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ABSTRACT

The primer is designed to help promote mental, physical, and emotional health in school personnel and to prevent job burnout, with primary focus on interventions that special education and special services personnel, administrators, and teacher trainers can implement to manage stress and prevent burnout. Nine chapters address the following topics: the problems of stress and burnout for educators, the problem of burnout for special services personnel, assessment of individual and organizational stress, modification of special education policies and procedures, inservice training, management of stress and prevention of burnout, the administrator's role, the role of the special services professional, and strategies for preservice training. A final chapter summarizes each of the nine previous chapters and concludes that on a formal level, schools and colleges of education in cooperation with local school districts should encourage and support major research in the areas of stress management and burnout prevention; and that on the local level both school boards and teacher organizations should carry out informal study projects aimed at investigating what makes a superior teacher superior and what prevents a poor teacher from becoming significantly better. Appended are a paper on analyzing observations of stress conditions, a bibliography, and information on general models of intervention. (SB)

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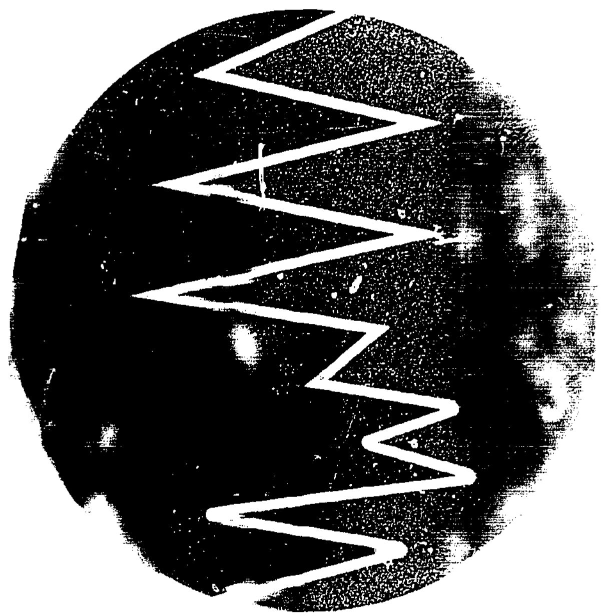
STRESS AND BURNOUT

A Primer for Special Educators and Special Services Personnel



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About the Authors

During the last few years the co-authors have collaborated on numerous journal articles and national presentations on stress and burnout. This *Primer* is but another product of this ongoing collaborative effort. Since each author brought to the effort his own perspective, training, and experience, we believe the result is a practical guide to a broad range of educators interested and/or involved in the reduction of stress and the prevention of burnout among special services personnel.

Stan F. Shaw is Associate Professor of Special Education, School of Education, University of Connecticut, Storrs. His professional career includes experience as a regular classroom and special education teacher, teacher trainer, and consultant. Dr. Shaw is currently the Coordinator of Undergraduate Special Education at the University of Connecticut. In addition, he is project director for two personnel preparation grants for preservice and inservice training funded by the Office of Special Education; a State Hearing Officer; consultant and inservice trainer for numerous school districts, regional cooperatives and state agencies.

Stan believes that a well balanced life style and an accurate personal perspective are essential ingredients to personal and professional stability. Although he recognizes his work as valuable, his relationship with God and family are higher priorities. His time is, therefore, shared between roles as educator, Elder in a Full-Gospel Church, husband, and father of two school age daughters.

Jeffrey M. Bensky is Coordinator of Educational Programs, Department of Health Promotion, at the St. Louis University Medical Center. Dr. Bensky is also Assistant Professor of Psychology, St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri. During his professional career he has been a school psychologist, program evaluator, and organizational consultant to the planning, developing, and implementing of child study teams and comprehensive systems of personnel development. He is also currently a project director for a REGI personnel preparation grant funded by the Office of Special Education, program auditor for Dissemin/Action (a national significance OSE project), and health promotion and inservice consultant to many school districts and cooperatives across the country in an attempt to improve employee satisfaction and performance and reduce health care costs.

Dr. Bensky's major area of expertise and focus is in developing employee incentive and health promotion programs for optimal well being of the individual and educational system. He provides organizations with programs and services to develop and enhance administrative, staff, paraprofessional, and *student* well being (stress management, burnout prevention, physical fitness, and positive living) and to help contain and reduce related health care costs. At the Department of Health Promotion he is presently working on five major research projects investigating the issues of stress, burnout, health promotion, and the educational process.

