A STRESS REDUCTION MANAGEMENT MODEL
FOR HOSPITAL PATIENT REGISTRARS

by

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A Master’s Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

OTTAWA UNIVERSITY

May 1994

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Built in 1944, Phoenix Memorial Hospital (PMH) is a non-profit 209 bed facility. Its mission is to assure high quality, accessible and affordable health care to anyone who enters the facility, regardless of race, creed or color. The organization takes pride in offering a wide range of services; obstetrics, pediatrics, home health and social services, outpatient services, emergency room treatment, etc.

Employees play a vital role in the delivery of the services provided at PMH, and their health and quality of work life is important to the organization.

"Stress in the workplace is not a clear cut issue, with tried and true solutions. Its symptoms are often invisible, but the effects are unmistakeable" (Gibson, 1993, 14). A certain amount of stress is healthy and beneficial; it stimulates some to perform--makes them excited and enthusiastic. However, "when a stressful situation induces chronic anxiety or hostility, when he/she feels threatened rather than challenged, when he/she becomes obsessed--that's when measures must be taken to identify the sources of the stress and develop coping strategies" (Withers, 1989, 124).
Employees in the healthcare industry may be more prone to experience a high degree of stress and related illnesses. The reason is that the client base is one in which their clients are not medically and/or psychologically well. Individuals change in personality and temperament when sick, and the health care professional usually bears the brunt of these anxieties. This phenomenon is especially apparent in an emergency room setting. The patient is normally in some type of distress (sick, injured, frightened or anxious) and the relative or family member accompanying the patient is in distress. This person doesn’t want to give any personal information about the patient. He/She wants their loved one treated immediately—if not sooner. The patient registrar is faced with having to assuage the fears of the patient and the friend or relative—while attempting to obtain the necessary information required of all patients who present themselves for treatment.

The registrar is also dealing with his/her own life/work stressors and may or may not be able to channel these anxieties into coping mechanisms for handling stress on the job.

The researcher identifies the causes of stress in Emergency Department Patient Registrars, and presents ways of reducing it through stress management training.
Definition of Terms

* CLINICAL STAFF—doctors/nurses (healthcare professionals in general).
* TRIAGE NURSE—person who assesses the patient's medical condition to determine if he/she should be treated immediately, or wait until after the sign-in paperwork is complete.
* CLERICAL STAFF—patient registrars and unit clerks who actually work in the Emergency Room.
* STRESSORS—external demands of life or the internal thoughts that require us to adapt.

* E.D.—emergency department
* E.R.—emergency room
* AHCCCS—Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (state funded medical benefits for the needy).

Limitations

Research may be affected due to the following limitations: the employees may resign before the study is complete; due to the varying shifts, the stressors may differ and data collection may be difficult; the researcher is the supervisor in this area, so the questionnaire may not be answered honestly.

Assumptions

All patient registrars in the ED are subjected to varying degrees of stress. These stressors are reduced utilizing
various approaches to body awareness, nutrition/exercise.

Background of the Problem

PMH's Emergency Department sees an average of 75 patients per day, or 2300 patients per month. The shifts for patient registrars are 7am-5:30pm, 12noon-10:30pm, 4pm-2:30am and 9pm to 7:30am. The shifts are 10 hours in duration. There are normally two registrars per shift. However, during quieter hours, the 7am person is alone till 12 noon, and the 9pm person may be alone from 2:30am till 6:00am.

The researcher is the Emergency Room Registration Coordinator (supervises the Patient Registration staff). There are currently six (6) fulltime registrars and two (2) part-time registrars who are listed on the work schedule. All the registrars are women, with the exception of one. Most of them are married, with children. One staffer is a student. Rounding out the schedule are four (4) on call staffers who fill in when it becomes necessary. The busiest times are Thursday-Monday, 11am-12 midnight.

On a typical day, the types of problems addressed by the clinical staff in the emergency department consists of: headaches, flu, chest pain, shortness of breath, earaches and fever.

The patient registrar (located behind bulletproof glass) is responsible for greeting/acknowledging the
patient, finding out the nature of the complaint, and summoning the triage nurse for an initial assessment. The registrar must also obtain personal information from the patient, and key this information into the system as quickly and efficiently as possible. Most all other elements of the hospital utilize the personal data for various reasons (i.e., lab, x-ray, etc) so it is imperative that the information obtained be correct and accurately keyed in the system.

In the interim, the employee is dealing with stressful encounters involving the clinical staff (they want everything now), phone interruptions, directing and controlling traffic coming through the ED (there is only one entry door and it is controlled by the registrars), answering inquiries regarding the status of patients, keeping the triage nurse aware of the medical condition of each patient, and verifying insurance coverage through AHCCCS (on hold at least 15 minutes per call). The registrar must also stop whatever he/she is doing to sign in patients brought in by the Phoenix Fire Department and/or ambulance and obstetrical patients who are about to deliver. The registration process is also done on computer. When the system is inoperable, this person must be able to do everything manually and troubleshoot equipment malfunctions.

The researcher has been with this facility for 4 1/2
years and currently fills in or assists registrars when needed. She is well aware of the work requirements, and is also acutely aware of the stressors unique to the unit.

Workplace stressors involve attempting to balance multiple tasks simultaneously and coping with the emotions evoked in doing these tasks (i.e., sympathizing with the relatives of a patient recently expired in the ER, yet still trying to obtain personal data). It is also stressful to maintain professional relationships with employees who are unable or unwilling to assume responsibility.

In exit interviews given to patient registrars, it has been determined that stress is the main reason for turnover.

Statement of the Problem

The area of concern focuses on the causes of stress in the Emergency Department Patient Registrar.

Purpose of the Study

* To identify the stressors affecting patient registrars at Phoenix Memorial Hospital.
* To develop a stress reduction program unique to Patient Registrars in the E.D. of Phoenix Memorial Hospital.

Rationale

Employees who leave Patient Registration positions are offended by the abuses (sometimes verbal, sometimes
physical) cast on them by coworkers and/or patients. These same individuals have not been trained to revitalize and energize their bodies in order to fortify themselves against sensitive, confrontational situations. Other Stress Management programs have been developed for the clinical/not clerical ER staff. These programs don't examine the many highs and lows involved in an occupation where priorities change from minute to minute.

Research Questions

* How can stress reduction techniques be applied to the PMH'S Emergency Department Registration staff?
* What should individuals do outside the work environment to prepare themselves for the stresses in the work environment?

Significance of the Study

This study is of significance to the subjects involved. As a result of it, they have a better understanding of themselves. From a management's perspective, it would decrease turnover and increase efficiency. Accurate records mean prompt payment from patients, insurance companies and third party administrators. This study will also produce a better quality of work life for employees which decreases medical costs and worker's compensation claims due to stress.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study
Chapter 2 discusses the physiological changes of individuals in stressful situations. Life, work and chemical stressors will be presented, along with suggested destressing measures. Burnout, employer intervention and what employees could do to decrease negative stress is also included.

Chapter 3 explores the methodology of this project.

Chapter 4 contains an Instruction Guide and Handouts (Body Awareness, Nutrition and Fitness) which form the basis of the Stress Reduction Model for Patient Registrars.

