

Dr. Larry S. Fong
Eileen Ailon
Dr. Jim Canniff
Dr. Valorie Selland
Hanita Dagan
Judy Bachmann
Jocelyn Monsma
Janet McMahan
Vikki Small

FAC NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER



What Causes All of This Stress?

In this newsletter, we will explore what stress is and what causes it. In the next, you will learn how to manage the stress in your life and protect yourself against it.



Stress Is a Response

Most experts define stress as a response to life situations like the following:

1. Having too many responsibilities
2. Vague or confusing expectations
3. Having to do unpleasant tasks
4. Facing too many distractions
5. Having to do tasks for which one is unprepared
6. Working with difficult people
7. Being bored
8. Being sick
9. Experiencing too many changes
10. Being in physical danger
11. Living or working in a crowded space
12. Not getting enough exercise
13. Poor nutrition
14. Not getting enough sleep
15. Not enough time to relax
16. Being dissatisfied with your physical appearance
17. Abusing drugs or alcohol, or being close to someone who abuses them

Continued on page 2

WHAT'S INSIDE...

WHAT CAUSES ALL OF THIS STRESS? CONT'D	2
WHAT CAUSES ALL OF THIS STRESS? CONT'D.....	3
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: MOVING TOWARD THE LIGHT	4
PARENTING COORDINATION WORKSHOP.....	5
ARBITRATION WORKSHOP.....	5

FONG AILON CANNIFF
115 1st St. SW
Calgary, AB T2P 0B3

www.worldpsych.ca
Phone: (403) 266-2017 Fax: (403) 266-4998



What Causes All of This Stress? Continued

Social and Cultural Causes of Stress

Stress has become a factor in our culture in the last 20 years because of things that were originally designed to make life less stressful. Conveniences such as ATM machines, microwave ovens, and fax machines have made life easier in many ways, but they also have woven an expectation of instant gratification into our culture. And this causes stress.

Here are a few other examples of products and services that were invented to make life more efficient and productive, but which sometimes seem instead to add to stress:

- 24-hour stores and restaurants
- One-hour photo developing
- Drive-thru fast food
- 10-minute oil change
- Web sites, with their instant access to unlimited information
- Catalogue and internet shopping
- Personal computers
- E-mail
- CNN Headline News
- 30-minute pizza delivery

Stress at Work

Almost everyone complains of stress at work these days. It often results from one of the following:

1. Having too much or too little work to do
2. Having to do work that is very complicated and demanding
3. Having to do work that is boring and repetitive
4. Having unclear goals and expectations
5. Having to follow changing or confusing procedures
6. Being at a career dead end
7. Working in a company with an impersonal management philosophy



Continued on page 3



What Causes All of This Stress? Continued

Who Work Stress Affects Most

Stress affects people in every type of work setting.

People at the top of organizations suffer from stress because of excessive workloads, unrealistic expectations, and isolation. The phrase “it’s lonely at the top” has some truth to it.

Middle Managers often experience stress because they have responsibility for the people who report to them, but lack the control to execute what is expected. With the recent epidemic of corporate downsizing, middle managers have also been given greater and greater workloads. Managers who manage to keep their jobs often feel like they are living in the shadow of termination.

Professionals suffer from their own brand of stress caused by monotony. Doctors, lawyers, and other professionals often perform the same kind of work for many years, resulting in boredom and desperation.

Workers at the lower levels of today’s organizations often feel stress caused by boredom and the frustration of dealing with the public. They also may feel less successful than their coworkers in higher-level jobs and may feel stressed by their lack of status.

Why Workplace Stress Has Increased

1. The nature of work has changed. The fight-or flight responses to stress are ineffective in response to the stresses of today’s life.
2. The workplace has become decentralized. In many places, people no longer work together in one place, but may be scattered around the world or work from home, connected by technology.
3. People change with each generation. Baby Boomers differ from Generation Xers in terms of their values, work ethic, and their definitions of success. These generational differences contribute to stress at work.

How Stress Affects Women

Both genders experience stress. It affects women in some unique ways, however. Here are a few of them:

1. Overall, women are still paid less than men for the same work.
2. Women still face a glass ceiling as they climb the corporate ladder. A recent report stated that only 2% of the members of top management of North American corporations are women.
3. Women who choose to have children are usually responsible for the logistics of child care.
4. Women with children often do more housework when they get home than their husbands do.
5. Compared with men, women with children also tend to experience more guilt feelings about leaving their children to go to work.

In the next newsletter; we will explore ways you can manage stress and keep it from detracting from the quality of your life.