Jeff manages his personal and profes onal stre ough a variet ques: he participates and leads a physical fitness/positive livi class t e times a week s and enjoys active and spectator activities and games (whe ever and ever), is a lved in the reclamation and refurbishing of the 60 year old hous lives be found tally immersed in people. music, theater, or photography and, m mportant has lea to initiate the relaxation response inside himself. In other words thoro ive and productive Type A life in a Type B body.

Benjamin Dixon is Assistant Superinte nt Administr ecial Services, Bloomfield Public Schools, Bloomfield, Connecticut has been teach ublic and private schools, as well as a Central Office administrator public sch this career Dr. Dixon has been involved in planning, developing, implementing, or unity organizations, affirmative action programs, compensatory educ n program and ities related to human relations and educational futures. n his c position other school districts, he is intimately involved in staff develo activities been responsible for the implementation of a major stress managem nd burnout ent in the Bloomfield School District.

The belief that the future of humankind s in the quality of members is the basis for Ben's devotion to the principle of equal educational opp un ll children, no matter what their cultural, racial, or social backgrounds ma be. H c ce s to those children who are handicapped and who, too often, are prevente from m g the dual contributions to society. Thus, Dr. Dixon's efforts in the area of staff developmen e on helping education's most valuable resource—teachers and administra —becom ped to meet the educational needs of society's children.

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We would like to thank he many people who have ... d and helped us in the dev lopment of this *Primer*. Our apprec ation is extended to Terry ... William Beane, Dr. Marcy enn ngton, Dr. Herbert Chester, Dr. Allan Gouse, Roger He nk, Susan Henry, Dr. David M n , Lynn Pennington, Richard Stensrud, Dr. Tom Kramer, a Dr. Zahner for their though feedback and contributions. A special thanks is extended Dr. A eson, Gilbert Bourqui e Colombo, Dr. Kathryn Cramer, Cynthia Okolo, Dr. Jo Rab . Dr. Shirley Salmon, Schlitt, Judy Tindall, and Dan White for their support th ghout development of this P . To our incredible typist Hope Greiner and her colleagues Bois t, Cynthia Clabon, Cam , Kathy Pape, and Doris Winte we extend our apprec . We ould also like to ackno e school administrators Don Bar Dr. Marlin Jackoway, D om Keating, Dr. Gil Laurer, Dr. L a Mackler, James Selinger, Dr. J Shook, George Smith, Bill Walley, Debbie Waloh, Ida Woo . Savanah Young, and Anne Zelle who encouraged our res ch and raining efforts. Finally, t are innumerable special education teachers, pupil perso services staff and administrators who shared concerns and experiences which, in essence, cre d this *Primer* and provided its reality base.

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Introduction

The concern about teacher stress and resulting "burnout" has become more evident in recent years. The problems of our society have had a dramatic effect on our schools—lack of respect for authority and institutions, the disintegration of traditional family structures, and economic problems including recession, inflation, and limited resources directly impinge on the functioning of the schools. The resulting pressures on school personnel, including school violence, low salaries, changing school populations, and vandalism, can easily be seen to have a major impact on the mental health of educators.

There is a growing body of literature (Gmelch, 1978; Moe, 1979; Sparks, 1979; Styles & Cavanaugh, 1977) describing the problem of burnout in regard to the "helping professions" in general and regular classroom teachers in particular. There is, however, limited information dealing with this topic specifically in regard to special services personnel. This focus is particularly critical since the field of special education has numbers of inherent pressures in addition to the societal and general education stressors already mentioned. By definition, special services personnel work with handicapped students who have physical, mental, emotional, and/or social problems that make school success difficult. In the last few years, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, Public Law 94-142, has created additional responsibilities including placement team meetings, due process paperwork, individualized education programs (IEP's), and intensive involvement with and accountability to parents. It would seem, and preliminary data indicate, that this combination of working with exceptional children and implementing the mandates of P.L. 94-142 is creating stressful conditions with which many special services personnel are unable to cope. The unsuccessful attempts to deal with these stressors are resulting in the increasing burnout of special services personnel.

The purpose of this *Primer* is to help school personnel *promote* health (mental, physical, and emotional) and *prevent* job burnout. The primary focus is to describe interventions that special education and special services personnel, administrators, and teacher trainers can implement to manage stress and prevent burnout. In addition, definitions, descriptions and correlates of mental health, stress, and burnout are provided. Potential strategies and techniques for assessing individual and organizational stress and approaches for evaluating the success of interventions are also specified.