Chapter 5 includes the summary, conclusions and recommendations.
Physiological Changes in Stressful Situations

What is stress? "Stress is the interaction between the individual and environment, characterized by physiological changes which causes a deviation from normal performance; A situational phenomenon that moves one out of one's comfort zone" (Brodzinski, 1989, 76).

A complex part of the brain known as the autonomic nervous system prepares one for stress. "A relationship exists between the number and intensity of stressors present at any time, and the resulting physical symptoms": (Charlesworth and Nathan, 1984, 22).

Examples

A registrar in training, attempting to sign in a patient for the first time may experience 'butterflies in the stomach'. "The blood is directed to the muscles and the brain-digestion slows down. This allows alertness and strength when it becomes necessary" (Charlesworth and Nathan, 1984, 22).

A patient registrar who has just been frightened by a combative patient may be trying to 'catch a breath'. "Breathing increases to supply more oxygen for needed
muscles" (Charlesworth and Nathan, 1984, 22).

The registrar's heart may start to pound when an obstetrical patient enters the Emergency Department in the advanced stages of labor. "The heart speeds up, and the blood pressure increases, forcing blood to parts of the body that need it" (Charlesworth and Nathan, 1984, 22).

On a day when a new employee reports for training, the Emergency Department manager (who has several other critical projects going on at the same time) may use extra deodorant, since stress often causes perspiration. "Perspiration increases to cool the body—thus allowing it to burn more energy" (Charlesworth and Nathan, 1984, 23).

After a long stressful shift and no breaks, the registrar may have a stiff back or neck. "The muscles tense in preparation for some important event" (Charlesworth and Nathan, 1984, 23).

The registrar will notice that people who come to the Emergency Room for treatment with open wounds have little or no bleeding. "Chemicals are released to make the blood clot more rapidly. The clotting helps to decrease blood loss" (Charlesworth and Nathan, 1984, 23).

One busy afternoon, while signing in an obese seizure patient, the registrar noticed the patient starting to fall to the floor. She was having another seizure. The registrar leaped over the counter separating them, and
caught the patient before she fell to the floor. This is an example of increased strength and endurance in emergency situations. "Sugar and fats pour into the blood-providing fuel for quick energy" (Charlesworth and Nathan, 1984, 23).

**Life/Chemical/Work Stressors**

In addition to the physiological symptoms of stress, there are life stressors and work-related stress; these two invariably affect each other.

Life stressors have several subheadings: emotional stressors, family stressors, social stressors, and change or chemical stressors. These stressors may or may not affect the work life, but certainly provide the foundation for determining the dynamics of an individual's mind. Anxiety may be generated from worrying about paying bills, concern about the children, relocating, death in the family, separation or divorce, new baby, getting pregnant, attending parties, asking someone for a date, feeling stagnant and bored, etc.

Chemical stressors involve abuse of any type of drug an individual may be using i.e., alcohol, sweeteners, caffeine, nicotine, etc.

In healthcare and other industries, the changing nature of our working world is a major contributor to stress. According to an American Management Association survey, "81% of respondents report they suffer the ill
effects of stress at least once a week" (Maturi, 1992, 23). Employees are constantly worrying about layoffs. With the trend towards downsizing, the employees who stay with the company will see their workloads increase significantly.

Other stressful situations in the work environment include; few opportunities for advancement, new machines or ways of working, high noise or vibration levels and frequently changing room temperatures in work areas (Maturi, 1992, 24). Employees also express concerns regarding the amount of personal control or discretion in performing job duties, inadequate training, and formal or rigid work environments.

Insensitive bosses, coworkers and patients/customers are also major stress factors for employees. Aside from the stressors already mentioned, the healthcare employee has a unique stressor—a sense of powerlessness that has to do with working with terminally ill patients.

Destressing

"Stress is inevitable. It should not, however, reduce a professional's ability to perform his or her job effectively or ruin one's health" (Sunseri, Cae and Kosteva, 1992, 90).

The emotions associated with stress are part of an internal warning system that says when it's time to quiet the mind and slow down—regain some sense of serenity.
Achieving serenity would require emphasis on stress reduction skills through a process of revitalizing and energizing the mind and body. The individual would take into consideration his/her attitudes, emotions, life style, environment, etc. Appendix A provides ideas for Revitalizing and Energizing oneself. Other ways of 'destressing' include: Deep Muscle Relaxation Drills, a Mental Relaxation Drill, and Imagery Training—as shown in Appendix B.


In hospital and other work environments, it is very important to take breaks throughout the workday. It relieves tension, and prepares one for the challenges ahead. Breaks can be utilized to relieve tension. This could be accomplished by following the exercises in Appendix C.

Practicing coping skills is essential to dealing with situations out of one's control. Failure to cope could result in job burnout.
The Burnout Experience

Burnout can be described as "emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do 'people work' of some kind" (Maslach, 1982, 75). This response is normally generated through working with people who have problems or are troubled. There is too much information pouring in, too much emotional involvement, too many demands are being made, and things are happening too fast for the individual to cope.

Burnout sufferers are already 'on fire.' They are the ones most idealistic and enthusiastic about their work. They begin their careers with a high degree of dedication and idealism, only to end up with "a sense of malaise, emotional, physical, and psychological fatigue; feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, and a general lack of enthusiasm about work and life" (Levine, 1992, 56).

Recovery from burnout is achievable. It takes tenacity and internal strength possessed by the individual to overcome this condition. Some tips may include; Being aware that there is a problem, and thinking of it as a work function, rather than a personal failure. If the cause of his/her stress is disorganization, for example, it is best to develop a style of organization that is compatible with his/her work style. For some individuals, making a list of responsibilities and
checking them off as they’re completed works—while others use post-it notes or index cards. Devising a means of tracking what is being done decreases stress by forcing his/her to prioritize, while at the same time, progress can be seen. It’s important to remember that time management techniques have to be compatible with who you are and how you’re going to use them (Meade, 1992, 118).

Assuming responsibility for resolving the problem—take some action in order to feel that something is being accomplished as described above.

Doing a reality check on the aspects of the problem that could be changed—focus efforts on where they’ll make a difference.

Developing effective coping skills to combat burnout in the future. Women in five countries (Australia, Brazil, Germany, Japan and the USA) were surveyed to see what they do to combat stress. Exercise is the number one stress reliever everywhere but Brazil—where it’s number two. (Morris, 1991, 76). The actual percentages read as follows; Australia 40%, Germany 34%, Japan 29%, USA 33%—Brazil listed taking a long weekend (44%) as number one. Extra sleep, relaxation techniques, and long weekends round out the top three stress relievers on the survey.

**Employer Intervention**

Organizations not willing to confront the stress issue will pay a high price in absenteeism, disability claims,
health care, recruiting efforts and training costs. Stress claims in the service industry are the fastest growing categories of workers' compensation claims. Between 1978 and 1988, there was a 150% increase in the cost of workers' compensation. In California alone, there was a 700% growth rate during the same period. (Kottage, 1992, 25). Typical group health insurance policies don't provide adequate services for mental health disorders.

Little quantifiable data exists because each state enforces its' own workers compensation laws, with different degrees of recognition for the compensability of stress claims, and the lack of common terminology for claims categorization (Kottage, 1992, 24). Insurance companies, government agencies and health organizations would list stress under mental health or psychological disorders.

