



## Economic Troubles Often Lead to Mental Health & Addiction Problems

Too many businessmen and women seem to be coping with job loss or financial reversals with alcohol, illegal substances or both according to experts interviewed in an MSNBC report.

***“People drink more in hard economic times....but employers have not done enough to help employees cope.”***

Joseph Califano –Founder, National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse; Former U.S. Secretary of Health,

Housing foreclosures, huge investment losses and job losses lead many to let off steam with alcohol or drugs. The MSNBC story focused mainly on New York and Connecticut residents.



## East Tennesseans Anxious Too

East Tennessee is not immune to the same problems. Open the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* any day and you are greeted with home foreclosure notices, job loss news at area manufacturers or other large employers or losses to retirement investments. The MHA has been a very helpful resource to these and many others experiencing stress and anxiety about the economy. In fact use of the Anxiety Screening tool on our website is up 350% from a year ago and 125% since November 2008.

## Lawford & Miller Featured Speakers at Mental Health Matters in the Workplace Conference June 5, 2009

“*What’s stressing your employees*” is the theme of our annual conference for employers. Christopher Kennedy Lawford, actor and author about his own recovery and Clare Miller, Director of the Partnership for Workplace Mental Health are just two of our featured presenters.

Stressors, whether they be job related, at home, personal, financial, health or caregiving related are all distractions at work and greatly contribute to poor employee health and wellbeing, increased healthcare costs, reduced productivity and attendance.

Employer representatives, including CEOs, human resources, supervisors and others should plan to attend to learn more about how stress impacts mental health at your workplace and what to do to create a healthy workplace. Pre Registration is required by calling 865-584-9125. A nominal fee is required.



## Stressed in America!

Do you turn off the evening news so you can avoid the latest stressful and depressing news about the economy, the stock markets, your retirement planning, health or local crime? You are not alone. APA finalized their Stress in America 2008 Survey and found:

### Our Most Stressful - Stressors

- 81% ~ Money**
- 80% ~ Economy**
- 67% ~ Work**
- 67% ~ Family health problems**
- 64% ~ Family responsibilities / Care Giving**
- 62% ~ Housing costs**
- 62% ~ Relationships**
- 61% ~ Personal health**
- 56% ~ Job stability**
- 48% ~ Personal safety**

## Understanding Stress

*How do you personally experience stress?*

Biologically, stress is a condition caused by the fight or flight response which is intended to help people take defensive action in a dangerous situation.

Stress is “a condition or feeling experienced when the **demands exceed** the personal and social **resources** the individual is able to mobilize.”

It is important not only to be aware of your own personal stress levels, but also those of your coworkers.

When your peers are struggling with stress management their loss of productivity, absenteeism, health complications, and negative coping patterns (ranging from short tempers to violent behavior) have a direct impact on you.

Job stress is “the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the **requirements** of the job **do not match** the capabilities, **resources**, or needs of the worker.”

Also, it is imperative to understand the differences between stressors and challenges. Challenges are difficulties that you can mobilize the resources to overcome. Facing a challenge can be rewarding and help you learn new things. You should not only be aware of your own personal stress levels, but also those of your coworkers. This can increase your own stress levels as you may try to carry some of their responsibilities or maintain a calm work environment.

### Stress Symptoms Vary

- **Irritability or anger**
- **Fatigue**
- **Nervous or anxious**
- **Lack of interest, motivation or energy**
- **Depressed or sad feelings**
- **Headaches**
- **Crying**
- **Stomach / indigestion problems**
- **Muscular tension**
- **Decreased sex drive**
- **Chest tightness**
- **Feeling faint or dizzy**

## Nine Stress Management Tips

- 1. Take one thing at a time.**
- 2. Know your limits.** Learn to say, "No!"
- 3. Don't try to be superman or superwoman.**
- 4. Exercise.** Thirty minutes of physical activity per day helps both body and mind.
- 5. Hobbies.** Take a break and do something you enjoy.
- 6. Adopt a healthier lifestyle.** Get adequate rest, eat right, limit your use of caffeine and alcohol, and balance work and play.
- 7. Share your feelings.** Don't try to cope alone.
- 8. Be flexible!**
- 9. Get plenty of sleep!** 6 hours per night is not enough! Most people need 7-8 hours nightly to recharge their batteries.

## What if it's more than stress???

Free screenings for Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Anxiety Disorders, Eating Disorders and Alcohol abuse are available on our website.

### Follow These Six Steps For a Free Online Screening

1. Go to [WWW.MHAET.COM](http://WWW.MHAET.COM)

2. Click on "Mental Health Information"

3. Click on your County

4. Click on a screening tool

5. Complete the tool

6. Print results and take to the doctor

### Get Educated About Mental Health!

Lack of symptom knowledge is the leading barrier to accessing mental health care. Our staff can do presentations for your employees, church group or civic organization about stress, depression or other mental health issues. *Where have we been lately?*

- Knox County PTA
- Hardin Valley Academy PTA
- Episcopal Church of the Good Shepard
- Westside Unitarian Church
- DRD Medical Clinic
- Helen Ross McNabb Center
- Carson Newman College
- TN Valley Homeless Coalition
- New Center School, Sevierville
- Oak Ridge School System
- Catholic Charities



## Pediatricians Urged to Routinely Screen Teens for Depression

Fifty percent of adults who have mental illness, had their symptoms start as teenagers. Most teens will suffer needlessly for 10-12 years or more before entering treatment. This delay leads to greater impairment, if not psychiatric disability.