There are a number of caveats that must be addressed in regard to this problem. The first relates to the mandates of P.L. 94-142. Although the implementation of P.L. 94-142 is seen as creating a significant degree of stress, the authors are very supportive of both the intent and result of that comprehensive special education legislation. It is also assumed that most schools are, at least, in minimal compliance with the law. The recommendations for review and modification of special education procedures, discussed later, focus on increasing efficiency and providing productive roles for special services personnel.

It should be noted that the term *burnout* assumes that there was [illegible] 'lame." Burnout is seen as most typically affecting personnel who might be described as [illegible], hard working, conscientious, idealistic, creative, concerned, and/or ambitious. Burno[illegible] not generally relate to the incompetent or lazy educator although that kind of person migh[illegible]se it as an alibi.

This *Primer* must be seen as tentative. The data, and even [illegible]rience of burnout for post-P.L. 94-142 special services personnel is extremely limited. The [illegible], however, is already very real and has the potential for adversely affecting both the qual[illegible] quantity of services provided [illegible] many handicapped students. It is hoped, therefore, that the inf[illegible] and recommendations presented here will be the beginning of our understanding of the pr[illegible] and our awareness of alternatives for dealing with it.

Chapter 1: The Problems of Stress and Burnout for Educators

The problems and nature of stress and burnout have confronted our cultures and societies for a number of years. The Department of Health Promotion, Saint Louis University Medical Center (1980) has helped outline not only some operational definitions of stress and burnout, but has also clarified terminology. This chapter will describe the problems, nature, and definitions of stress and burnout, as developed by the Department of Health Promotion, for professionals in educational systems.

DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

The prevalence of distress in our personal and professional lives is without question a major contributor to destructive life styles, disease, and sometimes premature death. Effects on a school system are manifested by ineffective delivery of service, lower morale, excessive absenteeism, and higher health care costs.

The definitions of *stress* and *burnout* have plagued professionals for years. The American Heritage Dictionary (1969) defines *stress* as a force that tends to deform a body *and* act as a mentally disruptive influence—distress. This double edged definition alerts us to the ominous nature of stress: it can affect us both physically and psychologically. When discussing the nature of stress we feel a number of basic distinctions need to be made. The differences between stressors or stress triggers and stress is most important. Stress *triggers* and/or *stressors* create stress *reactions*. Stress triggers or stressors can be defined in three broad categories: environmental, physical, and psychological. Environmental stressors exist in the world around us. They (a) vary in form (noise, yelling kids, work demands), (b) can vary from permanent to short term, and (c) can produce an immediate stress reaction (out of control class), a gradual build up of the stress reaction (differences with your principal or supervisor), or produce a stress reaction unnoticed by the individual. Physical stressors represent your body state or condition. Examples include excessive weight, poor circulation, excessive use of alcohol, poor nutrition, etc. Environmental and physical stressors can often interact with one contributing to the effects of the other. This is important! Stressors will seldom affect you in a unique and specific way but in most cases will affect you in a complex interaction.

If you place the psychological stressors in the life condition equation, you may begin to see why the stress reaction is common and characteristic of our lives. The psychological stressors are well known: conflict, frustration, anger, fear, and anxiety, to name a few. Ironically, psychological stressors are a little different from the environmental and physical stressors mentioned. For example, psychological stressors such as frustration depend upon your psychological state (motives, goals, expectations, needs, etc.). In summary, a differentiation between the stress triggers/stressors and the stress reaction is made. Broadly defined, the *stress reaction* can be viewed as a mental, physical, and emotional response to environmental (school) and personal demands.