Organizations can no longer view assistance programs as "warm fuzzies" with no direct link to the bottom line. They need to develop healthy workplaces, which allow employees autonomy, a strong sense of responsibility, interesting work, and an opportunity to participate in decisions.

Boston's Beth Israel Hospital is just beginning to feel the impact of incorporating an effective stress management program. The program, divided into six units was designed specifically for hospital employees. The topics
include; stress basics, attitudes, communication and relationship management, job/organization/time management, anger, relaxation techniques, and lifestyle management (Lewis, 1993, 46). The participants were given manuals containing worksheets, so that a self-analysis of stress reactions could be done. Individual goals were also set and progress monitored by the facilitators.

After taking the course, employees informed their supervisors that they feel that they have more control over stress in their work and personal lives. What this means to Beth Israel's bottom line is that claims payments on its' 4400 benefits-eligible employees dropped 22% in the last year, and staff turnover has been cut in half over the past five years to 12.7% in 1992 (Lewis, 1993, 46).

Coors Brewing Company has expanded its stress management program to include a Lifestyle Management Program. The 24 classes offer a preventative approach to stress management. In addition to anger and relaxation seminars, classes include; going through a divorce, parenting young children and teenagers and self-esteem workshops for teenagers.

Coors offers the classes to all 10,000 employees and their dependents. Attendees pay a fee to participate and to help defray costs.

Cultural changes at Coors--participative management, layoffs and benefits changes have heightened stress. As a
result, stress intervention is now offered for the entire staff of a particular work unit (Lewis, 1993, 48). Individuals who have been laid off may receive counselling for up to one year.

Although data is not available on the relationship between Coors' stress management interventions and medical and mental health claims, the organizations' executives wouldn't go to such lengths to keep stress levels down if they didn't feel that stress is an issue worth addressing.

Unfortunately, most organizations are just the opposite; dictatorial, arbitrary and punitive-locked into a military model chain of command—all of the things experts say block creativity and defeat the purpose of stress management problems.

What can employers do to assist patient registrars in obtaining the necessary skills to present themselves to the Emergency Department clientele as sensitively as possible, and to prevent their burnout leading to desire to avoid the stressful E.D. registration environment? McCue (1992) suggests;

Educate-enact an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) give seminars on a periodic basis focusing on the psychology of the E.D. patient.

Support-give registrars the chance to 'vent' at staff meetings about common experiences. Encourage them to think beyond the surface behaviors of the patients, and see what
the cause of the behavior might have been-fear, panic, etc.

Survival Skills-instructing the employee in handling volatile situations. The EAP would be very beneficial in providing mini-courses dealing with building and maintaining self-esteem. This would alleviate any anxieties the registrar may have regarding his/her sense of self-worth based on the comments of an insensitive patient. Inservices can also be offered on 'Humor in the Workplace'. This would assist the registrar with developing a different perspective in an intense work environment.

Modify the ED environment-remove as many routine tasks from the ED Registration area a possible, so that the registrar can focus on their interaction with the patients.

Recent modifications in the ED designed to assist Patient Registrars include; providing reference books for frequently used information so that every aspect of their job doesn't have to be committed to memory; overlapping shifts--so that the oncoming shift can gradually work into the shift, and the leaving shift has time to complete documentation and wind down; the main switchboard operator has been equipped with a computer, enabling her to address incoming calls regarding patients in the facility (she used to transfer those calls to the ED Registration desk).

The above suggestions provide registrars with a sense of control in their surroundings, and helps them to achieve a healthy sense of self, which would lead to increasing
positive customer relations in the Patient Registration area of the E.D.

Decreasing the Negative Stress of Employees

Stress varies among individuals so workshops work best when dealing with a specific stressor or groups of stressors at a time. In the interim, that employees need to focus on several issues to decrease negative stress in the workplace. Grant (1991) suggests the following:

Make a list of trouble spots—list all aspects of the job that are perplexing—then note areas where changes could be made.

Communicating needs—voicing concerns about unrealistic deadlines, for example, may lead to changes or improvements in some areas.

Realize that there’s always room to negotiate—most organizations are not completely inflexible. There are some areas subject to negotiation—i.e., leaving work early for personal business—the boss may require the employee to come in earlier or stay later.

Accentuate the positive aspects of your job. Focusing on positive aspects of the job can outweigh the negative. Becoming more involved in the aspects of the job that are enjoyable would increase job satisfaction.

Be prepared for a layoff. The warning signs are; merger with a company whose products and services are similar, high debt/low cash flow, dismissal of bosses.
Updating the resume, and listing with employment agencies are good starting points. It's also wise to have three to six months' salary saved up in order to stay afloat while job hunting. If the individual is doing a good job and is of value to the company, this change may come later than sooner—but if the employee knows that he/she isn't truly making a valuable contribution, then preparation for layoff should be as soon as it is made public.

Know when to call it quits—-if all of the above techniques have been utilized, and one still feels angry and depressed—then its time to look for work elsewhere.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This case is a descriptive study, which examines the stressors that affect Patient Registrars at Phoenix Memorial Hospital. As such, the following research questions are explored—how can stress reduction techniques be applied to Phoenix Memorial Hospital’s Emergency Department Registration Staff? What should individuals do outside the work environment to prepare themselves for the stresses in the work environment?

In addressing this research, the descriptive model examines the behaviors of Patient Registrars, and proposes ways to change this behavior, so that a stress-free environment would prevail.

Descriptive research is the best approach to use when examining the relationship between events—such as the onset of a stressful situation and the resulting physiological changes.

The stress reduction model is the end product of extensive research involving the individual, the body, and health/well-being. From these ideas stemmed three approaches to reducing stress—body awareness, nutrition and fitness. Although each approach utilized independently would reduce stress, the full benefit of a stress-free
environment is derived by thorough interaction of all three.

Body Awareness alerts the individual to situations that cause stress and provides relaxation techniques as a means of fortifying the body for stressful occasions.

Good nutrition is the touchstone to producing the energy to keep the body performing at its peak throughout the day. Having enough energy to overcome stressful situations on an ongoing basis is a necessary fact of life.

Enough could never be said about the benefits of a good exercise regimen. A healthy body welcomes challenges and rises to the occasion confident and eager to resolve issues.
CHAPTER 4
BODY AWARENESS, NUTRITION AND FITNESS

This chapter consists of an Instruction Guide and handouts which form the basis of a Stress Reduction Model for Patient Registrars. Special emphasis is placed on the well being of female registrars since the majority of employees in this field are women. The model is divided into three phases. The first phase focuses on body awareness as a means of coping with stress. The second phase consists of special nutritional needs. The third phase addresses various forms of exercise which could be utilized to increase energy and endurance. Each instruction guide is followed by the relevant handout materials.

The handouts are to be given to the students at the start of the class. The students should be encouraged to take notes on them.

The classroom must be large enough to accommodate a floor exercise for 8-10 students. It should be as isolated from other areas as possible in order for students to concentrate fully during the body awareness exercises.

