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Contact: Pat Brinkman
FCS Educator, Fayette County
PH: 740-335-1150
Fax: 740-335-2757
Web-site: www.fayette.osu.edu
Contact: Melanie Hart
FCS Educator, Greene County
PH: 937-372-9971
Fax: 937-372-4070
Web-site: www.greene.osu.edu

Contact: Susan Holladay
FCS Educator, Clinton County
PH: 937-382-0901
Fax: 937-382-4995
Web-site: www.clinton.osu.edu
Contact: Rose Merkowitz
FCS Educator, Highland County
PH: 937-393-1918
Fax: 937-393-0222
Web-site: www.highland.osu.edu
Contact: Christine Olinsky
FCS Educator, Montgomery County
PH: 937-224-9654
Fax: 937-224-5110
Web-site: www.montgomery.osu.edu

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FOR RELEASE

Five County Solutions

Fifth Article in a Series of Ten

“Helping You Manage Between Jobs”

Stress – We all live with some stress but now your stress level is probably off the charts. How do you handle that stress without it having devastating effects on your health and relationships?

You may feel tense and angry, frustrated, experience mood swings, depressed, discouraged, and/or lashing out at others. These feelings are normal. Talking about your feelings can help. Your family may also be experiencing some of these feelings, so it is important to express to each other what feelings you are having. Then you can work together to help each other make changes that may relieve some of the stress.

Keep yourself involved in daily routines as much as possible or find ways to keep occupied and involved. Fill your time with things you have been meaning to get done but haven't had the time, spend more time with your family, learn or develop a new skill, participate in some recreation, or volunteer some of your time to help someone else, your church or community. Volunteering can help improve your own self-esteem and even add to your resume.

We are better able to cope with stress if we take care of our body. This means eating healthy, exercising and getting enough sleep. Reducing alcohol and cigarette consumption can provide savings as well as improved health. Supermarket shopping tips will be in a future article to help you eat healthy and spend less at the grocery store.

Regular exercise not only is a way to keep fit but can reduce tension and help your self-esteem. Consider taking a walk (or walking the dog), bicycling, jogging, dancing, playing a sport with your children or friends for fun, or working in the yard and/or garden.

Take a stress break and participate in an activity you enjoy such as listening to music, watching

a movie, taking a bubble bath, reading a book, or working at your favorite hobby. Consider trying relaxation exercises which can help reduce the tension.

Monitor your stress by recognizing symptoms of stress and how you are reacting to it. Although stress cannot be eliminated you can take some steps that may help such as revising the family spending plans and clarifying family roles and responsibilities. Discuss all changes and plans with your family it will help to reduce tensions and increase family support and acceptance. Challenge your children to view this as a learning experience and develop skills such as thrifty shopping.

To help with coping you may find that writing down what your “stressors” are and listing possible ways to handle each one provides direction and assistance in dealing with them. (You may be too close to the situation to see any solutions, so consult others if needed.) Examine your list, determine priorities and decide on what solutions or changes will work best for you. Develop a schedule that you can follow to make changes and take some action.

Avoid isolation as it is important to communicate with family and friends. This assists you and them through this process. Consider joining a support group as this will assure you that your feelings and struggles are normal. They will also be able to provide direction if they notice “crisis signs.”

If you are experiencing excessive stress it is important to seek some outside help. “Crisis signs” indicating that outside help is needed include:

- Feeling depressed
- Abusing family members
- Thoughts about suicide
- Disciplining your child/children too harshly
- Considering a separation from your spouse
- Drinking alcohol in the morning, hiding liquor, or having 2 or 3 drinks or beer every night.
- Feel you can't cope or can't think of anything good to say
- Don't have anyone you can talk to
- Feeling overwhelmed by bills
- Your child is acting out a lot or getting into trouble
- Experiencing panic attacks or hallucinations

Community resources are available to help in these situations. Check with your family doctor, Greene County Combined Health District, clergy, or lay groups. Check with community agencies just as Job and Family Services for assistance.

Sources:

Purdue Extension, (2008) *When Your Income Drops: Fact Sheet 2 Control Stress*. Downloaded from the web at http://www.ces.purdue.edu/Living_on_Less/IncomeDrops.html.

New York State Department of Labor, *Handling Your Job Loss* downloaded from web site: <http://www.labor.state.ny.us/careerservices/finajob/handle.shtm>

University of Minnesota Extension, (2007) *Getting Through Tough Times: Controlling Stress* downloaded from the web <http://www.extension.umn.edu/moneyeveryday/>.

Many of you are facing uncertain times due to future job losses in our area. Ohio State University Extension wants to help with accurate information on how to deal with these uncertain times and the financial and emotional strain you will experience.

Family and Consumer Sciences Educators in these five adjoining counties (Clinton, Fayette,

Greene, Highland, and Montgomery) are working together to provide information through news articles, factsheets, and possible class sessions. You can contact us at any time for more information and resources. In Greene County, please contact Melanie Hart at (937) 372-9971 or hart.382@cfaes.osu.edu for more information.

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