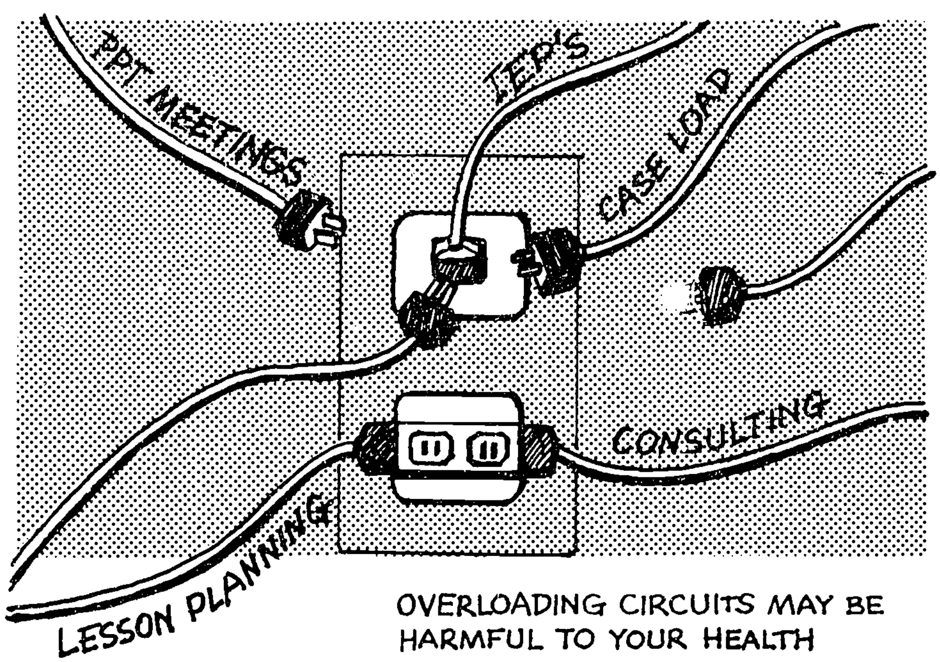
Job burnout has also been addressed by many professionals. For the professional educator, we have created the following definition: excessive exposure to ambiguous, inconsistent, and/or uncontrollable school system demands. Basically, *burnout* occurs when individuals reach their adaptability limit. This should be contrasted to a normal stress reaction where an individual is aroused to a level of coping with the situation and various stressors. Job burnout creates a reaction whereby the individual can no longer effectively cope or adapt to the situation or stressors. The short term costs (poor self control, lower self esteem, irritability, poor management of work) and long term costs (mild depression, ulcers, hypertension, drug and alcohol abuse, overreaction to mild work pressures) can be documented with many professionals. The lack of comprehensive individual and system intervention relating to both stress management and burnout prevention contributes immensely to the overall problem. The next section will attempt to outline the problems presented by stress and burnout to the educational system as we know it.

PROBLEMS OF STRESS AND BURNOUT

The problems of stress and burnout for individuals working in educational systems is quite similar to those of most professionals working in other helping professions. Additionally, the systems that organize and house these professionals are faced with parallel problems. The major problem is the *effect* stress and job burnout have on the individual and the system. First the effects on the individual will be discussed, then effects on the system.

Individuals

First, stress can be seen as making a direct contribution to the destructive life styles of educators. The incidence of educators indulging in excessive levels of alcohol, drugs, food, and tobacco can be documented from the teacher lounges to the conference and convention rooms and related activities (Bennington, 1980; Dixon, Shaw, & Bensky, 1980). Other destructive effects can be observed with professional educators: lower morale and creativity, inability to concentrate including sporadic memory difficulties, lower self esteem within their school and personal lives, disorganization in the classroom or office sometimes to the point of being in an out of control atmosphere, and overreaction to mild pressures in the classroom or office. The list is endless and the physical effects are as numerous. The key is that the effects of stress are physical, psychological, and emotional. In addition to the rapid turnover rates always men-



tioned, higher prevalence of disease and the resulting absenteeism are also a concern of educators. The problems and their effects on the individual are only half the story. The effects of stress on the system are also important.

Systems

The effects of stress and burnout on the school system cannot be looked at in isolated terms. The system is made up of many individuals and, as such, will have similar problems: ineffective delivery of services, lower morale, and excessive absenteeism. The bottom line is that more professional educators seem to be losing their zest for life and their profession, causing the delivery system to become excessively inefficient and nonproductive (Bennington, 1980; Dixon, Shaw, & Bensky, 1980; Zahner, 1980). School systems are becoming increasingly aware of the inefficient use of staff time and the resulting encumbrance of increased financial costs. In addition, health care costs are rising at a phenomenal rate, leaving schools unable to underwrite the costs of the effects of stress and burnout on individual staff members.

While increased financial costs and professional indifference are having devastating effects, there is an even bigger problem for school systems to deal with: the effects of professional stress and burnout on the learner/student. No research to date has documented the effects of teacher stress and burnout on the student. However, intuitively, it makes sense that the students will not receive the total benefits of the professional educator if, in fact, the individual and system problems are real. The implications are mind boggling when one stops and thinks of the systematic modeling effects that teacher stress reactions and related problems have on students. The educational and social implications are clear. The question is, what are we as educators able and willing to do about the problem?