Equipment needed- a. Floor mats (approximately 10)

b. Tables (2) for the food display
c. White board or easel
d. Samples of foods in the 4 food groups

e. Examples of calcium and iron in food and tablet form
BODY

AWARENESS
INSTRUCTION GUIDE

PHASE I (2 hours)

BODY AWARENESS

* Points 1 and 2

A. Discuss the two categories of stress reduction techniques
   (1) Relaxation—emphasizes that the focus is on relaxing the body.
   (2) Stress Reduction—emphasizes conditioning the mind to handle stress effectively. They aid in monitoring stress levels and taking corrective action to reduce physiological effects.

B. Discuss the definition of stress, and have the class provide examples of physiological changes that occur during stressful situations. Ensure to mention that chronic stress can result in high blood pressure, hypertension and many other physical ailments including: cardiac arrhythmias, ulcers, asthma, sexual problems, etc.

* Point #3

Discuss the concept that the body registers stress long before the conscious mind does as in the mind-body relationship emphasized in bioenergetic therapy and Gestalt therapy. Cite an example of Lowen's muscular tension—such as a woman who believes that it is bad to express anger is likely to have chronic neck tension and pain, or a man
experiencing a lot of anxiety about the future may develop chronic stomach problems. Chronic muscular tension also decreases energy, affects the digestive system and limits self-expression.

BEFORE PROCEEDING TO POINT 4 FACILITATE THE BODY INVENTORY EXERCISES

Have the students clear the center of the room. Ask them to pick a mat and find a spot somewhere on the floor. Instruct them to lie on the mat in preparation for the exercise. (They may remove their shoes). Facilitate the body awareness and body scanning exercisss by reciting the dialogue in the handout, and observe the reactions of the students.

* Point #4

Emphasize the importance of maintaining a stress awareness diary, and explain how to use the chart. The diary should be kept for two weeks. It assists with allowing individuals to prepare themselves in advance for a stressful event focusing on muscle groups most affected by that particular stressor. Solicit examples from the students of stressors and the parts of the body affected.

Encourage the students to rate themselves on a scale of 1-10 before and after a relaxation exercise. There should be marked improvements in the after relaxation phase in a relatively short period of time.

10 MINUTE BREAK BEFORE STARTING PHASE II
PHASE I
(HANDOUT)

STRESS AND BODY AWARENESS

1. What is the definition of STRESS?

When stimuli coming in are interpreted as threatening, the regulating centers give the body information to speed up in preparation to confront or escape the threat.

2. Physiological changes that may occur as the result of a stress filled event:

- butterflies in the stomach
- shortness of breath
- feeling the heart pound
- stiffness of the muscles
- adrenalin rush

3. Body Awareness Philosophies

A. Bionenergetic Therapy- (Alexander Lowen)

1. Stresses body awareness as the first step in recognizing and reducing stress.

2. When stress is experienced, the body tenses up. When stress is removed, the tension goes away.

3. Believes that chronic muscular tension occurs in people with particular attitudes which tend to tighten specific muscle groups.

B. Gestalt Therapy- (Fritz Perls)

1. Emphasis is on differentiating between external and internal awareness as a means of separating the world from your physical reaction to it.

   * Internal awareness-physical sensations or emotional discomfort or comfort inside your body.
* External awareness-stimulation of the five senses from the outside world.

4. Stress Awareness Diary

A. Useful in identifying how your particular stresses result in predictable symptoms.

B. Identifying symptoms and relieving stress increases energy and decreases the likelihood of serious illnesses (ulcers, heart disease, etc.).

C. The types of symptoms experienced would determine what type of relaxation technique you choose to relieve the tension (as shown in Appendix B and C).

STRESS AWARENESS DIARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>DAY OF THE WEEK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TIME</td>
<td>STRESSFUL EVENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SYMPTOMS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BODY INVENTORY

The following exercises promote body awareness, and will help you identify areas of tension.

AWARENESS

1. First focus your attention on the outside world. Start sentences with, "I am aware of ________". (e.g. "I am aware of the cars going by outside the window, papers moving, the coffee perking, the breeze blowing and the blue carpet.")

2. After you have become aware of everything that is going on around you, shift to focusing your attention on your body and your physical sensations, your internal world (e.g. "I am aware of feeling warm, my stomach gurgling, tension in my neck, nose tickling, and a cramp in my foot.")

3. Shuttle back and forth between internal and external awareness (e.g. "I am aware of the chair pushing into my buttocks, the circle of yellow light from the lamp, my shoulders hunching up, the smell of bacon.")

4. Used at free moments throughout the day, this exercise allows you to separate and appreciate the real difference between your inner and outer worlds.

BODY SCANNING

Close your eyes...Start with your toes and move up your body...Ask yourself, "Where am I tense?"...Whenever you discover a tense area, exaggerate it slightly so you can become aware of it...Be aware of the muscles in your body that are tense...Then for example, say to yourself, "I am tensing my neck muscles...I am hurting myself...I am creating tension in my body"... Note that all muscular tension is self produced...At this point, be aware of any life situation that may be causing the tension in your body and what you could do to change it.
LETTING GO OF YOUR BODY

Lie down on a rug or firm bed and get comfortable...Pull your feet up until your feet rest flat on the floor...Close your eyes...Check yourself for comfort...This may require shifting your body around...Become aware of your breathing...Feel the air move into your nose, mouth and down your throat into your lungs...Focus on your body and let all of the parts come into your awareness spontaneously...What parts of your body come into awareness first?...What parts are you less aware of?...Become aware of which parts of your body you can easily feel and which parts of your body have little sensation...Do you notice any difference between the right and left side of your body?...Now become aware of any physical discomfort you are feeling...Become aware of this discomfort until you can describe it in detail...Focus and be aware of what happens to this discomfort...It may change...Let your body do whatever it wants to do...Continue this for five to ten minutes...Allow your body to take over. (Davis, McKay and Eshelman, 1982, 18).

An important part of this process is maintaining a Stress Awareness Diary. Certain stressors faced by Registrars throughout the day are more likely to produce physical and emotional symptoms than others. Certain types of stressful events often produce characteristic symptoms. It would be extremely helpful to keep a record of stressful events as well as symptoms that may have been a stress reaction.

This diary should be kept for two weeks. A note should be made of the time a stressful event occurred, the event itself and the physical or emotional symptom that could be related to the stress. The diary would assist in identifying particularly stressful situations for you and allow you to prepare yourself for these times. Perhaps many of these situations could be handled better by you if
you prepared yourself (your body) in advance by focusing on the muscle groups most affected by the stressors you encounter.

Frequent use of the body awareness exercises will show where the body stores muscular tension. When awareness is increased, you can find ways of relieving the tension. Once the tension is relieved, your energy level increases along with a sense of well being. It may also be helpful to keep a record of how you feel before and after relaxation exercises. (Examples of relaxation exercises could be found in Appendices B and C.) Perhaps the best way to monitor tension is to rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 before and after a relaxation exercise. There should be marked improvements in the after relaxation phase in a relatively short period of time. Relief is on the way!
GO SHOPPING--BRING IN EXAMPLES OF FOODS FROM THE 4 FOOD GROUPS AND ARRANGE ON A TABLE IN ORDER OF THESE GROUPS. (Use non-perishable items such as canned fruit, dried beans, pasta, or rice and powdered milk)

NUTRITION

* Point #1
Encourage the class' participation in discussing nutritional needs of both men and women (the 4 food groups).

