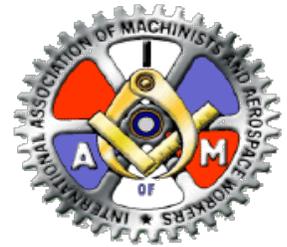




HELPING HANDS



Stress Awareness Month

(excerpts from Stress.org, By Pam Meyer is the Wellness Director, BLC-Wahpeton)

Stress Awareness Month has been recognized every April since 1992, but this year it seems particularly important. Learning to cope with our stress and finding healthy ways to deal with these situations can go a long way in living a healthy and positive life.

We all experience stress – we experience it in very different ways. Because of this, there is no single definition for stress, but the most common explanation is a physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension.

Stress is a reaction to a situation where a person feels anxious or threatened. Learning healthy ways to cope and getting the proper care and support can help reduce stressful feelings and symptoms.

Common reactions to a stressful event can include:

- Disbelief, shock and numbness
- Feeling sad, frustrated and helpless
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Headaches, back pains and stomach problems
- Smoking or the use of alcohol or drugs



Stress affects more than just your mind. Long-term stress can prove to be more than just a mental issue. From headaches to stomach disorders to depression – even very serious issues like stroke and heart disease can come as a result of stress.

When you are placed in a stressful situation, specific stress hormones rush into your bloodstream leading to an increase in heart rate, blood pressure and glucose levels. This is helpful in emergency situations but having this “rush” for extended periods of time can be dangerous and make you susceptible to the issues mentioned previously.

Sometimes the stress in our lives is not something we have the power to change.

- Recognize when you don't have control and avoid getting anxious about situations that you cannot change.
- Develop a vision for healthy living, wellness, and personal growth. Set realistic goals to help you realize your vision.
- Take care of yourself – eat healthy, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep and give yourself a break if you feel stressed.
- Share your problems and how you are feeling and coping with a family member, friend, doctor, pastor or counselor.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol. These can create additional problems and increase the stress you are feeling.
- Recognize when you need more help – know when to talk to a psychologist, social worker or counselor if things continue.

Potentially the most valuable takeaway here is knowing how to talk to others about your stress. This goes both ways, as you need to know how to discuss your problems with others, as well as how to talk to anyone that comes to you with an issue.

How to Deal with Tech Stress?

(Excerpts from Stress.org, Dr. Heidi Hanna)

Understanding that tech isn't going away or slowing down anytime soon, how can we maximize its benefit while minimizing the impact on our stress load?

1. Prioritize downtime. We need to recharge our brains and bodies with as much effort and attention as we give to our cellular devices. For every hour, plan 3 – 5 minutes to relax and focus on nourishing positivity with simple techniques like gratitude, calm breathing, and music.

2. Minimize multitasking. When we need to focus on the task at hand, turn tech off. Completely off. Remember that hands-free is not brain-free; studies show that the risk of an automobile crash is 4x higher when on a phone call whether you're holding a phone or not (National Safety Council, 2014). Set aside specific times during the day to check email or do other online tasks and avoid slipping into surfing in between. Fight the temptation to get more done in less time by doing multiple tasks at once. Instead, focus on being fully engaged in what matters most in each moment.



3. Engage in email etiquette. Drop the need to cc more than necessary and be considerate about sending communications after hours. When it's important, make a call or when possible meet face to face.

4. Reduce the rush. Set realistic expectations for yourself and others regarding response time. Create more space in your calendar by committing to 50-minute or 25-minute meetings, with buffer time for breaks in between.

5. Run mindful meetings. Spend time up front getting clear on the agenda and desired outcome so that participants can stay focused on the task at hand. Invite people to the meeting who need to contribute and hold firm to the scheduled time frame. Whenever possible end meetings early to allow people to recharge their energy, reflect on the conversation, and take action on key takeaways.

IAM

Peer Employee Assistance Program



The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peer coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experiencing.

Mental Health MATTERS

STRESS AWARENESS MONTH IDEAS

Practice meditation

One of the most effective ways to deal with stress is to learn how to silence the mind. Meditation is one of the most popular methods of achieving this quiet.

Exercise

Another way to battle the debilitating effects of stress is to exercise. Whether you're a jogger, bicyclist or just like to take long walks, be sure to get some fresh air and exercise into your daily routine.

Visit your doctor

They're really in the best position to get you started on the path to a stress-free lifestyle. Make an appointment today.