

# STRESS

## **“America’s New Plague” and the Duty to Fairly Represent**



***Wayne Dibofsky,  
Healthcare Assistance with Member Support***



# Introduction

Stress is so ubiquitous and so dangerous that the American Institute of Stress calls it "America's New Black Plague".

This workshop reviews the signs and symptoms related to stress, anxiety and how it effects people in the workplace, both emotionally and physically. It is hands on for participants with self-evaluation ,education, humor and tools for the future. Geared to helping members with coping strategies and how to seek help if and when it may be needed.

"If Black Plague is what killed most people in Europe in the Middle Ages, then stress is what's killing us the most right now," said Dr. Daniel L. Kirsch, the president of the Institute.

**“WE PROVIDE JOB PROTECTIVE SERVICES BY UTILIZING NEW JERSEY STATE PUBLIC LAW 2011,CHAPTER 69,TO TEMPORARILY SUSPEND ALL DISCIPLINARY ACTION, UNTIL A MEDICAL LEGAL DEFENSE IS CONSTRUCTED OF MITIGATING FACTS UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILTIES ACT.”**

# STRESS FACTS

- 43% of all adults suffer adverse health effects from stress.
- 75% to 90% of all doctor's office visits are for stress-related ailments and complaints.
- Stress is linked to six of the leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver, and suicide.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) declared stress a hazard of the workplace. In terms of lost hours due to absenteeism, reduced productivity and workers' compensation benefits, stress costs American industry more than \$300 billion annually.
- The lifetime prevalence of an emotional disorder is more than 50% often due to chronic, untreated stress reactions.

## KNOW THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS



# Checking Under the Hood

Be honest, no excuses: think about what you can do to better support yourself

- What is the current state of your general health?
- Do you get enough sleep?
- Do you wake up feeling refreshed?
- Do your eating habits reflect your dietary requirements and keep you at a healthy weight?
- Have you had a health checkup in the last year?
- Do you have a regular exercise routine that increases your heart rate for approximately 30 minutes per day?
- Are you attending to your spiritual or purposeful self?
- Are you engaging in stimulating activities that cause you to learn new things and stretch yourself intellectually?
- How is your stress level?
- How are you dealing with stress in your life?

Create a chart to help you visualize how you may make changes in the future; this is a powerful way to clarify your thoughts

HOLD ON

LET GO

# HOW STRESSED ARE YOU?

Rate yourself as to how you react in each of the situations listed below

\*If your score is 51-60 your stress level is high

\*If your score exceeds 60, you are stressed and in danger of health issues

**NOTE:** this quiz is not a medical diagnostic tool

\* The source of this quiz is unknown.

Scoring:

4= Always

3= Frequently

2= Sometimes

1=VERY rarely



1. Do you try to do as much as possible in the least amount of time? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you become impatient with delays or interruptions? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you always have to win at games to enjoy yourself? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you unlikely to ask for help with a problem? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you constantly seek the admiration and respect of others? \_\_\_\_\_

# HOW STRESSED ARE YOU?

8. Do you constantly strive to better your position? Increase your achievements?  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you spread yourself too thin? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you multi task on a regular basis? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you get angry/ irritable frequently? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you have little time for hobbies? Self time? \_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you have little time for exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Do you have a tendency to talk quickly? To hasten conversations? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Do you consider yourself to be “driven?” \_\_\_\_\_

16. Are you anxious about deadlines in your job? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Do you feel guilty when you relax? \_\_\_\_\_



# HOW STRESSED ARE YOU?

18. Do you find yourself getting upset by trivial things? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Do you fail to rely upon your network of relatives and acquaintances? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Are you unable to organize/ manage my time effectively? \_\_\_\_\_

If your score is 51-60 your stress level is high

If your score exceeds 60, you are stressed and in danger of health issues

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# EMPLOYEE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS ON THE JOB