* Point #2
Ask the students how many times a day they feel they should eat. Have them justify their responses. Follow up with discussing the size of the meal.

* Point #3
Using the display of foods you assembled prior to class, explore items 3a-3d. Have the class calculate their recommended daily allowance of protein by multiplying their individual weight by 2.2, then by 0.8, to get the number of grams per day that is considered to be their recommended daily allowance. Do an example on the white board to familiarize them with the process. Have the students voice their opinions about the consumption of fat and its effect on the body.
* Point #4

Ask students what types of high fiber foods they eat, and how often. Ask what types of foods they allow their children to eat.

* Point #5

Get feedback from the students on the feasibility of utilizing the sweet rules in (5d), after informing them of the sweet facts (5a-5c).

* Point #6

On the white board, list other types of non-caffeinated beverages which could be consumed throughout the day other than water, for example, lemonade, juices, kool-aid, decaffeinated teas, etc.

Solicit salt substitute ideas from the students.

10 MINUTE BREAK BEFORE STARTING PHASE III.
PHASE II
(HANDOUT)

1. Why focus on women’s nutritional needs?
   A. Foods provide fuel.
   B. Foods consumed on a daily basis are a crucial part of a woman’s total energy and stamina system.

   Recommended guidelines for avoiding nutrient fatigue and loss of energy:

2. EAT AT LEAST FOUR TIMES EVERY DAY

   1. Small to moderate meals are preferred to large meals that tend to make you groggy.
   2. Moderate size meals put less strain on your stamina.

3. EAT AT LEAST 60% CARBOHYDRATES, NO MORE THAN 15% PROTEIN AND NO MORE THAN 25% FAT DAILY

   Carbohydrates

   A. Glucose (naturally occurring sugar found in food) is an important source for the muscles and brain. It’s derived from complex carbohydrate foods, and is necessary to deliver maximum energy.

   B. Over half the foods you consume on a daily basis should come from complex carbohydrates such as: vegetables, cereals, pasta, breads, potatoes and fruit.

   Protein

   C. Foods high in protein include: eggs, milk, cheese, chicken, beef, fish, lentils and dried beans.

   D. Protein intake should not exceed 15% of your total daily intake.

   E. Calculation of your recommended daily allowance of protein is done as follows--multiply your weight in grams (your weight in pounds divided by 2.2) then by 0.8. The average woman needs approximately 46
grams of protein per day—while the average man needs approximately 56 grams.

F. Total caloric intake on a daily basis is 2000 calories for women and 2700 calories for men.

Fats

G. Only 25% of your total calories should come from fat sources.

H. Animal fat is found in: butter, whole milk, red meat and shortening.

I. Vegetable fat is found in: margarine, oil, salad dressings, mayonnaise and nuts.

J. Foods that are high in fat increase caloric intake, and contribute to elevated cholesterol levels. After a period of time, this leads to atherosclerosis (the lining of the blood vessels are clogged with fatty substances). As the vessels narrow, the risk of stroke and heart attack increases significantly.

K. Different fats have different effects on cholesterol:

* Saturated Fats—found in animal and vegetable products. These foods include: butter, cream, shortening, cheese, coconut, oil, whole milk, bacon drippings, palm oil, palm kernel oil, and beef (particularly organ meats). Their consumption should be limited or avoided altogether.

* Polyunsaturated Fats—lowers cholesterol levels. They include: safflower oil, corn oil, soybean oil and cottonseed oil.

These fats help to rid the body of excessive cholesterol.

* Monounsaturated Fats—these fats neither increase nor decrease cholesterol levels, but they’re low in saturated and polyunsaturated fats.

L. Where does the body get it’s energy?

Your body first burns carbohydrates, then a combination of carbohydrates and fat, then fat
and protein. Most people rarely get beyond the carbohydrate burning stage.

4. EAT MORE HIGH FIBER FOODS

A. High fiber foods—also known as roughage. It absorbs water in the intestines and swells. The soft bulky stools move more quickly through the intestinal system.

B. Advantages

1. Decreases the likelihood of constipation or hemorrhoidal discomfort.

2. Decreases the risk of colon cancer (bacteria in the colon doesn’t have the chance to concentrate in the bowel).

3. Increases weight control (fiber speeds the route of foods through the body and the system absorbs fewer of the calories in those foods.

4. Examples of high fiber foods include: oat bran, oatmeal, wheat bran, shredded wheat, Quaker Oats, Wheatina and Ralston Whole Wheat Cereal.

Whole wheat bread, rye bread, whole wheat matzoh, whole grain melbatoast, cornbread/muffins, tacos, tortillas, bran muffins, stoned wheat crackers, and whole wheat varieties of pastas.

Broccoli, peas, carrots, strawberries, corn, brussel sprouts, apples, string beans, prunes and oranges.

5. Although the exact amount of fiber to be consumed on a daily basis is yet to be determined, it is recommended to have two tablespoons of wheat bran daily or two slices of whole wheat bread along with a high fiber cereal.

5. EAT REFINED SUGAR NOT MORE THAN TWO TO THREE TIMES PER WEEK.

A. Effects of consuming too much sugar

1. Depletes your body of energy
2. Adds 'empty' calories

3. Increases blood sugar level, then drops after 2-4 hours, producing sluggishness after an energy rush.

B. Sweets must be consumed in moderation—2 to 3 times per week for those of you who must satisfy those sweet attack urges.

C. Keep in mind that sugar comes in many hidden forms—corn syrup, sucrose, fructose, molasses and honey. It's in just about everything we eat.

D. For those of you who must have those sweet portions, these rules may help to control the desire for sweets:
   1. Eat sweets only outside the house (restaurant or a friend's house).
   2. Ask family members to eat sweets outside the house also.
   3. Decide what and how much is going to be consumed before it is eaten. Portion out sweets.
   4. Never eat sweets when emotionally upset (especially alone).

6. DRINK MORE FLUIDS AND CUT BACK ON CAFFEINE, ALCOHOL AND SALT

A. Drink 4-6 glasses of water or other non-caffeinated beverages throughout the day.

B. Salt
   1. Daily consumption should be one teaspoon of table salt per day.
   2. Excessive salt intake increases the blood pressure and fluid retention.
   3. It's best not to add salt to your food while cooking it (use herbs as a substitute) or when preparing to eat at the table.
THE STAMINA CONCERNS OF WOMEN

1. Calcium and calcium supplements

A. Why are they important?

1. Around the age of 35, you need to introduce calcium to your diet to fend off osteoporosis (bone thinning) in later years.

2. Prior to menopause, you may need between 1000mg to 1200mg of calcium per day.

3. There is risk of kidney stones if you're taking an excessive amount of calcium and there is a family history of them.

B. Where can you get calcium?

1. Calcium is available in tablet form at your local pharmacy.

2. It can also be found in the foods you eat. Approximately 300 mg of calcium is contained in each of the following items:

   1 cup skim or low fat milk
   1 cup plain yogurt
   1 1/2 oz Cheddar Cheese
   3 oz sardines with bones
   1 1/2 cups spinach
   1 cup collard greens

2. Iron

A. Who needs it?

1. Women who have long menstrual cycles and/or heavy blood losses during menstruation,

B. Iron is instrumental in releasing oxygen to the body cells that produce energy. Conversely, when you become iron deficient, you feel fatigued, irritable and suffer from headaches.

