to understand the negative effects of stress and identify effective strategies for coping, identify areas that are within their power to control and identify positive outcomes, develop an increased ability to make creative and effective decisions under pressure and thus enhance the participants overall sense of well-being throughout the process of change.

According to McNiff (1998), reducing stress increases creativity. The development and implementation of a workshop to reduce stress and increase positive outcomes may support this concept. It may also support the concept that anything that increases creativity reduces stress. It is this researchers belief that introducing art therapy into traditional stress management training may enhance the effectiveness of traditional interventions as well as foster cognitive reappraisal, facilitate relaxation, and may even help participants formulate resolutions to specific problems.

**Purpose of the Study**

It is the purpose of this study to create a workshop model that includes empirically sound stress management methods and introduces art therapy as a means for reducing stress and increasing well-being and enhancing creative problem solving. The model for this workshop is psychoeducational in design utilizing empirically supported stress management training techniques with the addition of three experiential art therapy processes that are designed as a primary method to help the participants discover new ways of coping with change and learn new creative problem resolution techniques.
**Research Question**

What is the design of a stress management workshop that is based on a traditional psychoeducational approach combined with art therapy?

**Definition of Terms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>Talking together in which a stream of meaning flows between participants out of which a new understanding will emerge (Vogele-Welch, 1998).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploratory Therapy</td>
<td>A psycho-dynamic/interpersonal therapy that focuses on the therapist-client relationship as a vehicle for exploring and resolving interpersonal difficulties (Reynolds &amp; Taylor, 1993).</td>
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<td>External Locus of Control</td>
<td>Placing the focus or control of a situation on outside stimuli or factors (Bolt, 1990).</td>
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<td>Gestalt Problem Resolution</td>
<td>A process where the participant creates four simultaneous drawings, each based upon different views of the same problem, the fourth drawing culminating the sum of the whole process into a possible solution (Lincoln, 1993).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intermodal Transfer</td>
<td>The process of transferring meaning from one object or piece of art to another piece of art made through a different process (Bagan, 1998).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Locus of Control</td>
<td>Focusing on an internal stimulus or perception (Bolt, 1990).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>A term (or in Art Therapy an image) applied to one thing which is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance. Gk: To transfer (Barnhart &amp; Stein, 1967).</td>
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Moving Mosaic  Each participant places an object of significance in a designated space. The participants then work together non-verbally, moving the objects one at a time until they find a significant relationship to each other and all participants are satisfied with the end result (McDonald, 1998).

Peak Experience  An experience of fullness focused in the here and now, full of awareness and joy, creativity, authenticity, flexibility and openness (Manheim, 1998).

Prescriptive Therapy  Multimodal behavioral and cognitive treatments incorporating training in the management of specific symptoms such as relaxation and anxiety reduction, cognitive restructuring, assertiveness training and time management techniques, (Reynolds & Taylor, 1993).

Psychoeducational  A short lecturette or didactic process designed to teach others (Barnhart & Stein, 1967).

Synergy  The combined or cooperative action of two or more stimuli (Barnhart & Stein, 1967).

Winnecott Scribble Drawing  A drawing done by the participant often created by putting the drawing tool in the non-dominant hand and creating a scribble on paper while the participant’s eye’s are closed (Rubin, 1987).
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This study explores the empirical literature currently available on the prevention and management of work related stress and explores modern trends in the development of stress management strategies; in particular the addition of art therapy as an effective modality. A review of the literature begins with an expansion of discussion of the problem and its implications, followed by a review of five areas impacted: 1) employee satisfaction, 2) effects of stress on mental and physical health, 3) development of effective interventions, 4) locus of control and 5) increasing productivity through creativity. The literature review expands on the reasoning for and benefits of incorporating art therapy in stress management interventions and concludes by describing an effective model for developing stress management trainings, upon which the proposed model is based.

Background

As society continues to move forward into the technological and information age, corporate employers are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of employees’ efforts and satisfaction and their effect on the corporation’s ability to increase revenue.
The need for employers to assess the worker’s state of mind has lead to the formation of a committee by the Financial Accounting Standards Board and other organizations such as The American Leadership Foundation which are designed to help understand how to utilize their employees skills more efficiently, deepen their understanding, and create a greater commitment and contribution which consequently improves financial returns (Shellenbarger, 1998 and Vogele-Welch, 1998).

Over time, organizations develop their own beliefs and values which can either cultivate healthy process or weaken the company’s potential (Vogele-Welch, 1998). For example, employees at Northern Telecom (Nortel) said they wanted a better understanding of customer needs, clearer leadership, and more streamlined work processes. As Nortel addressed these employee concerns they saw customer satisfaction rise, concluding that “improving employee satisfaction will satisfy customers better and, in turn, improve financial results” (Shellenbarger, 1998). Vogele-Welch (1998) interviewed five top companies in the United States including TDI Industries, Techsonic Industries, Family Advocacy Services, Tampa Florida Aquarium and Hewlett Packard, finding that all leaders interviewed had developed a disciplined approach to reflection, invested time and resources to develop their organizational culture, and had developed a high level of trust and respect among team members, which ultimately produced improved services for the clients.

Factors that effect whether there is a perceived need for individual and group support are complex and include: the intensity of need for additional support, available support systems, whether the change was planned or unplanned, voluntary or involuntary, economic factors, the ability to cope with stress, and the reason for change. Other factors
include current employment, the length of time of transition, and the point in the transition process (Holmes, 1997).

**Company Mergers, Cutbacks and Downsizing**

People no longer expect the stability of a career with one organization to be the norm that it was in past decades. Individuals must be prepared to cope with transitions in the modern workplace (Holmes, 1997).

“Arthur D. Little Inc. surveyed 350 U.S. business executives across all major industries finding that… eighty percent of all major industries expect to go through a major change within the next few years” (Anderson, 1998, p. 36).

Globalization, worldwide competition and technological revolutions are creating a global economy that is both highly productive and incredibly unstable. In 1982, Peters and Waterman cited 43 companies that were examples of ‘excellent’ or financial successful. Five years later about 28 were in moderate to serious trouble, and only 14 were still measurably superior to their competitors (Anderson, 1998).

Corporations are eliminating 2 million jobs annually. Companies are eliminating more middle management jobs. Better jobs are being created for a fortunate few at the top levels of management, but there is also a loss of jobs for men and women in middle-management due to the introduction of new technologies. Although some new jobs are being created, they tend to be in the low-paying sectors, and some are temporary jobs or part-time (Holmes, 1997).

Helping organizations to change, and helping individuals within organizations cope with these aforementioned changes has become big business (Anderson, 1998).
Change is everywhere and it is important for individuals to learn to adapt and cope (Holmes, 1997).

Modern management would not have evolved as it has without the theories and practices borrowed from psychology (Anderson, 1998). Techniques and theories from the practice of psychotherapy contribute to a more holistic approach to career counseling, recognizing the interactive nature of all aspects of an individual’s life. Clients are sometimes unaware about how work can impact all other areas of life. Career exploration and decision-making involve change, which occurs through a complex psychological process and can affect all aspects of a person’s life (Holmes, 1997).

