



ENIGMA

NEWS AND VIEWS ON MENTAL HEALTH

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This newsletter was put together by the staff of the Otago Mental Health Support Trust.

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OTAGO MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TRUST

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- Advocacy, Consumer Networking
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DISCLAIMER

The opinions and articles expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Otago Mental Health Support Trust or anyone associated with the organisation



Here is the summer edition of Enigma, reaching a wide audience, all of you unique, interesting individuals and organizations.

What does summer mean? Does it mean, holidays, fun, warmer days, less power bills, more fresh fruit and veg? or does it mean more juggling of time with kids on their summer break, more financial stress of Christmas present buying, putting on a special meal, organizing care for your school kids if you work. Easier said than done when you live week to week. Where are you going to find that extra Christmas cash or money to spend on holiday outings? Is it as simple as writing out a list or making a plan? While not fool proof it may go a long way to saving your sanity.

Here are the top 10.

Christmas planning

1. Make a plan and stick to it
2. Prioritize, make a list, of who you are buying for and what you think may be a nice gift. Decide before of your price range.
3. If you haven't got any spare cash think of other ways you can show your love and appreciation (see our colour gift certificate insert!)
4. Write up a menu.
5. Build up your Christmas food treats by buying 2 items a week 2 months out.

Holiday Planning

1. Make a list of the things you (and your family) enjoy doing together(not shopping)
2. Put in a hat and pull each one out to do. If there are severe financial restraints make them realistic and free.
3. Pre-plan "kid minding" if you have to work.
4. Guilt free time at home reading a book.
5. Sitting in the sun.

OTAGO MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TRUST

PEER SUPPORT

ADVOCACY

EDUCATION

INFORMATION

ARE YOU NUTS - Understanding your stress

The origins of the word stress comes from old french "destresse" and from old Latin "stringere" meaning to draw tight. In the sense of mental strain it was used only occasionally until the late 1930s'. The concept of stress remains prominent in public health and owes much to the work of Hans Selye (1907–1982), the "father of stress." One of his main allies in this work has never been discussed as such: the tobacco industry. After an analysis of tobacco industry documents, we found that Selye received extensive tobacco industry funding and that his research on stress and health was used in litigation to defend the industry's interests and argue against a causal role for smoking in coronary heart disease and cancer." - taken from "Father of Stress" Meets "Big Tobacco": Hans Selye and the Tobacco Industry." To read the article go to www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

What has been determined however is that the main ingredients for stress are universal and for a situation to be stressful it has to contain more than one of the elements in the N.U.T.S. analogy.

So what is N.U.T.S. what does it stand for?

- Novelty: Something new you have not experienced before
- Unpredictability: Something you had no way of knowing it would occur.
- Threat to ego: Your competence is called in question.
- Sense of control: You feel you have little or no control over the situation.

While we cannot plan to create "stressless" life if we look at the elements of N.U.T.S. when an event or situation is coming up that would normally "stress" us out, we can to a degree minimize that stress.

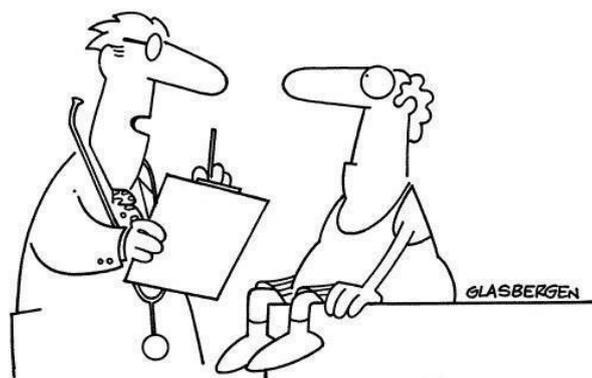
We can do that by developing coping strategies that work for us.

Some coping strategies may be:

1. **Be positive!** Look at each obstacle you encounter as a learning experience e.g. you may not have done well on your mid-term exam, but that has motivated you to study harder and ace your final exam.
2. **Make the choice not to over-react to stressors and deal with them one at a time** e.g. take a few deep breaths and carry on.
3. **Take an objective view of your stressor** e.g. is preparing dinner for 12 people really that horrible?
4. **Communicate!** Don't ruminate or bottle up your emotions, as this will lead to an explosion later on.
5. **Accept yourself (and others).** No one is perfect and there is always room for mistakes.
6. **Make connections with people.** Social support is key!
7. **Deal effectively with mistakes** i.e. Learn from your mistakes and apply them to future decision making.
8. **Deal effectively with successes also!** This will build on your competence.
9. **Develop self-discipline and control** e.g. train yourself to study harder in preparation for your final exam, or train yourself to work out four times a week to lose those pounds you gained since last Thanksgiving dinner!
10. **Maintenance!** Practice, practice, practice for a long life of resilient living!

