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Insomnia

8 Fixes for Troubled Sleep

Just as brushing and flossing every day can prevent gum disease, good sleep hygiene can fend off insomnia and even depression. Here are some tips for setting up a healthy sleep schedule.

1. **Set up a Solid Routine.** Organize your schedule so you can go to sleep and wake up around the same time each day. Such scheduling will train your body to sleep when you need it to and wake feeling rested.
2. **No Naps.** Even if you had a lousy night's sleep, don't nap during the day. Daytime napping will only make it harder for you to fall asleep at night. If you must nap, push back your bedtime by an equivalent amount of time.
3. **Dump Distractions.** The bedroom should be for sleep, so put the television, computer and radio in the living room. Keeping them in your room will only distract you from the task of sleeping.
4. **Get Out of Bed.** If you find yourself having difficulty falling asleep, don't stay in bed staring at the clock. Instead, move to another room and read a book until you feel sleepy again. Then, return to your bedroom to fall asleep.
5. **Make a List.** If anxiety about everything you need to get done is keeping you up, write a list of your undone tasks, so you can put them aside mentally.
6. **Skip the Caffeine and Alcohol.** Coffee may wake you up and a glass of wine before bed will help you doze off, but neither beverage allows your body to wake or fall asleep naturally, resulting in difficulty sleeping or waking without them.
7. **Exercise.** A good workout can help the body sleep through the night and feel more rested and energetic during the day.
8. **Think Positively.** As a silver lining, look at short term insomnia as a solution instead of a problem: "It's more time to get done what you need to get done."



Barrow, Karen (2007). Up All Night, Down All Day. *Psychology Today* March/April 2007, p56.

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Family Law Practice Note “7”

The Court of Queen’s Bench amended Family Law Practice Note “7” effective July 2006. Practice notes are directions of the Court, outside the Rules of Court to assist in the administration of justice and are inherent to the powers of the Court. They cannot supersede the Laws or Statutes, or the Rules of Court, but are complementary. This particular practice note is designed to assist the Court in dealing with a minority of separating and divorcing families who are engaged in conflict. Practice Note “7” may be used by the Court to appoint a “Parenting Expert” for the purpose of assisting, by providing interventions or assessments. A “Parenting Expert” is defined as a “psychologist, social worker or other professional, or team of professionals, with sufficient training and experience to be accepted by the Court as expert in matters relating to parenting, contact, custody and access to children.”

Section 4 of Practice Note “7” states that limitations imposed on Parenting Experts by the governing bodies were considered and the College of Alberta Psychologists and the Alberta College of Social Workers were consulted in its development. The Practice Advisory Committee had the opportunity to review drafts of the proposed document and provide feedback as to issues that might be problematic to psychologists in meeting their professional ethical obligations. These included the potential dual roles, confidentiality issues involving the release of records and information, imposed limitations on parties regarding the reporting of unprofessional conduct, the need to provide for the ability to use professional judgment in choosing psychological tests, and gaining informed consent from the parties.

It is important for psychologists to understand that this document has been developed by the Court to guide them in the administration of difficult family matters. The document has no regulatory weight in regards to psychologists who may be appointed under the Practice Note. For example, it provides no immunity for psychologists from being the subject of a complaint by a member of the public in the course of fulfilling an appointment under Practice Note “7”. Section 18 of the Practice Note may be viewed as suggesting such. The parties to the procedure may be accountable to the Court, if this forms part of an Order. The College, however, is required to act on a written, signed complaint.

Notwithstanding the acceptance of an appointment under Practice Note “7” psychologists are reminded that they are **not** exempt from compliance with the Standard of Practice (2005), the Canadian Code of Ethics (2000) for Psychologist, and the CAP Child Custody Assessment Guidelines. Psychologist accepting an appointment under Practice Note “7” would be well advised to very carefully consider issues of gaining consent, reviewing the limits to confidentiality and release of information with the parties, and limitations to recommendations and conclusions based on the information that may be gathered in working with the referred families. A psychologist should not accept an appointment which is beyond their experience and training. It is important to understand what is being requested at the outset and to determine whether services can be provided, while meeting all ethical and professional obligations of the profession. Psychologists are cautioned against using standard consent forms. A best practice consideration may be to develop, for each referral, a written agreement with the parties outlining such issues as the expectations, limits to confidentiality, payment for services, how information will be obtained and released, and how lack of cooperation or disagreement will be dealt with. Minimally, these issues should be verbally reviewed with the parties and the discussion documented. Requesting agreement from the parties to refrain from complaining to the College would be unacceptable.

The CAP Monitor Winter 2007, p3.



Not Your Parents' Retirement

Redefining Retirement

The idea of spending one's "golden years" in a rocking chair is vanishing with extraordinary rapidity. About 70% of baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) have a hobby or special interest to which they will dedicate a lot more time once they retire and 68% plan to spend plenty of time on recreation. Retirement is increasingly seen as an extended playtime, with opportunities to take up pursuits like scuba diving and exotic travel, which time constraints and financial obligations previously held out of reach.



While much fun is being had, there's also plenty of work. In fact, 79% of boomers plan to work in some capacity during their retirement years. It's now much more common to think in terms of phased retirement. As one's post-retirement years stretch into the 80's and beyond, the age of 65 is no longer the quasi death knell it once was. Professionals may transition from 9-to-5 work to the flexibility of consulting. Trades people may make the move from full-time labour to seasonal or occasional work. Some take up new careers, and others begin new lives as volunteers.