C. Foods that are rich in iron include:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Item</th>
<th>Iron Content (mg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oysters</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried Apricots</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clams</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole wheat, pumpernickel or enriched white bread</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 3 1/2 oz portions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Item</th>
<th>Iron Content (mg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lean Beef</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raisins</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofu</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuna</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The daily requirement is 25-75 mg per day, and a commercial iron supplement may be used.
INSTRUCTION GUIDE

PHASE III (1 Hour)

FITNESS

Discuss the roles of women and the demands made of them at home and work (wife, mother, working woman, counselor, etc). Emphasize that maintaining stamina is important, due to the complexity of these roles.

* Points 1 and 2

Bring in examples of calcium and iron in food and tablet form and discuss this with the class.

BURNING CALORIES

Ask the students to explain what they do on a regular basis as part of an exercise regimen.

Have them define which category their exercise falls into. (aerobics, calisthenics, etc). Ask them what they do to keep from getting bored with a particular regimen.
EXERCISE
What's exercise got to do with it?

Due to the percentage of fat in a woman's body (20-25% as opposed to 12-20% for men), women burn 500 fewer calories per day than men. It is important for women to burn off fat and increase muscle tissue through some sort of physical activity.

There are many exercises you could do to burn off fat. They fall in one of two categories: aerobic or low intensity.

AEROBIC EXERCISE

Sustained rhythmic activity of the large muscle groups, especially the legs. These exercises include: running, jogging, brisk walking, swimming, bicycling and dancing.

Exercises should be done at least 3 days a week, and the heart rate should reach the aerobic range appropriate for your age and remain at that rate for 20 minutes.

Advantages-increases the heart rate, stroke volume and respiration rate. It strengthens the cardiovascular system and increases stamina.

LOW INTENSITY EXERCISE

Types on activity include: slow walking, house cleaning, shopping, office duties and light gardening. A pedometer could be used to measure the amount of low intensity exercise obtained in a day. The device clips to the clothing (like a beeper) and measures the number of miles the wearer walks or runs in a day.

Keep a record of how far you've walked for a week. If you walk less than 2 1/2 miles per day-pick up the pace!

Advantage-increased muscle strength and flexibility and joint mobility.

CALISTHENICS

Examples include: toe-touching, sit ups and kneebends.

Advantage-improves the flexibility of the major muscle groups. Helps to prevent injury when integrated into an
aerobic exercise program in the warming up and cooling down periods. No special clothing or equipment required. They can be done indoors or outdoors.

ISOTONICS

Involves the contraction of muscles against a resistant object. Most popular form of isotonics: weight-lifting.

ISOMETRICS

The contraction of muscles against resistance, without movement. For example, pushing against a wall or doorjamb. Advantage-increases strength.
WHAT'S GOOD TO EAT?

BREAK BREAKFAST BOREDOM

* Use egg whites or egg substitutes instead of egg yolks.
* Choose cereal, bagels, English.
* Choose skim or 1 percent milk instead of whole milk.
* Use margarine instead of butter.
* Try Canadian bacon instead of sausage or regular bacon.

BETTER BURGERS

* Order a regular hamburger instead of a specialty burger.
* Order broiled or grilled chicken and fish sandwiches rather than fried sandwiches.
* Ask for sandwiches without mayonnaise and special sauces.
* Order cheese pizza with mushrooms, green peppers, onions and other vegetables instead of pepperoni or sausage.
* Choose vegetables and fruit rather than higher fat cheese and bacon bits at the salad bar.
* Use no more than 1 tablespoon of salad dressing on your salad.

LEAN MEATS TO EAT

* Choose fish, chicken, turkey and lean cuts of beef and pork. Stick to three ounce servings once or twice a day. (Three ounces is about the size of a deck of cards).
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study has presented various causes of stress as it relates to Emergency Department Patient Registrars. It has focused on factors in their life and work environments that contribute to stress and the body’s reaction to those stressors.

A stress reduction model has been designed as a coping mechanism for the Registrars. Prolonged use of the information provided in the model is encouraged—as it encompasses a preventative maintenance program for dealing with stress.

Competent stress management is the touchstone in combating stress. The physiological symptoms that occur in stressful situations can be lessened or averted altogether if some very basic preventative maintenance is done.

Conclusions and Recommendations

An integral part of any stress training program emphasizes the need for self-assessment; understanding how the body behaves in certain situations, and deriving ways to modify unhealthy behaviors. It is imperative to undergo a complete medical checkup at least once a year. Although the body experiences many physical and chemical changes, in
stressful events, dangerously high stress can trigger major medical problems—such as respiratory and stomach ailments.

Having a close circle of friends could be a powerful destressor. Life stressors normally evolve from family and social stressors, not unlike circumstances experienced by friends and family members. At times, the advice or companionship of a trusted friend or loved one who also provides unconditional emotional support could be invaluable.

Developing leisure time activities helps a great deal in coping with stress. They help to take the mind off personal troubles and allow time to recharge. They’re also great self-esteem boosters.

As with most stressful environments, job stress could be relieved in any number of ways. Those individuals wanting advancement, for example, could be offered a broadbanding method of advancement, where they would progress to certain skill levels (with comparable pay) until they reach the maximum compensation for their particular employment classification.

The introduction of new technology could be made in a non-threatening manner—through training, and making employees aware of any organizational changes a result of this new technology. Employees could be allowed some input in certain aspects of performing their work, to alleviate concerns about not having enough personal control or
discretion regarding performance of their work assignments.

Of all the stressors facing ED Patient Registrars today, the most frustrating one involves dealing with people—insensitive bosses, coworkers and patients/customers. In order to effectively cope, it's essential to "achieve a successful internal dialogue consisting of our beliefs, notions, and automatic thoughts or mental tapes. These little voices guide our physical and psychological reactions to stress" (Rosenthal, 1991, 72). Internal monologues assist in reshaping solutions in unpleasant situations, thus providing a positive more healthier outlook.

The organizations' swift response to cries for help from its workforce can truly enhance the bottom line. One by-product of stress is chemical abuse. Because of the many forms it takes, the employees' level of productivity would have dropped 25-50 percent by the time it's noticed in the workplace. Training managers in stress management—recognizing symptoms and using simple, self-administered stress reduction techniques—can assist employees to relieve stress before it becomes a problem for everyone.

In keeping with destressing ED Patient Registrars or any employee, body awareness, nutrition and fitness must be part of the overall plan. The Stress Reduction Model introduced in this study was designed to enhance body awareness, inform its users of the importance of
maintaining good eating habits, and to reinforce those habits with a well-tuned body prepared for any encounter.

Future adaptations may include; incorporating the model in other hospital settings, adding a recipe guide to the nutrition section, and persuading the dietician at the hospital to provide a nutrition guide for the meals served, and upgrading/modifying the exercises in the fitness section. The model is not limited to just the healthcare industry, it could be modified to suit any work environment.