"The purpose and methods of career counseling are therapeutic ways of engendering mental health” (Holmes, 1997, p. 33). Educating people to identify their purpose and thereby create meaningful work, can be an effective stress prevention strategy. Teaching the client new behaviors and ways to deal with old beliefs while moving forward towards a desired goal is an important aspect of reeducating clients. Additional contributions from the field of psychology address verbal and non-verbal communication, the development of the client-counselor relationship, and understanding the concept of client resistance (Holmes, 1997).

**Employee Morale/Performance During Career and Corporate Transitions**

According to Holmes (1997), people have been shifting their attitudes about work, defining success in more personal terms. Employees are becoming dissatisfied with authoritarian, impersonal work environments, and they want to derive more satisfaction from their jobs. Some employees view job change as an act of personal
liberation and occupational opportunity. For those whom change is voluntary, career
transition can be empowering and exciting, offering new opportunities to enhance
personal and professional growth. Those who pursue voluntary changes are willing to
take risks to achieve rewards. These individuals seek change because of changes in
societal functioning, and an increased focus on individual growth, potential, status and
success. The more common outcomes of voluntary changes include personal growth,
increased satisfaction, innovation, enhanced overall well-being, and greater economic
returns. These individuals appear to have higher levels of self-esteem and value personal
fulfillment and intrinsic job satisfaction. Often, these changes are related to physical and
mental health as well as to a decline in stress symptoms (Holmes, 1997).

There is an increased expectation that work should be meaningful and that
change and transitions are becoming more accepted as a normal part of life. Under
normal conditions change can be difficult, but when it is unexpected there can be a
difficult, or even overwhelming transition (Holmes, 1997). When companies downsize
responsibilities shift to remaining employees which can result in frustration, irritability,
fatigue and finally burnout. Prolonged anxiety over who is leaving next depletes the
energy, creativity and productivity of the remaining employees (Whigham-Desir, 1993).
Because the extent and rate of change is increasing, new solutions are needed to help
individuals cope. These solutions can include self-assessment tools, increased knowledge
of employment trends and the basics of career development (Holmes, 1997), as well as
increased awareness, new paradigms of thought and new perspectives (Vogele-Welch,
1998).
Environmental issues such as management and supervisory styles can create negative working situations which can lead to involuntary change. Involuntary changes can also be tumultuous or distressful. Preoccupation with problems, low self-esteem, deficient interpersonal skills, an inability to tolerate constructive supervisory relationships, as well as limited opportunities within the work setting for advancement, lack of opportunity to achieve the level of reward, or mismatch between the individuals abilities, skills and personality style and the environmental expectation can all be contributing factors (Holmes, 1997).

The negative effects of job change are reported to be the emotional upheaval, anxiety, and disorientation that change brings, and feelings of isolation and abandonment. It can also disturb family and social relationships, and community networks such as connections with churches and civic organizations. Also involved are the economic, time, and energy costs of relocation. (Holmes, 1997, p. 6)

Involuntary job loss can be more stressful or problematic causing emotional discomfort, physical stress, feelings of grief and loss, increased isolation or irritability, recognition of unclear goals, and often some kind of financial problems. Transition, whether self-chosen or involuntary, involves some form of loss, a process resembling grief or mourning. Positive outcomes can include clarification of goals and needs, increased communication about needs, increased reflection and values clarification which can lead to greater realism, and commitment to meaningful work (Holmes, 1997).

Strategies are needed to help displaced employees deal with their anger and frustration. When people are in a helpless reactive mode, they can be encouraged to make a shift from helpless reaction to active participation, which can lead to greater insight into creating a new future (Vogele-Welch, 1998).
Life event changes are known to precede the onset of mental and physical illness, and can have negative effects to family and community (Holmes, 1997). It is important to recognize how job-related stresses can foster anger and anxiety at work, and understand that these feelings can affect job performance (Whigham-Desir, 1993). Stress is known to be a major contributor to many of the medical conditions confronted by health care professionals (Benson, 1997). Mental health issues may include boredom, decreased self-esteem, guilt, shame, anxiety, fear, anger, depression, and loss of a sense of identity (Holmes, 1997). Workplace depression is common, and can produce a general lack of enthusiasm, low productivity and contribute to high absenteeism (Whigham-Desir, 1993). U.S. industry loses approximately 550 million working days due to absenteeism of which 54% of these absences are reported to be stress-related (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994). Corporations are experiencing an increased loss in workers’ compensation costs each year which can be traced to stress related illnesses. Reports indicate the loss is in the billions of dollars annually (Lochner, 1995). In the event of layoffs, the remaining employees often distrust the company, and subsequently become more cautious. Innovation and creativity are often stifled as a result (Whigham-Desir, 1993).

**Social and Cultural Considerations**

Social and cultural issues must be considered relevant to how stress is experienced because there are a vast number of cultures represented in the corporate infrastructure. According to Campanelli (1996), we are a product of both our personal
history and our cultural background, which includes race, ethnicity and social class. These factors affect how we define problems and solutions.

According to Whigham-Desir (1993), “The blanket of racism is more covert and subtle today, which makes it harder to identify strategies to combat it” (p. 78). African-Americans, for example, are affected by corporate downsizing disproportionately because they believe they’ll be the first to be laid off. Stress increases when individuals jump to the conclusion that race is the deciding factor in retaining an employee. According to Whigham-Desir, (1993), it is difficult for African-American executives to find high-level positions once they’ve been laid-off.

In addition to understanding how individuals from different ethnic cultures perceive change, it is important to understand that there are considerable differences in how ethnic groups express their creativity. Facilitators of art therapy groups need to be able to distinguish between what is cultural and what is abnormal. What may appear abnormal in the larger society may be normal within the culture, and what is considered normal in one culture or country may not be representative of another. There are also cultural differences in the expression of style and form in art. Therefore, it is necessary that facilitators and art therapists examine ethno-cultural diversity and learn how cultural differences apply to the practice of art therapy, and be willing to develop culturally sensitive interventions (Campanelli, 1996).

**Group Processing**

Group work is an effective means of enhancing mental health, and has been applied to career services for more than three decades. Groups conserve time and
resources, and as a result, are more cost efficient. Working within a group also provides opportunities for catharsis, self-understanding, and interpersonal skills. New behaviors are learned in group situations, and peer support provides appropriate feedback and support. Consequently, one of the best ways to modify behavior is in a group context (Holmes, 1997).

Short term dynamic approaches are needed to facilitate effective transition in single session groups (Filip, 1994). Groups provide responsiveness to issues in career counseling that address mental health benefits and treatment efficacy (Holmes, 1997). Although every group process goes through a stage of conflict to a state of change and resolution (McNiff, 1998), groups facilitate change that is major in scope, discontinuous with the past and typically irreversible, requiring a new way of thinking and behaving (Anderson, 1998). Those going through a job or career transition sometimes isolate themselves, and it can be critically important for those in transition to be able to discuss their thoughts and feelings with others. The process of sharing within a group can help validate the person's experience and increase his or her social support system (Holmes, 1997).

Positive outcomes of the group process may include clarification of goals and needs, improved communication and understanding, values clarification, greater realism, increased commitment, and a more relaxed attitude (Holmes, 1997), as well as create a shift in perspective which can bring new awareness to the participants (Vogele-Welch, 1998).
Benefits of Employee Satisfaction

As noted above, Shellenbaerger (1998) reports that as employee satisfaction improves, customer satisfaction improves, which in turn can lead to greater financial results. Assessing the current needs of employees, clarifying roles and creating streamlined work processes and reducing stress overall can lead to increased well-being and enhance productivity in employees.