A final systems oriented issue that should be attended to is the cyclical and/or reciprocal relationship between teacher stress/burnout and student behavior. For example, a short term result of teacher stress might be irritability, disorganization, and a lack of concentration. How do these behaviors affect students in school or classroom? While the research is still being systematically designed and data collection initiated, a subjective impression would clearly indicate a negative effect on student behavior. If, in fact, teacher stress/burnout is a negative stressor for students, a logical step would be to simultaneously minimize the negative impact on both parties (teachers *and* students). Additionally, student behavior/performance as a negative stressor for teachers should be considered in the same vein: both stress causing factors should be dealt with simultaneously. It is not *where*, *what*, *why*, or *who* the stressor is affecting but rather *when* a change agent will begin the intervention process to end the cyclical arrangement.

Chapter 2: The Problem of Burnout for Special Services Personnel

As indicated in the previous chapter, a special educator can burn out when he or she can no longer cope with, or adapt to, environmental, physical, and psychological stressors. The focus of this chapter will be to identify and discuss the environmental stressors that specifically relate to the responsibilities of special services personnel.

It must be noted, however, that there are social, economic, mental, physical, and emotional factors that also impinge on the mental health of educators. It is clear that a person who is dealing with serious marital difficulties, coping with chronic health problems, or having difficulty meeting mortgage payments may see a resultant decrease in professional performance.

There are also environmental stressors associated with *any* professional position. There may be problems with facilities (e.g., cramped office, delapidated building, a room that is too cold or too hot), supervisors (e.g., abusive, too demanding, no standards), clients (e.g., lazy, often late, violent), and colleagues (e.g., unfriendly, incompetent, unprofessional). Concerns more specific to educators include low salaries, limited career ladders, the growing resentment of taxpayers, and very limited authority. In addition, educators are faced with increased responsibility within the school power structure and the perceived increase in the number and severity of student "problems."

All of these situations certainly can create stressors that contribute to burnout. Although this chapter deals with descriptions of environmental stressors facing special services personnel, subsequent chapters will discuss how to deal with physical and psychological stressors as well as environmental stressors. More information and references on personal stressors are available from the sources cited in Appendix B.

Although burnout is highly individualized, in most cases it results in a reduction in productivity, motivation, or compassion for others. In general, professionals have to deal with short term effects such as an inability to concentrate, lower self esteem, irritability, disorganization, and poor management of work flow. Long term effects include free floating anxiety, intolerance of people, and overreaction to mild work pressure. It is imperative that we identify the sources of stress that lead to burnout so that individuals themselves and the school systems that employ them can deal with the problems at their source.

NEGATIVE STRESSORS

Colarelli (1978), following along the lines of Selye (1974), has defined stress within a work setting in terms of positive and negative stressors. Negative stressors that can lead to unhealthy, nonproductive behaviors are uncertainty, role overload or underload, abrupt and unplanned organizational and role changes, and poor job design.

Uncertainty

Uncertainty is defined as doubt, hesitancy, unpredictability, and indefiniteness regarding competence, role, security, etc.

The case of Lynn (Case 1) is an example of what has happened to many special educators, particularly those trained prior to the implementation of P.L. 94-142. They are too often unprepared to meet the demands placed on them by the schools that employ them. Unfortunately, as in Lynn's case, school administrators may compound the problem by not providing the direction, support, training and follow through necessary to help the teacher deal with this most difficult situation. Although Lynn has sought help outside the school, it may be too little, too late. Symptoms of stress, including fear of failure, resentment of authority, and isolation, are beginning to manifest themselves.

Role Underload/Overload

Role underload/overload is defined as the underutilization of staff geared up for a specific task or the overburdening of limited personnel resources.

Given the increased responsibilities of special services personnel created by P.L. 94-142 and the concomitant fiscal constraints, role overload is almost inevitable. Sarah (Case 2) is an all too typical example of an energetic and well trained, though inexperienced, special educator who quickly gets in over her head. The new educator's concern for handicapped children and need to achieve in his or her professional endeavors, combined with the pressure on administrators to get an extremely demanding job done, often results in burnout.

Sarah, for example, has quickly become overextended and overwhelmed. She began doing her one basic job very well but is now handling many roles, with each suffering. As Sarah realizes that she is less and less able to meet her students' needs, her sense of purpose, feeling of being trapped, and even emotional and physical fatigue will grow.