Other stress-reduction training includes the "balloon technique." Participants inflate, tie off and pop balloons. When apprehension or anxiety is experienced, an inflated balloon is held against the chest. The individual's eyes are closed, and attention is focused on the area of concern. During the process, the balloon is squeezed until it pops. Thus, a form of mini-shock treatment is introduced—an instant destressor.

Another simple, self-administered stress reduction technique is the "French Release." This method requires participants to draw from the subconscious mind, knowledge of the root cause of his/her stress. By combining the element of surprise with physical release techniques, the method impacts both emotional and physical elements for a complete immediate release of trauma (LaChance, 1991, 27). Results are immediate and gratification is instantaneous.

These techniques may be offered through an Employee
Assistance Program or Wellness program as proven effective means of coping with stress.

The decade of the 90’s is going at an ever-increasing pace. Communication is becoming more sophisticated and spontaneous. Technology will continue to expand and become more complex, and the environment—along with demographics will continue to change. If ED Patient Registrars are not prepared to take on that next challenge, they are destined to become casualties in the stress wars.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

IDEAS FOR REVITALIZING AND ENERGIZING YOURSELF
APPENDIX A

IDEAS FOR REVITALIZING AND ENERGIZING YOURSELF

A. YOU CAN DEVELOP SELF-UNDERSTANDING:
   1. Listen to the voice of your body.
   2. Make a list of your present goals.
   3. Write a diary or a journal.
   4. Get feedback from others on how they see you.
   5. Find out what is controllable in your life and what isn’t.

B. YOU CAN DEVELOP HEALTHY ATTITUDES:
   1. Develop the attitude of gratitude.
   2. Think positively.
   3. Learn to love yourself.
   4. Practice living in the present.
   5. Reward yourself.

C. YOU CAN CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS:
   1. Admit to yourself how you feel.
   2. Practice self-expression.
   3. Work off your anger.

D. YOU CAN STRENGTHEN YOUR BODY:
   1. Learn to relax.
   2. Get regular vigorous exercise.
   3. Eat a nutritionally balanced diet.
   4. Lose weight.
   5. Control all your input.

E. YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS:
   1. Seek out good friends.
   2. Contact new people.
   3. Refrain from criticizing and blaming others.
   4. Face painful questions directly.

IDEAS FOR REVITALIZING AND ENERGIZING YOURSELF - PAGE 2

F. YOU CAN LIFT YOUR SPIRITS:
   1. Keep things in proper perspective.
   2. Don’t do wrong.
   3. Learn to let go.
   4. Allot time for daily meditation.
   5. Learn to play again.

G. YOU CAN CONTROL YOUR JOB:
   1. Remember--no job is tense.
   2. Focus on one thing at a time.
   3. Don’t try to be perfect.
   4. Define the purpose of work.
5. Take some time off.

H. YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR ENVIRONMENT:
1. Spend time in a new environment.
2. Rearrange and redecorate your home.
3. Cut down excessive noise.
4. Control the TV set.

I. YOU CAN LIVE A HEALTHY LIFE STYLE:
1. Be yourself.
2. Arrange to have variety in your life.
3. Take one thing at a time.
4. Set up desireable futures.
5. Take time to be alone.
6. Practice relaxed driving.
7. Develop a hobby.

SUMMARY:

Is any one of these answers just right for you? Probably not. But one, or a combination of coping ideas might stimulate some ideas for you...might suggest for you some way you can begin to shake yourself up-shake up your habits-shake yourself out of the dumps. Now is the time for you to begin formulating a plan that you think will help you to be more creative in managing your stress. A plan that will lead you to a greater sense of freedom and joy in your life. YOU must create your plan. YOU must choose the changes you want to make. Both the challenge and the rewards are yours.
APPENDIX B
MUSCLE/MENTAL/RELAXATION DRILLS
APPENDIX B

A. DEEP MUSCLE RELAXATION DRILL

1. Find as quiet an environment as possible. Lie on your back in a comfortable position or sit comfortably. Close your eyes.

2. For the right-handed people, begin by physically tensing the right hand for an instant, then relax and let it go loose. Tell it to be heavy and warm. Continue with the rest of the right side of the body, moving up to forearm, upper arm, shoulder, then down to the foot, lower leg, and upper leg. Next, follow the same procedure on the left side of the body. (If you are left-handed, begin the procedure with the left hand and continue). The hands, arms, and legs are now relaxed, heavy, and warm. Wait for these feelings. (After mastering the technique, you will not need to tense the muscles before relaxing them.)

3. Next, relax the muscles of the hips and let a wave of relaxation pass up from the abdomen to the chest. Do not tense these muscles. Tell them to be heavy and warm. Your breathing will come more from the diaphragm and will be slower. Wait for this breathing change.

4. Now let the wave of relaxation continue into the shoulders, neck, jaw, and the muscles of the face. Pay special attention to the muscles controlling the eyes and forehead. Finish the drill by telling your forehead to feel cool.

Practice this drill twice daily; fifteen to twenty minutes is ideal (but even three minutes is better than nothing when circumstances do not permit a longer session). Practice before meals or no sooner than one hour after meals. You can also practice before an anticipated stress experience but no more frequently than four times a day.

With practice you will learn to attain deep muscle relaxation—the feeling of heavy, warm, inert muscles and a cool forehead—in as short a time as two minutes. An Instant Relaxation Drill, to be described later, is designed for use before and during stressful periods in the course of your normal activities when longer relaxation periods are clearly not practical.

If you are not sure whether or not you are relaxed, ask another person to raise your arm or leg about six inches and then let go. If it drops as a dead weight, your muscles are relaxed. Jerky resistance indicates that muscle tension is still present. The benefits of deep muscle relaxation are
many: lowered pulse rate and blood pressure, lowered breathing rate, decreased bodily oxygen consumption, and a general feeling of calmness and tranquility.

B. MENTAL RELAXATION

When you have learned to achieve at least a partial state of deep muscle relaxation, you are ready for the next step in relaxation—clearing your mind of stressful worries through mastery of the Mental Relaxation Drill that follows.

MENTAL RELAXATION DRILL

After entering a state of deep muscle relaxation, you are ready to begin the mind-clearing process that deepens the relaxation state. Your eyes are closed and your forehead is cool.

1. Enter a passive state; let thoughts flow through your head.

2. If thoughts recur, respond by saying "no" under your breath.

3. Imagine a calm blue sky or sea or any blue area or object without detail (with your eyes closed). Try to see the color blue (which has been found to be a particularly relaxing color).

4. Become aware of your slow, natural breathing. Follow each breath as you inhale and exhale.

5. If you still do not feel calm and restful, you may find it helpful to use a repeated, soothing word (such as love or God) or less symbolic work (such as now or breath). If you find that using a word distracts you, try using a sound (such as "ah"). Think of the word or sound silently, preferably during exhalation. Always remind yourself to keep the muscles of the face, eyes, and forehead loose, and to keep your forehead cool.

The Deep Muscle Relaxation and Mental Relaxation drills are interactive and should ordinarily be done together. Once you have learned both drills, simply combine them. Practice this combined Deep Muscle/Mental Relaxation Drill twice daily.