The cultivation of emotional well-being is essential in reducing stress. Our identity is linked to our employment, as is our self image and self-esteem (Whigham-Desir, 1993). Work is also a primary source of material, social and psychological security within the worker’s family unit. Work determines how individuals spend their time, create social networks, and define their socioeconomic status. The American society places a high value on our roles as workers. Long-term unemployment affects the individual worker as they begin to question their purpose in life, and affects the worker’s entire family system (Schliebner and Peregoy, 1994). When faced with layoffs, employees are faced with feelings of inadequacy and failure (Whigham-Desir, 1993). Individuals can take measures to counteract the negative impact of stress such as focusing on networking and professional development which makes the employee more valuable to the company. Those who take such measures are more adaptable to change. These individuals make their emotional, physical and psychological well-being top priority and are able to develop a greater sense of control and feeling of security (Whigham-Desir, 1993).
Effects of Stress on Physical and Mental Health

Stress has become a universal explanation for a variety of mental and physical problems (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994). Stress is the body’s response to increased demands, change or perceived threat (Lochner, 1995). Stress can be defined as the perception of danger and typically requires a change in behavior (Benson, 1997). Benson (1997) reports that stress contributes to many of the medical conditions presented to health care practitioners, and results in between 60-90 percent of visits to doctors (Benson, 1997). Many diseases can result from repeated exposure to stress. Symptoms of stress can include an increased heart rate, high blood pressure, increased blood flow to the muscles, as well as an increase in the release of adrenalin into the blood stream (Benson, 1997). Research has shown that excessive stress can also lead to strokes, cancer, high blood pressure, resistance to infections and asthma. It also effects mental, physical and emotional processes (Lochner, 1995). Additionally, people may become frozen with anxiety, obsess on smaller problems ignoring the important ones, perceptions can become distorted, and wrong decisions can be made (Colvin, 1998). When a situation is perceived as threatening, the person either prepares to confront it or escape (Lochner, 1995). This results in the fight-or-flight response (Benson, 1997). Schliebner and Perego (1994) cite research at Johns Hopkins University that concluded “when unemployment rose 1%, suicides increased 4.1%; homicides rose 5.7%; deaths from heart disease, liver cirrhosis and stress related disorders increased by 1.9%; and 4.3% more men and 2.3% more women were admitted to mental hospitals” (p. 368).

Lack of open communication and lack of control over one’s circumstances are contributors to increased stress (Lochner, 1995). Workplace depression is widespread in
today’s corporate environment and may result in high absenteeism, low productivity, and a general lack of enthusiasm (Whigham-Desir, 1993). Businesses experience the negative effects of stress in increased insurance claims or premiums as well (Lochner, 1995).

It is important to note that stress also has some positive effects. Seyle, the father of modern stress theory, believed that a moderate amount of stress leads people to do their best (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994). According to Colvin (1998), difficult times can work in our favor. People can feel threatened, and this can provide opportunities to explore innovative alternatives that may not have been considered previously. People may consider taking carefully thought out risks during times of uncertainty (Colvin, 1998). Stressful times provide an opportunity to emphasize the positive aspects of one’s situation (Whigham-Desir, 1993). Significant unresolved stressors, though, disturb “body equilibrium” which can lead to the fight or flight response, resistance or exhaustion (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994).

**Effective Interventions**

Cognitive restructuring teaches people to change the belief systems and thought patterns that lead to stress. This helps the individual understand how their perceptions affect their reactions (Lochner, 1995). Waggenaar (1994) reports that in 1975, Selye observed that it is difficult to define the stress phenomenon. Stress can refer to stimulus conditions for some, for others it refers to response conditions, and still for others, it refers to the interaction between genetic predispositions and acquired experiences. Psychological interpretation, or how a person assailed with stressors perceives his or her
situation can determine their response. In one’s first appraisal of a situation the situation can be perceived as either harmful or threatening, or perceived as a constructive challenge, and upon second appraisal one assesses one’s available coping mechanisms and resources. Stress results when the perceived threat seems greater than the ability to cope (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994). Effective adaptation requires an accurate perception of reality, or, as Freud taught, a realistic self-appraisal (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994).

Although cognitive interventions dominated therapy for several years, these treatment techniques did not prove empirically beneficial. According to Gurnani (1990), it has been the behavioral interventions that have been the most potent effectors of clinical improvement.

Benson (1997) identified the relaxation response as one of the key mechanisms for helping reduce stress. The relaxation response is a proven intervention. It is measurable, predictable and can be replicated (Benson, 1997). Simply watching television or engaging in other passive activities is not as effective (Lochner, 1995). The relaxation response can be produced through the repetition of a word or phrase, a sound, a prayer, or a muscular activity. It is necessary to eliminate intruding external thoughts while doing the exercise (Benson, 1997). The relaxation response lowers heart rate, metabolism, blood pressure, slows brain waves and induces feelings of peace and tranquility (Perlmutter; 1991). It can also slow the progression of heart disease and help control levels of glucose and insulin (Lochner, 1995). It therefore can bring relief from anxiety while creating the potential for improved concentration, increased energy and greater self-acceptance (Perlmutter, 1991).
Progressive relaxation, a technique that contracts and releases each of the muscle groups, is another method of relaxation that affords the same benefits as the relaxation response (Lochner, 1995).

Deep breathing can reduce the effects of anxiety, irritability, depression and fatigue (Lochner, 1995). Deep breathing combined with creative visualization techniques is also an effective antidote to stress (Whigham-Desir, 1993).

Meditation is widely practiced and is effective in the reduction of stress. Concentration on a given word or phrase can alter brain wave frequency, enhance mental focus, improve brain functioning, and positively affect memory and concentration (Lochner, 1995). Mini-meditations or mindfulness meditations are defined as moment-to-moment awareness. In other words, it’s the ability to live in each moment and enjoy it, being more balanced in the face of stress (Perlmutter, 1991). The Three Minute Meditator, as described by New Harbinger Publications in 1990, can be very effective. It involves taking time to look and listen, musing on the mundane, or focusing on a feeling (Perlmutter, 1991). Perlmutter (1991) suggests it might be as simple as observing a small bird that has landed on the windowsill, or becoming aware of your sense of balance as you walk.

Vogele-Welch (1998) recommends the use of reflection as a form of soul searching that can lead to increased awareness, new paradigms and new perspectives which can lead to more effective action. Reflection is described by Vogele-Welch (1998) as an increased awareness of thoughts and feelings which can lead to greater insight, as well as a deeper connection to inner and outer experience, and may lead to a greater congruence between intention and outcome. Reflection, unlike meditation, can be done
through a process of meaningful dialogue with oneself such as looking back over circumstances, or in a meaningful dialogue among others involved in the process.

Relaxation techniques are the only empirically documented anti-stress procedure, and it is understood by researchers that this technique will not resolve difficult problems, cure physiological disorders or assist in the development of improved interpersonal skills (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994). Wagenaar and LaForge (1994) state that “relaxation is no substitute for sane living practices: good nutrition, exercise, and basic satisfaction with life are infinitely more important for general health” (p. 24).