(Coping strategies taken from Centre of Human studies on stress)

Some thoughts.....



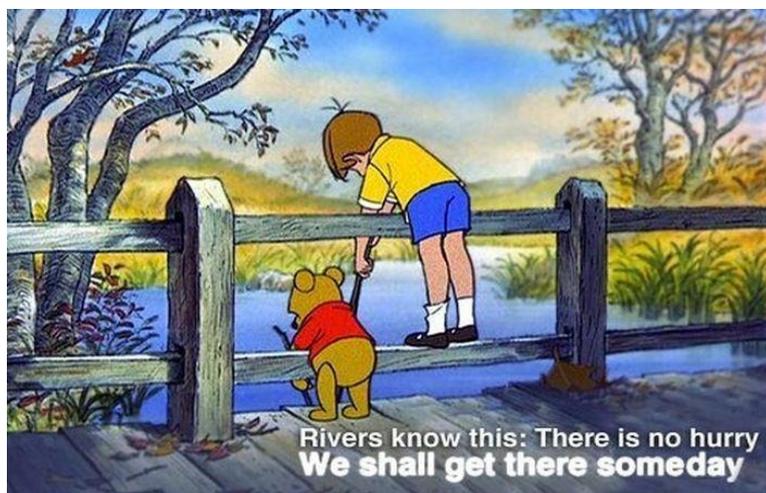
"We can't find anything wrong with you, so we're going to treat you for Symptom Deficit Disorder."

Sometimes we don't need to over analyse our stress, just that it is part of life and it does not require us to diagnose it! What is stressful for one person though may not be stressful for another. It is so individualized. For example I knew a DJ who ran a high rating morning drive time radio show. He had a diagnosis of bipolar disorder yet for him this was a wonderful job and did not add to his stress. Yet for someone without any mental illness, speaking publically can be VERY stressful!

Ho Ho Ho.....



Christmas is a funny time of the year. So much time and money and advertisements is spent promoting joy, happiness, relaxation and festivity. However lots of people can relate to the above cartoon where the Christmas spirit can simply give you a headache! And what's the answer? Well maybe even laughing about it all can be therapeutic!



Winnie the Pooh reminds me how I need to slow down. For me stress so often relates to hurry and thoughts whizzing around my head. Just to sit still is often very difficult.

I decided recently to do John Kirwan's journal online at www.depression.org.nz. One of the early activities was on mindfulness. I downloaded a voice recording of a woman talking me through a breathing exercise which also made me relax my muscles as well. I was quite surprised that I did actually start relaxing and that the thoughts that went round and round in my head actually stopped – for a short time anyway! For me I likened it to being on the platform of a railway station and watching trains come in the station and leave. Each train had some distressing thought on it for example "how am I going to get this report done in time?" or "How are I going to get through this situation?" Through this mindfulness exercise I have started to think of these "thought" trains as coming into then OUT of the station. In other words let these thoughts in then let them flow out and NOT to dwell on them as if I have to try and solve them!

Grant Cooper

Being is more important than doing, and doing things together is more important than doing things alone.

Henri Nouwen



Have a look at the insert we have created for you.
Your 'gift certificate' can be written in your own words as your gift to someone in your life!

Some gift ideas could be:

- ❖ Dig the garden
- ❖ Babysit
- ❖ Walk the dog
- ❖ Lunch on me
- ❖ Morning or afternoon tea
- ❖ Outing of your choice
- ❖ Game of your choice
- ❖ Spring clean
- ❖ Mow lawns
- ❖ Room make-over
- ❖ Garage cleanout
- ❖ Op-shop



Women's Group held on the last Friday of every month. A friendly informal meeting giving opportunity to make new friends, and share experiences.

Next group will be on 30th January 2015
1-3pm meet at our rooms, Queens Building, 109 Princes Street.

NOTICE OF AGM

The Otago Mental Health Support Trust Annual General Meeting (AGM) is on
Tuesday 16th December
12 Noon at our offices.
All welcome

Otago Mental Health Support Trust Trustees

We are currently looking for new Trustees. Trustees provide the strategic direction of the organization

If you are interested or have any questions please contact Grant on 4772598



Summer BBQ!

You are invited to our annual Woodhaugh Garden BBQ on Tuesday 27th January from 12 Noon to 3pm
If you want to come along please let us know so we can ensure we all have enough to eat!

Otago Mental Health Support Trust will be closed FROM:

Friday 19th December midday and

Re-open Monday 5th January



Incite is a group of interested people who use or have used mental health services. We discuss and take action on issues of interest to consumers. We meet monthly in Dunedin.

For more information phone 4772598.