- Low productivity, carelessness, takes needless risks.
- Poor concentration – deteriorating work habits.
- Unexplained absenteeism, misuse of FMLA; persistent tardiness, disregards consequences.
- Anger management issues; aggression and/or outbursts.
- Interpersonal problems on the job – inability to get along with coworkers/supervisors.
- Avoidance and isolating at work (i.e. excessively long lunch breaks).
- Higher than average accident rate and Worker's Compensation claims.
- Inconsistent work quality, frequent mistakes, blames others for poor performance. (**verbal and/or written warnings, and complaints of harassment**)
- Inappropriate conversation about personal problems at work, unpaid loans from coworkers.





# What is the ADA's Definition of a Person with a Disability?

A **Person with a Disability** is anyone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.

In addition to those people who have visible disabilities – persons who are blind, deaf or use a wheelchair – the definition includes people with a whole range of invisible disabilities. These include **psychological problems**, learning disabilities or some chronic health impairment such as epilepsy, diabetes, arthritis, cancer, cardiac problems, HIV/AIDS and more.

Documentation of the disability may be required. A person is considered to be a person with a disability if he/she has a disability, **has a record of a disability** or is regarded as having a disability.



# CONFIDENTIALITY A MUST

On May 9, 2011 New Jersey adopted into law **Chapter 69, the nation's strongest statute dealing with employee assistance programs (EAP).**

Today, all public employees, their spouse, civil union or domestic partner, an unmarried child of the employee who is less than 31 years of age and lives with the employee in a regular parent-child relationship is eligible for EAP assistance to resolve problems; which may affect the employees work performance irrespective of whether the problems originate on the job. These problems include but are not limited to, marital and family problems, emotional, substance abuse, gambling, financial, and medical problems.

Under the statute, **no New Jersey public employer can take any disciplinary action against employees or a dependent of an employee if they are participants in an EAP.** The law also extends the requirement of confidentiality shall apply to all information related to the employees assistance program, including but not limited to any statements, materials, documents, evaluations, impressions, conclusions, findings or acts taken in the course of the EAP. This law now extends into New Jersey greater standards than are currently covered by federal guidelines.

The law was drafted by Wayne Dibofsky the Director of Member Services for HealthCare Assistance with Member Support. If you are interested in hearing how this legislation can help your members please contact Wayne at 1-888-828-7826 or 908-513-9946.

**“You can’t exercise your rights...if you don't know your rights”**

# MEET OUR PRESENTER

## Wayne Dibofsky

### Director of Members Services

Read: "Chapter 69 Confidentiality/Job Protection" HCAMS welcomes former NJEA senior lobbyist Wayne Dibofsky. Well known in legislative, union, and corporate circles, Dibofsky brings a commitment to quality healthcare and due-process rights. Hallmark in a distinguished 30 year career advocating member rights is the recent statute ensuring confidentiality standards for public employees seeking assistance programs. Chapter 69 of the New Jersey State Law, drafted by Wayne, was adopted on May 9, 2011 and is considered the nations strongest statute dealing with EAP's. "I've been in the trenches protecting members for 30 years at NJEA; it is a natural extension of my mission to roll up my sleeves at HCAMS advancing that promise" says Dibofsky.

Advocating for union members and their families utilizing state and federal laws that are specific to job protection, Wayne is uniquely qualified to train your union leaders on issues related to stress management and representing members.



**HealthCare Assistance** *with Member Support, LLC*  
Terry Livorsi, 1-888-828-7826, *Member Assistance Counselor, CEAP*

[www.unionsupport.org](http://www.unionsupport.org)

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- On-Site Planning
- Field Services

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- Aid in treatment choices
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- Utilization of Medical/Legal Remedies
- Job Protective Employee Assistance (EAP)

**Assistance**

- Drug & Alcohol Dependence
- Sleeplessness
- Addictions of all kinds
- Anger management Issues
- Stress Related Conditions
- Adolescent Problems
- Health Related Job Discipline
- Relationship Problems

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