Aerobic exercise is a well-known stress reducer. Releasing muscle tension through regular exercise leads to improved alertness, energy and concentration (Lochner, 1995). Regular exercise produces endorphins, or natural opiates, that reduce stress (Whigham-Desir, 1993).

According to the World Health Organization, one of the best models for coping with stress comes from the military, where the effects of stress can have serious results. They report that soldiers fare better because they have a sense of control, strong group cohesion, trust in their commanders, are highly motivated, well prepared, well trained and have good support (Colvin, 1998).

According to Lochner (1995), employees cope better when they experience open communication with their employers and have more advance notice of changes or layoffs. Maintaining outside professional and social affiliations also help provide continuity and reassurance (Whigham-Desir, 1993).

Open communication within the group context is important as well. Counselors learn more from their clients’ successful handling of stressful situations and problems
than when the client is succumbing to them (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994). A constructional approach focuses on identifying specific client strengths relevant to helping the client achieve the targeted goal. The challenge is to learn to cope successfully rather than suffer insightfully to a successful therapeutic outcome. “It is the outcome and not the cause that is the raison d’etre (reason for being) of the therapist” (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994, p. 28).

**Internal vs. External Focus**

One of the worst sources of stress comes from an internal source: our own minds. Thoughts can seem to leap from one subject to the next and it can be easy to get trapped by them. People often get anxious about past events and what might have been done in that event, or worry about future events that may not even occur (Perlmutter, 1991). Individuals experiencing stress often spend their time and energy worrying about what they need to do and do better and faster (Whigham-Desir, 1993).

Individuals who focus on an external locus of control focus on external causes of change, and typically experience more significant doubts about their ability to succeed and options available to them (Holmes, 1997). According to Covey (1990), “Anytime we think the problem is ‘out there,’ that thought is the problem. We empower what’s out there to control us” (p. 89). This is referred to as victimization, which can lead to passive withdrawal and a sense of helplessness (Wagennart and LaForge, 1994).

Performance under stress can provide a true measure of a business person’s character and ability. According to modern psychological studies, people are generally more ready to blame others for a problem than attempt to resolve it, although people who
accept responsibility for the situation rather than blaming others seem to do better overall (Colvin, 1998). Individuals who focus on internal changes or take personal responsibility for their situation are better able to see the benefit of job transitions (Holmes, 1997).

Employees who are engaged in the scheduling and directing of their own work flow have a greater sense of control over their environment. Employee feedback is successful in determining which tasks are unnecessary. It is also helpful in increasing productivity. Employee participation in and commitment to the company’s mission can decrease stress (Lochner, 1995), and increase productivity. Employees can learn to rely more on themselves rather than their company for security (Whigham-Desir, 1993).

Just as we define our identity through our work we also define who we are through artistic expression. Artistic expression is a way of learning from the inside out rather than from the outside in (Fowler, 1994). The ability to think independently is essential to the creative process. Those involved in the creative process must apply their own standards to their own work, have the ability to self-correct and be self-critical. This process calls for individuals to stretch their inner resources in order to attain their own level of perfection. It also teaches self-discipline as well as how to handle frustration and failure, which are attributes that are essential to a competent workforce (Fowler, 1994), supporting the concept that the more control or mastery an individual feels over their circumstances the less stress they will experience (Lochner, 1995).
Increasing Productivity through Creativity

We have evolved into a society that values productivity (Marken, 1992). When looking at productivity quantitatively, employers are likely to say they want 50 products assembled and quality checked by the end of each day. Creativity is different. Creative solutions come when you least expect them. If employers want creativity to work hand in hand with productivity, it must be protected from harsh measurement until it has had a chance to evolve. New ideas come when they have had an opportunity to gestate and mature (Marken, 1992).

As stated above, individuals consider taking risks during times of uncertainty (Colvin, 1998). Management looks for creative efforts, but they want safe creative efforts and look for solutions that involve the least amount of risk (Marken, 1992). Creativity allows individuals to gather information, condense it, manipulate and reassemble it, until one idea becomes another. When teams are allowed to generate their own creative solutions they tend to work harder and longer (Marken, 1992).

When individuals are participating in the process of creative problem solving, they become partners in the process. Individuals are asked to come up with different solutions. This requires divergent rather than convergent thinking, which is a way of thinking that is taught through the process of art. Art explores the emotional, intuitive and irrational aspects of life that cannot be explained through science. An effective workforce requires both kinds of reasoning, and divergent thinking is more often required when there is a need for real world problem solving (Fowler, 1994).
Art Therapy as an Effective Modality in Stress Management

Albert Einstein once said, “The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them” (Covey, 1990, p. 42). Therefore, a new, deeper level of thinking is necessary to resolve these deep concerns (Covey, 1990). Art therapy provides an alternative to verbal expression. Participants are exposed to visual imagery they have created which can evoke thoughts and feelings the participants were unable to verbalize. These feelings and thoughts are processed internally (Filip, 1994). Creating art encourages introspection and provides an opportunity to participate in decision making that is based on various emotional and cognitive processes. Projection and subjective experience play a central role in the creation of art, and the processing of the content of the art piece and the act of creation is central to the discovery of these unconscious emotional and cognitive processes (Franklin, 1992).

Art therapy reaches participants through the artistic expression of internal processes and fulfills the need for self expression that has been minimized in an increasingly mechanized society. Art therapy serves as a vehicle for awakening dormant creativity, contributing to the restoring of cognitive, emotional and creative vacuums that have arisen in the impersonal, technological, stress-driven and unsafe world (Snyder, 1997).

Franklin (1992) states, “Art is an assertive self-directed act” (p. 79). Art therapy is a doing form of therapy. It activates creative potential and serves to concretize the internal self. The art making process offers therapeutic opportunities for healthy self-involvement (Franklin, 1992). Science is the explanation of reality and art is the
representation of that same reality. When used well, the arts help cement all the disparate areas together. Fowler (1994), advocates that the arts are an important contributor to the development of well-being. He states that science and technology do not enhance well-being; the arts do.

Because society tends to separate the place of work from the pursuit of personal creation there is opportunity to reverse this concept and provide a new opportunity to incorporate creativity into our daily work lives (McNiff, 1998). When economic necessity is not a factor, it is possible to see that work provides a means for being inspired and influenced by others. This, in turn, can lead to opportunities for individuals working together to become part of a collective and creative purpose, which can help create an environment of vitality (McNiff, 1998). According to Vogele-Welch, Hans Seyle defines vitality as being full of life and having the capacity to renew and endure when challenged (1998).

There are many similarities between the art making process and the process of life (Franklin, 1992). In all things there is first a mental creation, and second a physical creation (Covey, 1990). To work with art materials is to transform them physically and symbolically. Art may be considered a simultaneous process of reformulating the self through the active formation of an external object (Franklin, 1992). The value of art therapy may be seen in its ability to aid in exposing the essence of a participant’s core issue in a visible image, making it possible for the participant to confront the image and transform potentially destructive energy into constructive compositions (Syder, 1997).