Combining the Deep Muscle/Mental Relaxation Drills helps to lower the blood pressure.
In the beginning, until these skills are mastered, frequent practice is the best plan. It may take a few weeks to reach the goal of not only decreased respiration and lowered blood pressure but also the general feeling of tranquility that you gain from better stress management.

C. IMAGERY TRAINING

Imagery training is a useful method to assist you in the Deep Muscle Relaxation and Mental Relaxation drills. Imagery training breaks down mental blocks to the use of your imagination. For people who are out of touch with their bodies, deep muscle relaxation is sometimes difficult to learn. Test yourself. Think of your left ear; make it feel warm. Imagine your right calf muscle as feeling warm and heavy. Now try two harder tests. Imagine the left leg is heavier than the right leg. Reverse the feelings. If you can do these tests easily, you should find it relatively easy to achieve deep muscle relaxation. If you cannot, you will benefit from the following muscle-finding drills.

D. DRILLS FOR MUSCLE FINDING

1. Lie comfortably on your back in a quiet room. Become passive.

2. Tense all the muscles of your body for about five seconds, then let them go as limp as you can. Notice the difference in feeling.

3. Repeat this, but now exhale your breath slowly during the total body relaxation. This will help create a limp, relaxed state.

4. Try tensing and "letting go" of individual sets of muscles: hand, arm, foot, lower leg, upper leg, buttocks, neck, jaws, mouth, face, and forehead.

If you are uncertain whether or not you are relaxed, ask a helper to judge your muscle tension by picking up your arm about six inches and letting it drop. After a few weeks' practice, almost everyone will have been able to reduce muscle tension to zero (on a scale of 4 to 0).

Relaxation tapes for home playing may be helpful for those who have difficulty with unaided self-instruction, or you can tape your own instructions for these drills.
E. IMAGERY TRAINING FOR MENTAL RELAXATION

Even though you do well in deep muscle relaxation, intrusive, racing thoughts can prevent you from reaching a stage of complete muscle relaxation as well as complete mental relaxation. Still, you may find this stage of partial deep muscle relaxation and free association of ideas rather pleasant. It can be a time for surprising effective problem solving. To achieve complete mental relaxation, it is helpful to incorporate imagery training into relaxation drills by following these steps.

IMAGERY DRILL FOR MENTAL RELAXATION

1. Bring yourself as deeply into the Deep Muscle/Mental Relaxation Drill as possible. Assuming that intrusive or racing thoughts remain a problem, read on.

2. Use the following two methods of "thought stopping":
   a. When a thought returns too frequently or persists, say "no" out loud. If it returns, say "no" again. Use this self-command repeatedly over a five-to-ten minute period, while remaining in the deep muscle relaxation and mental relaxation states.
   b. If the verbal commands to stop seem to decrease the frequency of the recurrent intrusions, then change to a silent "no" when an unwanted recurrent, or persistent thought prevents your entry into complete mind clearing. When a further reduction in active thinking occurs, you are ready to continue.

3. Imagine a pleasant scene, such as a mountain lake, a calm ocean, a blue sky with drifting white clouds. Focus on this scene to replace the previous intrusive, racing thoughts.

4. When this succeeds, let the pleasant scene fade and enter the final stages of the drill.

5. Let a gray or black "nothingness" be the image before your closed eyes. Ignore any visual detail.

6. Finally, let blue colors drift, in often as patches. When they come, hold on to the particular feeling that lets the blue colors in. When you are at this point, you have usually reached zero muscle tension and complete mental relaxation.
F. INSTANT RELAXATION

After you have achieved a satisfactory degree of success in deep muscle relaxation and mental relaxation, you should be able to enter partially into deep muscle relaxation and mental relaxation states within thirty seconds to three minutes. You are now ready to practice instant relaxation.

1. Sit comfortably. (You can also learn to do this while standing, waiting in line, or just prior to an anticipated stressful event).

2. Draw in a deep breath and hold it for five seconds (count to five slowly), exhale slowly and tell all your muscles to relax. Repeat this two or three times to become more completely relaxed.

3. If circumstances permit, imagine a pleasant thought ("I am learning how to relax") or a pleasant scene (a calm ocean, a mountain stream, etc).

Develop cueing systems to remind yourself to use this drill (for example, any time you become impatient over having to wait). The Instant Relaxation Drill takes from thirty to sixty seconds. In most stress circumstances, you can benefit from using either a Deep Muscle/Mental Relaxation Drill or an Instant Relaxation Drill. Each can be used when you are consciously attacking a specific, recurrent stress that you have identified. Each can also be used as a refresher interspersed in your daily routine.
APPENDIX C

DESTRESSING ON THE JOB
APPENDIX C

DESTRESSING ON THE JOB

TO RELAX SHOULDERS AND CHEST

1. Shoulder Circles: Sitting with arms hanging at your sides, gently circle shoulders forward a few times—separately at first then together. Now circle backward.

2. Shoulder Lifts and Squeezes: Inhale and slowly lift shoulders towards your ears. Exhale as you drop shoulders toward the back, as if to make them touch. Continue to draw them back and down hard for several seconds, then relax.

3. Arm Rotations: Place fingertips on your shoulders. As you inhale, bring elbows together in front of your chest and lift them as high as possible; then swing elbows open. Exhale as you drop elbows down to chest level, then return them to touching position in front. Circle elbows several times one direction, then reverse.

TO LOOSEN NECK MUSCLES

4. Up-and-Down Head Turns: Inhale as you tilt head back and look at the ceiling: exhale and bring head down, tucking chin into throat.

5. Side-to-Side Head Turns: Exhale as you look over right shoulder; inhale as you look front. Repeat to the left.

TO LIMBER UP LEGS

6. Foot Rotations: Straighten your right leg in front and push heel away so you stretch the back of your leg. Slowly circle foot clockwise five times, then counterclockwise five times. Repeat with your left foot.

TO EASE BACK TENSION

7. Upper Back: Lace fingers together in front. Exhale as you straighten arms and push palms away. Inhale as you raise straight arms above your head, palms to ceiling. Exhale as you lower linked hands behind your head. Move elbows and shoulders back, so you feel a squeeze between your shoulder
blades. Inhale as you stretch arms up, palms to the ceiling, keeping arms and shoulders back. Exhale as you lower arms in front.

8. Lower Back: Sitting tall, place hands on your lower back. Inhale and lengthen upward, lifting and opening rib cage. Exhale as you slowly arch backward, lifting your chest and looking at the ceiling. Pull shoulders back, squeezing blades together. Hold a few seconds, breathing naturally; then inhale as you return to upright position.

9. Spine Stretcher: Lace fingers and turn palms toward knees. Inhale as you straighten arms above your head, palms up. Stretch and lengthen your spine. Exhale and lean forward with palms turned outward, keeping arms, head, and body aligned. Feel the stretch in your hips and spine. Inhale as you sit up straight, arms stretching up. Exhale as you slowly lower arms to the front.

Still tight? Stand with feet parallel to hips, abdomen and buttocks tucked in. With arms hanging at sides, turn palms outward. Inhale as you bring arms to shoulder height, and rise on your toes. Raise arms overhead, bring palms together, and then turn them outward. Exhale as you slowly bring arms to your sides, and ease back onto your heels. Breathe deeply.

Now go get 'em!