



## DEALING WITH THE STRESS OF JOB LOSS

by John Reid, Racine County Workforce Development Center

It seems like every day we hear about more and more companies that are letting employees go. You probably know at least one person who's lost a job, if you aren't in that position yourself. Make no mistake – losing a job is no small thing, even beyond the obvious loss of income. On the Holmes and Rahe Stress Rating Scale, job loss is one of the top ten stressors for adults. Psychologists know that most people losing a job go through some or all of the same stages of grief as a person coping with the death of a loved one.

There are many ways of dealing with the stress of losing a job. Some of them may appear to help in the moment, but in the long run they only create more problems and can make getting a new job even harder. These include drinking too much, taking drugs, overeating, sleeping too much, putting off a job search and verbal and/or physical violence towards others.

Healthy ways of managing and coping with the stress of job loss include:

- Making time for leisure activities that bring you joy, such as spending time in nature, reading a good book, working on a hobby, keeping a journal, being with friends, playing with a pet, etc.
- Keeping your sense of humor. This includes the ability to laugh at yourself. Watch funny movies or TV shows or read funny stories. The act of laughing helps your body fight stress in a number of ways.
- Exercising regularly. Make time for at least 30 minutes of exercise, three times per week. It is also imperative to get enough sleep to keep your mind sharp and your mood upbeat.
- Watching what you put into your body by eating a healthy diet. Reduce your intake of caffeine and sugar. Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs not prescribed by your doctor. Physical condition directly affects mental outlook and attitude.

Ultimately, the best stress-control techniques help you to have a positive attitude, which is very important to your search for a new job. How you think has a profound affect on your emotional and physical well-being and how you then appear to others. Although it might seem easier said than done, by focusing on the good things about yourself you are much more likely to feel good and act confidently. Take some time to sit down and write a list of your good qualities and all the things you appreciate in life. Put the list where you can look at it often throughout the day to boost your self-esteem.

At the same time, start your job search now. The Racine County Workforce Development Center at 1717 Taylor Avenue in Racine and 380 McCanna Parkway in Burlington is designed to help you. Here you will find career counselors, workshops and facilities designed to assist your search. We will help you identify your strengths and transferable skills and the jobs that take advantage of them. We will help you write your resume, develop and implement a networking plan, practice your interviewing skills and put together an individual job search strategy. All of these services are free of charge.

Knowing that you are actively and productively working on finding your next job will keep your spirits up and your attitude positive. Having an upbeat, positive attitude will make you a more attractive candidate to employers. Times are difficult, but they are not hopeless. Let the Workforce Development Center be your partner in working toward a brighter future. For further information please call the Racine office at 262-638-6425 or Burlington at 262-767-5399.