In creative arts therapy we ... encourage the poetic process of making metaphoric connections between the physical features of artworks and personal experiences. When we make analogies between artistic expressions and our lives, the images help us see patterns and themes. They give us a physical structure or template to
hold over our lives. The visual configuration offers a basis for comparison. (McNiff, 1998, p. 102)

Artistic creativity produces a synthesized solution between the rational and the irrational, and serves as a prototype which regulates, integrates, and differentiates the external and internal worlds. Artistic processes allow the creator to transcend an unsatisfactory reality versus simply passively adapting. The creative mind integrates with the normal logical process allowing a new outcome to emerge (Manheim, 1998). Art is a fundamental way to represent reality, to make sense of the world, and assists in improving life management and provides an opportunity to share perceptions of reality. This process affirms, connects and increases awareness of all forms of knowing (Fowler, 1994).

Unresolved issues can surface during the creating of art, offering participants a tangible means to address those issues. Active participation in the balancing of tensions that typically surface during the process of creation can lead to self transformation (Franklin, 1992). Instead of trying to remove the tensions from life, McNiff (1998) suggests doing something more creative with them. Creative transformation of stress allows a person to step out of the victim role and into a more proactive empowered role.

McNiff (1998) defines ‘art alchemies’ as “taking the situations and feelings that were disturbing ... and turning them into gold” (p. 127), and identifies art as an “alchemical process that feeds on emotional energy” (McNiff, 1998, p. 144). McNiff uses the term “creative alchemization” (p. 70) stating that he looks for the greatest weaknesses either in his own life, in another person’s life, or in the culture of an organization, with the understanding that these weak areas are most receptive to creative alchemization or change.
Art therapy can provide a safe place where an old paradigm can be confronted and a new paradigm rehearsed. Participating in this process of change gives individuals a sense of accomplishment that can be affirmed by others in a group or by the art therapist. Self-empowerment is enhanced as the participant masters the materials he or she works with, transforming the art into a metaphor of his or her own issues and resolutions (Franklin, 1992).

Creating art is hard work that takes courage. The creation of art is parallel to creation in our personal lives. Through art we are offered a variety of processes that are synonymous with basic life struggles and challenges. The participant must have a measure of self-esteem in order to effectively participate in the art process (Franklin, 1992). McNiff (1998) describes self-confidence or self-esteem as a “commitment to ‘the process’ and its ability to generate worthwhile results” (p. 31).

The creative process need not be explored as a product of illness, but as significant in representing the highest degree of emotional health. Creative individuals can be divided into two categories: the extraordinary and the ordinary, the ordinary representing everyday creativity. Creativity is a basic attribute in all people. It is an ability that enhances all other creative domains (Manheim, 1998). The process of creating is as natural as breathing and walking. People hunger for opportunities to express themselves creatively. “We live within the process of creation just as much as it exists within us” (McNiff, 1998, p. 2). The arts provide a forum in which society can express fears, anxieties, struggles and hope (Fowler, 1994). The creation of art requires the ability to relax during periods of uncertainty and trust in a creative intelligence. Results are achieved by making connections between previously unrelated areas, and
often requires giving up ‘ego’ control. McNiff quotes Nietzsche who declared, "The artist must break things apart in order to create anew" (p. 35). The artist or creator is an agent who moves and alters materials in order to help them find a new and significant relationship to one another. Creativity is an intelligence of its own that is greater than any one individual acting alone, and requires blending structure with chance (McNiff, 1998).

Covey (1990) states that the creative process itself is uncertain because the creator cannot be certain of what is going to happen next or what the end result will be. He uses the concept of synergy in connection with the creative process, defining synergy as a process where the "whole is greater than the sum of its parts" (p. 273). The creator or artist must leave his or her comfort zone and confront new and unknown experiences. Synergism is the potential to catalyze and unify, and create new alternatives out of what was not previously evident. "The essence of synergy is valuing differences, … to build on strengths and to compensate for weaknesses" (Covey, 1990, p. 263-264).

The creation of artistic achievements is often preceded by periods of difficulty. Creativity flourishes in times of uncertainty. Consequently, challenging situations where unexpected events are presented provide an opportunity to respond instinctively in new ways (McNiff, 1998). Looking back over one’s life over an extended period of time, bad performances or painful events played pivotal roles in the shaping of our lives (McNiff, 1998). Colvin (1998) reports that according to the Center for Creative Leadership, business trouble can lead to one of the most effective developmental experiences a person can have. One characteristic of successful people is the ability to accept limitations followed by an effort to redirect oneself (Colvin, 1998). What may be perceived as a
mistake because it did not fit our current frame of reference can be looked at from
different vantage points once judgement is relaxed. Often, what may have appeared to
have been a mistake turns out to be a major achievement (McNiff, 1998).

Repetition in artwork can mirror repetition at work just as it can mirror the natural
rhythms of biological and physical life. Approaching the daily routine of work as a
creative process can bring new insights. In the creation of art, simply filling space with
color in repetitive strokes can carry us to a new resolution to an old problem. Persistence
throughout the artistic process requires the creator’s ability to remain open and
responsive to what happens, and facilitates surprising resolutions and a feeling of hope
and transformation (McNiff, 1998).

People have been taught to expect certainties in learning situations with an
expectation that something concrete will be delivered by the teacher to the learner. There
is no one right way of proceeding in the process of creating art which is contrary to most
ideas about instruction. Facilitating an artistic process requires a willingness for the
participants to step into the unknown, relinquishing any preconceived plans and
expectations (McNiff, 1998).

According to Liebmann (1996), art therapy provides benefits to the group process
that other group processes cannot. These benefits include the following: 1) everyone can
join in at the same time, no matter what level of expertise, 2) art is another important
means of communication particularly when words fail, providing spacial characters that
describe many aspects of an experience simultaneously, 3) art facilitates creativity, 4) art
products are tangible and can be examined at a later time, and 4) art is fun, which can
lead to shared pleasure in a group environment.
Art therapy, used in a group context, provides an opportunity to explore and discuss the specific issues leading to stress in a non-threatening environment. Art can offer visual feedback and group members can validate each others reality, which may lead to the development of greater understanding and ability to identify possible alternatives for resolving issues that lead to stress.

**An Effective Model for Managing Stress**

Wagenaar and LaForge (1994) present a viable model for aiding counselors in the development of credible and effective stress interventions that are based on responsible clinical methodology and organizing empirical literature. This model incorporates the primary stress coping modalities of environment, cognitions, emotions, and personal belief and is presented to help facilitate systematic efforts at creating interventions that maximize efficient stress counseling. Many models have been proposed, however Wagenaar and LaForge (1994) recommend a return to basics that focus on durable literature to help counselors organize a more effective strategy.

Wagenaar and LaForge (1994) have suggested an instructional model rather than psychiatric model. They identified four basic concerns that are derived from the constructionalist approach: identifying concrete goals, assessing relevant resources, constructing cost-effective solutions and consolidating durable motivation. These four areas encourage the counselor or facilitator to address fundamental correlative issues: the purpose of the intervention, the strengths the client brings to consultation, the actual business of therapy or homework, and the clients ability to persist in pursuing the mutually agreed-upon goals (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994).
Although the counselor must carefully assess the client's situation to determine an appropriate strategy and sequencing, the goal of the intervention is to help clients become as self-resourceful as possible. Individuals do better if they believe what they do makes a difference (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994). A personal assessment of the individual problems and strengths is essential for designing a successful intervention (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994). Identification of the unique situational context of the client can be achieved through the use of storytelling. The telling of a life story can be elicited through the use of stress diagnostics such the Social Readjustment Rating Scale or another similar assessment. Wagenaar and LaForge (1994) recommend using an educational format for group purposes.