Of course, even with these changes some retirement issues remain the same. For example, some parents have a difficult time letting go of their children and moving into the next phase of their lives. While many parents will have no trouble dropping their teenage children off at college and then heading out for a week in Cabo San Lucas, other will have a harder time disconnecting. They continue to call, monitor, and attempt to maintain control at a level that is no longer appropriate. These "empty nesters" struggle to build an identity other than that of parent.

Many individuals also have trouble letting go of work identities. Even the opportunity to transition over time may leave some people uncertain of their identity. Someone who has 40 years—and a tremendous amount of self-esteem—invested in a particular work-related role can suddenly be faced with challenges they haven't experienced since adolescence. Who am I? How am I? Who is my peer group? What do I care about?

The spousal relationship is another area of very significant changes. Many people go from seeing their spouse only during evenings and weekends to a 24/7, in-your-face marriage—something they may never have experienced before. No matter which member of the couple is retiring, the relationship is going to change. And if both are retiring at the same time, these changes can be tremendous: sometimes liberating, sometimes catastrophic.

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While traditional retirees may have needed encouragement to stay active and not cut off from the world, many of today's retirees will be having an entirely different kind of experience. Instead of their world constricting, they may be entering a world of vastly increased possibilities. Newly freed from the constraints of children and a heavy workload, they find themselves entering a world that's dizzying in scope.

This free-floating and even frightening experience may be an opportunity for re-birth. Old roles have been fulfilled, old responsibilities taken care of; now is the time to break free from long familiar constraints and try something new. Desires and interests, which have been on hold, can now be fulfilled. Instead of a world without moorings, it can be a chance to explore a world of new opportunity. There is a prevailing cultural myth that creativity and inspiration are the domain of the young. Yet, history is replete with examples of people completing their greatest works after age 60. After all, Michelangelo did not begin working on St. Peter's Basilica until he was 70, and Frank Lloyd Wright did not complete the Guggenheim Museum until he was 89.

New Roles:

What Are the Options?

A recent study identified a number of different ways people are currently approaching retirement. For example, there are:

Continuers. This group continues to make use of existing skills and interests. They may keep working, but dial down their commitments. Or they may take the skills and personal connections acquired during a life-long avocation and build them into something much larger. A hobbyist may open a business related to the hobby, or an expert in a field may choose to write about what they've learned.

Adventurers. Life really opens up for this group. They take advantage of their newfound freedom to go in new directions, and may surprise friends and family with interests they've never discussed before. These are the middle managers who become ski instructors, and the short-order cooks who take up sky-diving.

Searchers. In this group, you'll find retirees who want to try out many different options. They use their time to sample the smorgasbord of life. After a season of bowling, perhaps a summer building campsites for disabled children, they then take a trip to Stonehenge.

Easy Gliders. For these people, it's all good. The best way to experience a day is to let it unfold. Unscheduled, unhurried, they cruise through their retirement years with laid back aplomb.

Involved Spectators. People who are interested in their world, but want to engage in a less active way, often become Involved Spectators. For example, a former stockbroker may become involved in watching the stock market and blogging about it.

Retreaters. This group tends to back off from the world, let go of former relationships, and possibly sink into depression.

This is going to be a time of tremendous change as the baby boomers redefine what it means to be "retired". If the past is any indication, this transition will be surprising, memorable, and a good time to fasten your seatbelt. In the words of actor turned financial company pitchman, Dennis Hopper, "Your generation is definitely not headed for bingo night."

Miller, John K., St. John, Christopher. Not Your Parents' Retirement:: Preparing for the Next Boomer Revolution. *Family Therapy Magazine January/February 2007*. pp. 30—35.



Sneezy, Meet Grumpy

The Emotional Toll of Allergies

When it comes to allergies, the solution may lie in how you perceive your situation. Researchers in Britain recently found that people who believe their allergies are severe and enduring suffer worse anxiety and depression as a result; those who feel personally in control of their condition and believe treatment will help are less psychologically distressed and report fewer somatic symptoms like headaches and weariness. The less you identify with your illness, they conclude, the easier it is to manage.



Four Steps to a Clear Head

1. First things first: Make sure you're properly diagnosed. It's important to talk to a health practitioner and not simply diagnose yourself.
2. Don't attribute all ailments to your allergy. Some of your symptoms may be unrelated, and giving your allergy too much credit can make you more anxious.
3. Seek emotional support from family, friends, and fellow allergy sufferers.
4. Refrain from dwelling on your negative emotion, which can spur stress, depression, and somatic symptoms.

Guzowski, Stephanie. Sneezy, Meet Grumpy The Emotional Toll of Allergies. *Psychology Today* June 2007. p. 27.

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.

New Program

Executive Resolution Services

Executive Resolution Services is a custom designed package developed to meet the needs of Senior Executives. Our focus is crisis management, and training and mediation to eliminate a crisis situation from occurring. This can involve anything from a Senior Executive dealing with a divorce, a parenting issue, a substance abuse issue, or any other personal issue that will directly impact them on the job, to all other job related issues requiring:

- Mediation and mediation training
- Conflict resolution
- Testing and interviewing of specific personality and emotional traits which can only be administered by a psychologist
- Sexual harassment investigation, mediation, and coaching

We provide customized programs and workshops in all of the above areas depending on your company's requirements.

We are finding that we are able to provide our services in a much quicker fashion than the Executive Assistance Programs offered by a typical EAP provider. We are more like a VIP level service for the executives in the firm. This allows for expedient service which reduces anxiety and therefore work performance at the executive level. With highly experienced professionals and confidential offices located near Eau Claire, we can see your executives in a timely fashion, and provide crisis management where required.

Karen Fawcett, Mediator, Consultant