Worse still, **6%** or **2 million** teens suffer from depression yet will go undiagnosed in the place where help should be most readily available to them, the Pediatrician's office, unless important clinical practice changes occur.

### Shocking Facts

**6%** of U.S. Teens suffer from Depression

**27.7%** of Knox County Students Meet Diagnostic Criteria for Depression

(2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey.  
Knox County Health Department)

The U.S. Prevention Task Force recommended that all teenagers be "routinely" screened for depression at all pediatric clinics. This is a bold move meant to identify teens earlier so that interventions have a greater chance to be effective.



Screening all teens, not just those at risk (chronic illness, parental mental illness) will help prevent other teens from suffering depressive episodes needlessly. Because illnesses like Depression can start at any time, annual screenings will simply help catch symptoms earlier.

The Mental Health Association of East Tennessee has screening tools available for Pediatric Clinics. Parents may also complete an online screening tool at our website, [www.mhaet.com](http://www.mhaet.com). Follow the steps described above.

## Insomnia Raises Suicide Risk

Tennessee's escalating number of suicides naturally makes us curious about suicidal risk factors. University of Michigan researchers point out that sleep difficulties can be a significant predictor of suicidal risk.



The greater the types of sleep problems a person had, raised the odds a person had suicidal thoughts, planned a suicide or attempted suicide. Sleep problems cited include:

- Waking up too early
- Difficulty falling asleep
- Lying awake at night

~ “ People who suffer chronic sleep problems are more likely to think about suicide or actually attempt suicide.”

Marcin Wojnar, Researcher, University of Michigan and the Medical University of Poland

### How Much Sleep Do You Need?

~ **Only 6 hours of sleep per night for five days in a row is like not sleeping at all!!**

~ **Most adults need 7-8 hours of sleep per night to recharge their ‘batteries.’ If you are not getting enough sleep, consult your doctor.**

## Caffeine Addiction



The problem with caffeine is the longer-term effects, which tend to spiral. For example, once the adrenaline wears off, you face fatigue and depression. So what are you going to do? You consume more caffeine to get the adrenaline going again. As you might imagine, having your body in a state of emergency all day long isn't very healthy, and it also makes you jumpy and irritable.

*“Small doses of caffeine are ok. Many people start each day with a few cups of coffee or tea . However, limiting caffeinated drinks to morning hours is a wise decision“*

Jennifer Tedder, MHAET Program Coordinator

The most important long-term problem is the effect that caffeine has on **sleep**. Adenosine reception is important to sleep, and especially to deep sleep. The half-life of caffeine in your body is about six hours. That means that if you consume a big cup of coffee with 200 mg of caffeine in it at 3:00 p.m., by 9:00 p.m. about 100 mg of that caffeine is still in your system. You may be able to fall asleep, but your body will probably miss out on the benefits of deep sleep. That deficit adds up fast. The next day you feel worse, so you need caffeine as soon as you get out of bed. The cycle continues day after day.

This is why 90 percent of Americans consume caffeine every day. Once you get in the cycle, you have to keep consuming the drug. Even worse, if you try to stop consuming caffeine, you get very tired and depressed, and you get a terrible, splitting headache as blood vessels in the brain dilate. These negative effects force you to run back to caffeine even if you want to stop.



## Annual Membership Campaign Starts

*We are grateful to the many long term donors who have contacted us to advise us that despite the economy, the Mental Health Association and its fine programs, will remain in their charitable giving plans in 2009.*

*The MHAET knows everyone's budgets are tighter this year and we respectfully asks our donors to maintain their giving to the MHA at the same level as last year if they can. Thanks in advance for your support. ~ Ben Harrington, Executive Director*

**Those you help with your gift are your family, your friends, your neighbors and your coworkers. Help them because they would help you. *Send your check today!* Your gift of ...**

**\$50** – Will provide educational materials to 200 people.

**\$100** – Will provide mental health screenings for 30 people suffering from unrecognized symptoms of depression, anxiety or an eating disorder

**\$250** – Provides client or family services by helping 10 persons access the specialized mental health care.

**\$1000** – Provides *Mental Health 101* to 500 students

## Thank you 2008 Campaign Donors

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- Helen Ross McNabb Center**
- Cornerstone of Recovery**
- Horizon Health**
- Bradford Health Services**
- Blount Memorial Counseling & Concern EAP**

**Mount Rest Foundation Fund Announces Grant**

The Mental Health Matters in the Workplace Program has received a grant from the Mount Rest Foundation Fund at the East Tennessee Foundation. This grant will support outreach efforts with employers who wish to help their employees struggling with stress and unrecognized or untreated mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety.



**You** can support the **Mental Health Association** with a designated or undesignated contribution to



the **United Way of Greater Knoxville** and through the **Combined Federal and Campus Chest Charitable Giving Campaigns.**

**Mental Health Association  
of East Tennessee  
P.O. Box 32731  
Knoxville, TN 37930-2731**



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Real, Diagnosable, Treatable**

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