Emphasis on personal assessment of resources will encourage the use of procedures with the greatest leverage over client problems, which will achieve the most effective change at the least cost in terms of therapist/client resources, time and effort. This provides a two-fold positive motivational effect: both client and professional are more likely to experience a growing success for their intervention efforts, and third-party payors will be more likely to continue to support interventions that can be demonstrated to have successful outcomes (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994). The principle of leverage means using simpler procedures before going on to more complex ones. Wagenaar and LaForge (1994) recommend never using complex procedures when a simpler one will do. They report an inverse relationship between length of treatment and treatment effectiveness, therefore, brief processes would be most beneficial (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994).
Extensive reviews of stress coping literature lead to three interventions which prove to be most effective: (1) problem solving, (2) cognitive reappraisal, and (3) relaxation training. These three, listed in order of priority, constitute the most frequently cited and more effective treatments in literature. Both Selye and Lazarus acknowledge that strategies for resolving stressors are more effective than those that encourage simply tolerating them (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994).

Very often, simple life-style changes can produce dramatic results. Some situations, however, cannot be changed, and then it is important to consider the client’s cognitions, and may require a therapeutic design that produces a new way of thinking about problem solving (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994).

Relaxation counteracts the emotional components of the stress response, and is therefore more limiting than problem resolution techniques. Its positive effects are typically limited by the time of actual training and the ability to practice daily. A client with ulcers may learn to control his/her ulcers through relaxation, but would probably benefit far more from learning how to formulate a realistic budget, express emotions appropriately, think more productively or negotiate competing demands more effectively. Relaxation techniques may be most beneficial for those who are obviously in a state of being tense (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994).

Personal belief systems are reinforced through the course of a lifetime of experience, and some belief systems are clearly maladaptive. Basic life philosophies and personal values are deeply rooted in culture and more resistant to change. Wagenaar and LaForge (1994) recommend taking a positive approach to addressing personal beliefs and values. Victimization beliefs lead to passive withdrawal and a sense of helplessness.
Beliefs of absolute mastery can lead to disillusionment and despair. A more adaptive belief form would be “I am the co-creator of my destiny” (p. 31) which reflects more accurately total life experience and leads to more effective long-term coping with stress.

Wagenaar and LaForge (1994) recommend the following sequence of intervention: (1) If the problem is environmental and change can resolve the problem, the therapy process is concluded. (2) If not, consider mentality. If cognitive reconstruction resolves the problem, counseling is concluded. (3) If not, consider relaxation techniques. If relaxation works, therapy is concluded. (4) If not, assess the client’s basic life belief system. If this resolves the problem, therapy is concluded. If the therapist fails to achieve the desired goal with respect to one modality, cycle to the next one, and stop when the goal has been achieved. Success is achieved when significant results are gained with minimal intervention (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994).

Summary

The literature clearly identifies a need for effective strategies to assist employers and employees cope with the stress of change, and companies that have implemented strategies of various kinds have shown evidence of improved employee satisfaction and well-being which had ultimately lead to improved productivity and revenues.

Leading experts in the field of organizational development have identified five areas impacted the increased stress. These areas are: 1) employee satisfaction, 2) the effects of stress on mental and physical health, 3) development and implementation of effective coping strategies, 4) understanding of locus of control, and 5) creativity as a contributor to increasing productivity. Individuals caught in the process of change may
react in a helpless victim way. Educating employers and employees can facilitate potential for new paradigms of thought and new perspectives which may lead to personal growth, increased satisfaction, innovation, enhanced well-being, and intrinsic job satisfaction. This may cause a shift from a helpless reactive mode towards one of active participation, which may ultimately lead to greater insight into creating a new future for both the individual and the corporation.

Group work has been determined to be beneficial in conserving time and resources and thus is more cost efficient than individual counseling. The group process also provides opportunities to try out new ideas and behaviors in a safe environment with peer support and feedback. Therefore, one of the best ways to modify behavior is in a group context. Groups can create an opportunity for short term dynamic approaches which can facilitate effective transitions within a single session, encourage open communication and develop in participants a sense of control over one’s circumstances.

Returning to basics was recommended as the most efficient procedure to use in developing an intervention. This requires focusing on what has been proven empirically effective in the past. According to the literature cited within this thesis, the following have been proven the most beneficial strategies empirically proven to be effective to date: recognition of problems and their resolution, followed by cognitive reappraisal, then relaxation training. A clear assessment and understanding of the problem is essential to identifying a resolution. Cognitive reappraisal may lead to a shift in thought paradigm from helpless victim to empowered individual who is a party to the creation of a future. Relaxation training remains the most proven effective intervention, however it does not replace more long term interventions.
Research on art therapy shows that art therapy can potentially address all the above interventions simultaneously, fostering cognitive reappraisal, facilitating relaxation, and formulating resolutions to problems. The act of doing art encourages participants to focus, in a sense meditate, on the present moment, offering a sense of control or mastery over the project at hand. Art therapy in a group context provides a safe environment to try out new resolutions to existing problems and get appropriate feedback. It invites participants to become partners in the process of problem resolution and provides a tangible product at the conclusion. The process of awakening dormant creativity can challenge old paradigms and lead to the creation of new ones, which, through the process of creating something tangible, are then internalized and often irreversible.

As a result, three art therapy exercises were chosen as the primary method for reducing stress, increasing well-being and resolving problems.

The Moving Mosaic (McDonald, 1999) was selected because it is a non-threatening exercise that introduces creativity without any expectation of art ability. It also provides and environment conducive to the development of trust among group participants, as each participant places something of personal significance into the mosaic.

The Winnecott Scribble Drawing (Rubin, 1987) was selected as the second exercise. Once a basic environment of trust has been established, participants can experiment more openly, yet because this exercise in conducted with the participants instructed to use their non-dominant hand, and have their eyes closed, the expectation of a piece of “art” is diminished. The process of sharing what is discovered from this
process provides an opportunity to discuss core elements of one’s experience of the stress of change, bypassing the sentinels of conscious censorship.

The Gestalt problem resolution exercise (Lincoln, 1993) was selected for the purpose of identifying a specific problem, and finding at least one resolution to that problem. The Gestalt process helps participants stay focused in the present, concentrating on what is obvious and in the present moment. Gestalt processes also help participants assume responsibility for what is occurring in the present moment. This focused awareness assists participants in recognizing and reintegrating parts of themselves that may have been disowned, thus reunifying them (Corey, 1994). This researcher’s personal experience has demonstrated that using this process in groups and individual sessions has lead to participants’ increased awareness of and ability to identify potential resolutions to existing problems.

