

# Meet stress head-on

United Press International  
CHICAGO — Forget meditation and biofeedback in favor of facing stressful situations head-on.

That's the advice of psychologists Suzanne Kobasa and Salvatore Maddi of University of Chicago's Department of Behavioral Sciences. They say stress is inevitable.

Rather than try to escape stress, the researchers said in an interview, people should develop techniques to cope with it and perhaps even take advantage of it.

"Some people handle stress very well," Ms. Kobasa said, and avoid ulcers, heart attacks, insomnia, nervousness and other signs of stress.

The notion we have to run away from it was very distressful to me. To find out how people coexist with stress without harmful effects and in some cases thrive on it, Ms. Kobasa and Maddi studied 837 middle and upper level men executives in a large utility company.

Some business executives — "hardy executives" — successfully cope with stress without suffering such side effects as high blood pressure, ulcers and heart attacks.

Three personality traits differentiate hardy executives from those who become ill under stress, the researchers said.

A hardy executive has a commitment to life and a desire to continue grappling with problems and setbacks, with an ability to recognize one's distinctive values, goals and priorities.

The same type of executive has control over what occurs in his life and both can and will choose among various courses of action to defuse the stressful events.

They found another type of executive meets a challenge to change, knowing where to turn for resources to coping with stress and coping quickly from adjustments made.

Highly stressed executives who will consider the world worthless, feel overwhelmed and powerless to cope and have an aversion to change, perceiving security as the status quo, they said.

"Some stress cannot be avoided," Ms. Kobasa said, "such as a parent being or a job transfer."

As a result, she said, people who adopt the "hardy executive" approach to stress — no matter what their occupation — will be the better for it.

As far as executives and other company employees are concerned, company physicians should encourage them to adopt the personality dispositions and perceptions of the hardy executives, the researchers said, but they should do so positively.

"Neither meditation nor biotherapy fit well into the traditional American business scene," Ms. Kobasa said. "It interrupts the work day and encourages passivity, not the aggressive tackling of a problem."

"If the best advice a company official can give is to avoid stress, the health profession has failed. We social scientists should be able to illuminate ways of developing the kinds of attitudes, goals and motivations which foster both a productive and healthy life."

She said physicians should consider psychotherapy for employees, projecting "that life best led is a strenuous process, and that fulfillment of human capabilities is ultimately more satisfying than is rest, leisure and easy security."

# Texas suburbs, growing regions

United Press International  
AUSTIN, Texas — Suburban areas outside Texas' major cities are the fastest growing regions of the state, a University of Texas Bureau of Business Research official said.

Dr. Charles P. Zlatkovich, research associate at the bureau, said the areas of Texas growing the most during the 1970-75 period were within the 25 standard metropolitan statistical areas, but outside the city limits of major cities in those areas.

Zlatkovich said estimates by the U.S. Bureau of the Census show Texas gained about 1,046,000 residents in the five-year period, with more than 88 percent of that growth within the 25 metropolitan areas.

Zlatkovich said about 59 percent of the state's growth, and more than 66 percent of the metropolitan area growth, has been inside the metropolitan areas but outside the central cities.

Zlatkovich said the central city portions of four Texas metropolitan statistical areas reported net losses of population between 1970 and 1975. The four were the Dallas-Fort Worth area, the Beaumont-Port Arthur area, the Sherman-Denison area, and the Wichita Falls area.

The Dallas-Fort Worth area, the largest metropolitan statistical area in the state, showed the largest drop in central city population. Dallas lost about 31,500 residents between 1970 and 1975, while Fort Worth lost about 35,000, Zlatkovich said.

But the suburban area of those two cities grew rapidly, gaining 206,000 residents in the five-year period.

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