West, B. (2002). What Causes All of This Stress? In L. Cope Grand (Ed.), *The Therapist’s Newsletter Kit*, (pp. 76 — 78). New York;; John Wiley & Sons, Inc.



Domestic Violence: Moving Toward the Light

Modern families face many challenges, one of which is domestic violence. Many theories exist that attempt to explain the root causes of domestic violence, with some suggesting that violence is a learned behaviour while others propose it is more often instigated by drug and/or alcohol abuse. The sociocultural view asserts, however, that it is the context in which the abuse occurs that may be the most important determinant. According to this perspective, unequal power relationships are more likely to generate issues of control, which may then manifest in abusive behaviour.

The question of how the abuse is able to continue is also important for understanding the root causes of domestic violence, as without the victim there would be no abuse. The theory of learned helplessness suggests that the victim learns to believe they are unable to control or stop the abuse from happening. In this regard, the victim becomes socially isolated and dependent on the very person whom abuses her. This dichotomous relationship may be explained by traumatic bonding, whereby strong, affective bonds develop between the abuser and the abused. Such bonds form when the victim blames herself for the violence and begins to identify with the abuser, particularly when he promises the abuse will never happen again. When he does harm her again, self-blame may be the difference between staying in the relationship and leaving to a safer environment.

So how can professionals working with clients involved in domestic violence offer positive assistance? By helping both the victim and the abuser find additional means of support within the community, you encourage a healthier resolution to a very difficult problem. Such interventions include:

1. Individual counselling for victim to build self-esteem and help her become more empowered to resist the abuse
2. Individual counselling for the abuser to help him take responsibility for his actions and acquire new anger-management skills
3. Family counselling for children who have witnessed the abuse, or been involved in the abuse, to help resolve feelings of anxiety, depression, anger, and/or guilt.

Domestic violence is a problem of great concern in our homes and in our communities, but through preventative action we may work together to help individuals rebuild their lives for today and for the future.

Vikki Small is a Registered Provisional Psychologist helping children and their families transition through the divorce experience. To obtain a complimentary copy of her handbook, "After the Rainbow: Parenting Beyond Divorce," please contact Vikki at Fong Ailon Canniff or visit her website: www.theparentpage.ca.



Parenting Coordination Workshop

By Dr. Larry Fong

Recently, Dr. Shienvold and I presented a workshop on Parenting Coordination at the AFCC Custody Conference in Atlanta, Ga. It was interesting to note the major differences in the model proposed by AFCC and that of many other jurisdictions in the United States. In the U.S., the model was primarily that of Special Master, however it was found that many jurisdictions in the U.S. could not accommodate such status.

While this office has conducted parenting arbitration since 1992, now more known as Parenting Coordination, the College of Alberta Psychologists are currently looking at setting forth some guidelines for Parenting Coordinations. More recently, in *Hercus v. Hercus*, an Ontario case, the Parenting Coordinator did not follow certain guidelines and the Award vacated.

Also, a recent article by Professor Nick Bala of Queens University addressed the issue of making recommendations in custody assessments. The conference was alive to the debate by Judges, lawyers and psychologists on the merits of making recommendations (versus no recommendations) and although this debate has continued for at least two decades, there appears to be great variation in the U.S.



SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS?

Do you have any suggestions for future articles, or just a comment regarding this newsletter? We welcome your feedback. Please contact Wanda Mueller at 266-2017 or at wmueller@worldpsych.ca.

Arbitration Workshop

By Eileen Ailon

In response to the ever increasing need to find effective interventions for families caught in high conflict post separation situations Fong Ailon Canniff has been providing services such as Parenting Coordination, which is based on a with prejudice model. For some families a decision making component to this intervention is a valuable and important aspect. Arbitration can play an important role in assisting parents to make decisions and then move on in their parenting responsibilities. After many attempts to find appropriate training in Arbitration, Fong Ailon Canniff assisted in organizing a 2 day workshop offered by Retired Judge Michael Porter on arbitration training for Parenting Coordinators. The workshop was informative and focused on arbitration to assist clients with parenting plans post divorce. Lawyers, psychologists and a social worker participated in studying about arbitration, in mock arbitrations, and in the writing up of arbitration awards. The participants felt the course was extremely worthwhile and wish to continue on to a more advanced workshop format. Others are expressing interest in taking this basic workshop in the future. Consideration is being given to offering both an initial and advanced workshop in the spring. In our office, Hanita Dagan, Jocelyn Monsma and Eileen Ailon took the workshop. Those interested in finding out more information about future training in this area please contact Eileen Ailon. Dr. Larry Fong and Judy Bachmann have previous training in Arbitration.