The process of moving participants through a series of art experiences is called intermodal transfer, or the transferring of meaning from one experience or object to another, taking the participant to a deeper level of meaning with each transfer. As the meaning of the experiences deepen, the participant may become increasingly aware of how their perceptions affect their actions, hence reducing a sense of victimization and increasing a sense of control over their circumstances. This also assists in formulating a realistic self-appraisal. All of these elements facilitate learning from the inside out, which help concretize what has been experienced and learned, creating a sense of increased mastery and perhaps a shift in perceptions.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

It was the purpose of this study to identify what elements would be included in the design of a stress management workshop that includes empirically sound psychoeducational techniques combined with art therapy exercises. This workshop model was created after examining and organizing empirical literature developed to help counselors facilitate credible and effective stress management interventions. Therapeutic integrity requires that developers and facilitators of such programs as this be simple, clear, logical and as effective as possible. Treatments recommended in this intervention are well grounded in responsible clinical literature. The proposed workshop is based on a blend of prescriptive and exploratory therapy, utilizing a blend of psychoeducational instruction of stress management techniques such as relaxation response and visualization, and introducing art therapy as a multimodal approach to increase the client’s personal insight and sense of well-being which may ease the effects of stress related problems.
**Research Design**

This study utilizes a descriptive design. Descriptive research is commonly used in adult education and training. There are no dependent and independent variables used, and the goal is to explain phenomena and identify relationships or trends that may point to a cause (Merriam and Simpson, 1995). In this study, a review of literature from leading experts in the field of organizational development, psychology and art therapy was conducted identifying 1) the current trends in the corporate world that cause increased stress for employees and employers alike, 2) identify the most effective techniques used by those experts in stress management, and 3) identify what art therapy exercises would be productive in easing stress and why these specific exercises were selected.

**Source of Data**

Data gathered for this research project are based on literature from recognized experts in the field of organizational development, psychology, and art therapy. Literature was collected from available materials from library sources such as journals and books, internet sources, and recent course work and group work completed at Ottawa University. This researcher compiled all the traditional methods of stress management, and created the first portion of the workshop which is based on what is proven empirically effective in this field, and then determined through personal experience and literature reviews, which art therapy exercises would be most effective in the reduction of stress and ability to resolve problems, and incorporated these exercises in as sequence of increased intensity into the traditional workshop format.
Procedure

Upon completion of the literature review, this researcher identified five common elements identified by all the materials upon which to focus. These five common elements are: 1) understanding the benefits of employee satisfaction, 2) understanding stress, its positive and negative effects and identifying current stressors, 3) identifying which stress reduction techniques are proven effective, 4) understanding the importance of internal vs. external locus of control and 5) understanding the benefits of art therapy in developing creativity and resolving problems, which would ideally increase productivity. Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs was selected as a template for understanding how stress and uncertainty in corporate environments can lead employees to feel a decreased sense of safety, security and well-being during change. The workshop model, as outlined in Appendix A, was then designed to address these five elements with the goal of reducing stress, increased well-being and enhancing creative problem solving ability.

Assumptions and Limitations

Maslow’s need theory will help explain how individuals perceive stress in different ways. Maslow’s hierarchy is composed of five levels, the lowest being the physiological needs, followed by safety and security, then love, then self-esteem, and finally self-actualization.

Manheim (1998) reports that the distinguishing trademark of a self-actualized person is that they have peak experiences more frequently and intensely than the average person. Their actions are typically less inhibited, more spontaneous and expressive, and less self-critical. These individuals are more centered in the here and now. They possess
“flexibility, openness, autonomy, humor, playfulness, a willingness to try things, and a realistic self assessment” (p. 101). These individuals have an ease of certainty in their demeanor. Joy comes to them in the process of striving rather than achieving. They are adaptable, flexible, artistic, creative, and authentic (Manheim, 1998).

1. Maslow found that healthy people who had sufficiently gratified a hierarchy of their basic needs, were able to then function on a higher level, and having met the highest needs, were considered to be self-actualized. Although Maslow’s theory did not originally place the needs in pyramid form, as shown in textbook form, the theory stands as generally accepted. This theory has not been empirically contradicted, and has in fact been empirically supported by research carried out over along period of time in different countries (Manheim, 1998).

2. The needs addressed in this theory have to do with the actual and perceived competence one has in dealing with their environment, and whether these needs are at the physiological level, or at any other level, all require mastery and control (Rowan, 1998).

3. Employment shifts and unemployment lead to a needs shift as described from Maslow’s model, which causes people to move from a higher level of need to a more primary level of need such as safety and security, or the ability to maintain their physiological needs which is common under conditions of under- or unemployment. Reactions often include feelings of victimization, similar to those who are victims of rape, incest, disease and crime, and suffer from shock, confusion, helplessness, anxiety, fear and depression (Holmes, 1997).
4. There is a need for increased adaptability. People will need to master the process of transition in order to regain control of their basic needs and resume their lives at the previous level (Holmes, 1997). People have to be actively involved in making the decisions that affect their working lives. If they’re not, they are unlikely to carry out those decisions effectively no matter how much ‘empowerment’ rhetoric is evident in the corporate culture. Psychologist Will Schutz of the Esalen Institute states, “The only way to empower people is to give them power” (Anderson, 1998, p. 38).

An additional assumption to be considered is that participants in workshops following this model will likely be high functioning individuals from a population of adults who will likely be above average in intelligence and possess career aspirations and goal setting skills that are above average. It should therefore not be assumed that this model would be effective with any other population.
CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this review of available literature, the following paragraphs describe what elements are likely to be most effective in the development of a workshop model that includes art therapy for the purpose of reducing stress, increasing well-being and enhancing creative problem solving ability.

Workshop Model

The workshop is designed to be approximately six hours in length and follows a format outlined in Appendix A. The model includes: 1) an introduction to the topic of stress and its positive and negative effects, 2) identification of current stressors and stress management techniques currently utilized by the group and introduction of new techniques such as the relaxation response, 3) introduction of the concept of internal and external locus of control, 4) a review of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and the impact of stress using this model as a template for increased awareness and understanding, and 5) the introduction of three therapeutic art exercises designed to increase awareness, encourage creative potential, and identify possible resolutions to at least one problem.

The workshop design attends to each of the above listed elements for approximately one hour in duration, depending upon the needs of the group. Part one
would introduce the topic of stress and assesses the participants current perception of their own stress level using the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (Holmes & Rahe, 1967), and provide an overview of the process to be experienced. Part two more clearly identifies the specific signs, causes and symptoms of stress, both positive and negative, followed by identifying the various coping methods currently utilized by participants as well as an introduction new coping strategies. These strategies may include relaxation response, meditation, visualization, and others as reviewed in Chapter 2. Part three would introduce the concept of internal and external locus of control, and instructs the participants about how individual perceptions can increase or decrease their level of stress. A review of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs would be addressed in the fourth section, which concludes the traditional stress management training part of the workshop process. The fifth portion would introduce art therapy as a modality for promoting creative problem resolution. This portion of the workshop includes three group art therapy activities: the Moving Mosaic, the Winnecott Scribble drawing, and concludes with a Gestalt problem resolution exercise. The sixth and final portion would consist of an evaluation by participants of what had been learned and experienced to aid in determining the effectiveness of this model.

Conclusions

A review of available literature from experts in the field of organizational behavior, psychology and art therapy has provided a myriad of information from which to develop effective stress management trainings. The proposed workshop model, which is comprised of techniques developed from empirically sound research with the addition of
specifically selected art therapy exercises may prove beneficial in helping employers and employees reduce stress in corporate environments where unprecedented and unexpected change is currently taking place. It was the intent of this researcher to create a model that would be cost and time effective through the use of group processes and provide support for employers and employees throughout the process of change.

Strategies developed in this workshop may help participants deal with change by providing opportunities for participants to improve employee satisfaction through improved communication, understand the health risks related to stress, develop new coping skills to help them deal with the highly competitive world of business, and learn ways to use creativity in making productive decisions. Throughout the process participants may internalize what is discovered through the workshop process, which in turn, may result in an increased sense of self-worth. An additional benefit of this workshop may also include the development of support networks that may help participants cope with the aforementioned changes. This intervention could also lead to enhanced productivity which may in turn lead to increased earning potential for corporations.

The addition of the described art therapy exercises, combined with a traditional psychoeducational approach, facilitated in a group environment should provide a safe creative environment in which to try out new ideas, allowing participants to gather information, condense it, manipulate and reassemble it, until one idea becomes another. Individuals who are allowed to generate their own creative solutions in a safe environment are often motivated to work harder and longer, which can lead to more effective and productive results.
It is the hope of this researcher that this workshop model will encourage participants' morale through the use of assessment tools and therapeutic interventions which may enhance the development of a sense of community among participants as well as increase awareness and recognition of participants' strengths.

**Recommendations**

The next step in the research process would be to test the proposed workshop model using a quasi-experimental design with two groups: a control group and an experimental group. A quasi-experimental approach would allow the researcher to match participants by characteristics, such as selecting participants who are currently working in a corporate environment and are undergoing some change in that environment. It also allows for participants to experience more than one experimental treatment (Merriam and Simpson, 1995).

A leadership manual is recommended which would provide a clear outline of the processes and information to be covered in the workshop. This manual would assist facilitators in creating consistency and help eliminate variation in their delivery for purposes of standardizing the experiment to achieve accurate results.

The outline for conducting such an experiment might be as follows:

Both the control group and experimental group of participants could attend the first half of the workshop simultaneously. Both groups would participate equally in the first half of the process which, as described above, would be devoted to presenting empirically sound traditional stress management training techniques. At the mid-point, the groups would be divided using random selection into two separate groups. Group one
would view a stress management video, and group two would participate in three
specific art therapy exercises.

The final step would be an evaluation of the workshop experience by each
participant. This researcher recommends using an assessment tool such as the Session
Evaluation Questionnaire scales and the Session Impact Questionnaire (Reynolds &
Taylor, 1993). A description of these assessment tools follows under the heading
Recommended Instrumentation.

An outline of the experimental process described above:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group I Process</th>
<th>Group II Process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration of SRRS</td>
<td>Administration of SRRS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Stress Management Training</td>
<td>Traditional Stress Management Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stress Management Video</td>
<td>Art Therapy Exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration of SEQ and SIQ</td>
<td>Administration of SEQ and SIQ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A compilation of the SEQ and SIQ scores for Group I should assist in determining
if the traditional stress management training was effective in reducing stress. A
comparison of the results as reported by Group I and Group II should assist in
determining if the addition of the three art therapy exercises enhanced the benefits of the
stress management training.

This researcher recommends the following three instruments for assessment
purposes in conducting a quasi-experimental research on this workshop model:

The Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) (Holmes & Rahe, 1967) provides a
means for participants to assess their stress level at the outset of the experiment and aids
in identifying potential problems they may wish to address. This measurement tabulates
recent events such as bereavement, personal injury, job loss or change, and other life
events using Life Change Units (LCU's), a numeric value, to predict future health risk. Note, however, that according to the research, the experience of change as stress depends on the individual's personal context. Personal daily problems may be more likely to have a pervasive effect on coping processes than one time events because they may eventually demoralize a person and induce symptomatology (Wagenaar and LaForge, 1994).

The Session Evaluation Questionnaire (SEQ) is recommended for administration after the workshop intervention because it assesses three dimensions: the session's power and value (depth), the session's comfort and safety, and the participant's post-session mood (positivity). The measure consists of 12 bipolar adjective scales from which the participants were asked to show how they felt about this session by rating it on a scale from 1 to 7. Adjective scales are used to avoid a skew in the results. The participant rates the depth scale on the following attributes: shallow-deep, worthless-valuable and empty-full scales. The smoothness index was rated on rough-smooth, difficult-easy, unpleasant-pleasant and dangerous-safe scales. The positivity scale was rated on sad-happy, angry-pleased, uncertain-definite, unfriendly-friendly and afraid-confident. The SEQ is reported to have good internal consistency for all three.

The Session Impact Questionnaire (SIQ), also recommended for administration after the workshop intervention measures client perceptions of the impact of the whole session. Eight helpful and four unhelpful impacts are described. Helpful impacts can be further classified as task impacts, those in which the participant realized something new about themselves, or interpersonal impacts, those in which the participant realized something new about someone else. The SIQ also measures awareness, problem definition and resolution, level of support, feelings of relief, involvement, whether the
participant felt involved or not, and the value of the workshop (Reynolds & Taylor, 1993). Participants would be asked to take a minute and think about how the workshop affected them and match the descriptions in each item with the impact felt from the experience. Each impact would be rated from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). According to Reynolds and Taylor (1993), Wexler and Elliott reported good internal reliability for the SIQ.

The facilitation of a trial group using this format would provide more conclusive evidence as to the effectiveness of this workshop model. After completion of this trial and evaluation of assessments, adjustments could be made to the format of the model to improve the quality and effectiveness of the model. Further trials and evaluations with different populations would continue to enhance the creation of a viable tool for the reduction of stress in the corporate environment.


Lincoln, T. (1993). *Introduction to Art Therapy*. Course material conducted at Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ.


McDonald, C. (1998, August). *Introduction to Art Therapy*. Course material conducted at Ottawa University, Phoenix, AZ.


APPENDIX
APPENDIX A

Workshop Outline for
Creative Solutions for Positive Change

• Introduction and Overview of Workshop

• ROPES (Eckstein, 1997).
  R  Responsibility
  O  Opportunity
  P  Participation
  E  Empathy
  S  Sensitivity

• Administration of the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (Appendix II)

• Psychoeducational Process
  • List things that bring joy
  • List things that are stressful
    Examine how the same things that bring joy can also bring stress
  • Discuss positive attributes of stress
  • List techniques participants currently use to reduce stress and discuss benefits of each. Be sure to include:
    Relaxation Response
    Meditation
    Visualization
    Exercise
    Massage
    Humor

• Overview of Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and discussion of why life change events such as job loss and recareering lead to increased stress in terms of this model.

Break – (Division of groups for experimental recommendation occurs at this point)
Group reconvenes

Art Therapy Exercises

- Introduction to Art Therapy
- Moving Mosaic
  The purpose is to create an integrated sense of community among members of the group and increase group cohesion and trust. Each person contributes something personal and meaningful to the process, which initiates initial trust and empathy for the person.
- Follow up with group discussion of this process

- Guided visualization and Winnecott Scribble Drawing (Rubin, 1987).
  The Winnecott Scribble Drawing creates a shift to right brain activity increasing the ability to think creatively. Unconscious Symbols may emerge that will be significant to the creator of the drawing.
- Follow up with group discussion of this process.

- Gestalt Problem Resolution Technique (Lincoln, 1992).
  Participants think of a real or imagined problem, and follow with the creation of four consecutive drawings that are designed to aid the creator to increase awareness of the problem and internalized fears related to the problem, and possible resolutions to the problem. Also aids in creating a shift from external to internal locus of control.
- Follow up with group discussion of this process.

- Completion of Evaluations