Abrupt and Unplanned Changes

Abrupt and unplanned organizational and role changes include the rapid, crisis centered attempts to meet organizational needs through ongoing program and personnel shifts.

Many school administrators are finding themselves doing a constant juggling act trying to service handicapped children and implement the procedural mandates of P.L. 94-142 with limited personnel. When parents, teacher associations, the state education agency, or regular classroom teachers with mainstreamed children put pressure on the schools for more or better services, the administrator must reallocate limited personnel resources to meet the need. Unfortunately, special services personnel like Beth (Case 3) are often placed in very stressful situations. The problem of rapid role and organizational change is compounded by concomitant uncertainty and role overload. In addition, the staff member may be asked to do things completely out of his or her area of competence.

In the case of Beth, her ability to help regular classroom teachers succeed with mainstreamed handicapped children may be very suspect. The resulting lack of productivity, apathy, and inability to function adequately could soon result in Beth "suddenly" turning in her resignation.

Case 1—Lynn

Lynn has been a special education teacher for 10 years. She had always taught educable mentally retarded children in a self contained special class. At the beginning of this year, her responsibilities were changed to that of teacher of a noncategorical resource room. Since she was trained as a special class teacher and certified in mental retardation, she says she feels "completely out of my element." She is particularly tentative about dealing with the emotionally disturbed children in her room. In spite of her repeated requests for help, the school system has provided little support and no training for these new responsibilities. Although she is now taking courses at a nearby college to help her deal with her new situation, she really doesn't know if she's doing OK. She is particularly fearful about the impending annual reviews on her students. She has been avoiding contact with her supervisor and with her student's parents for months.

Case 2—Sarah

Sarah is a competent and energetic first year special education teacher. She graduated from an outstanding teacher training program where she became skilled in diagnosis, consulting, writing IEP's, working with parents, and running placement teams in addition to teaching handicapped children. By mid-October, she was successfully teaching 25 students each day in her resource room. In addition, she regularly consulted with teachers who had "mainstreamed" children in their classes. Recognizing Sarah's skill, the principal asked her to become a permanent member of the placement team and do educational evaluations on each referral. By February, she had major responsibility for writing, implementing, and monitoring IEP's for all handicapped children in her school. She now finds herself working nights and weekends trying to finish up schoolwork she could not get to during the school day. She is getting more concerned about the many hours during the week she is out of her classroom or handing out ditto sheets to keep the children busy while she handles responsibilities related to the referral-placement process.

Case 3—Beth

Beth has been a school psychologist for 7 years. Her training and initial experience related to the traditional roles of diagnostician (individual psychological and projective tests) and counseling disturbed children. During the last 2 years her role and responsibilities have been constantly revised. First, she was told to include academic assessments in her diagnostic battery and to write "educationally relevant recommendations and objectives in each evaluation report." She was then given the title of chairperson of the child placement team with responsibility for all due process paperwork. This year she is no longer placement team chairperson but has been given the responsibility for consulting with regular classroom teachers about programing for mainstreamed handicapped children.

Beth realizes that all of the jobs she's been given are necessary. She is very concerned, however, that many of them are beyond her training and experience. The greatest problem is the constant changing. Just as she gets reasonably proficient with her responsibilities, she gets new ones. She finds herself getting cynical about implementation of P.L. 94-142 and even about servicing handicapped children. She now gets more excitement and fulfillment from her part time job selling real estate. She knows she'll have to make a career choice soon.

Case 4—Gary

Gary ran a "model" resource room program in a large elementary school. Based on that successful experience, the Director of Special Education asked him to set up the same program as the first special education program in the district's high school. Gary's life has been a nightmare ever since he accepted that assignment. He found the high school staff and structure unwilling or unable to accommodate the modifications required to make the resource room work. Gary did not have the "clout" to be a successful advocate for his program and students. Although he quickly discovered that the remedial academic program alone was not sufficient to meet his students' needs, he could not get needed materials, access to vocational classrooms, scheduling changes, or the cooperation of regular classroom teachers needed to make the necessary improvements. As Gary saw increasing numbers of his students get suspended, drop out of school, or turn on to drugs, his own malaise worsened. He became depressed, irritable, and isolated. Before the end of the school year, he threatened to quit teaching unless he received a transfer back to a primary school.

Poor Job Design

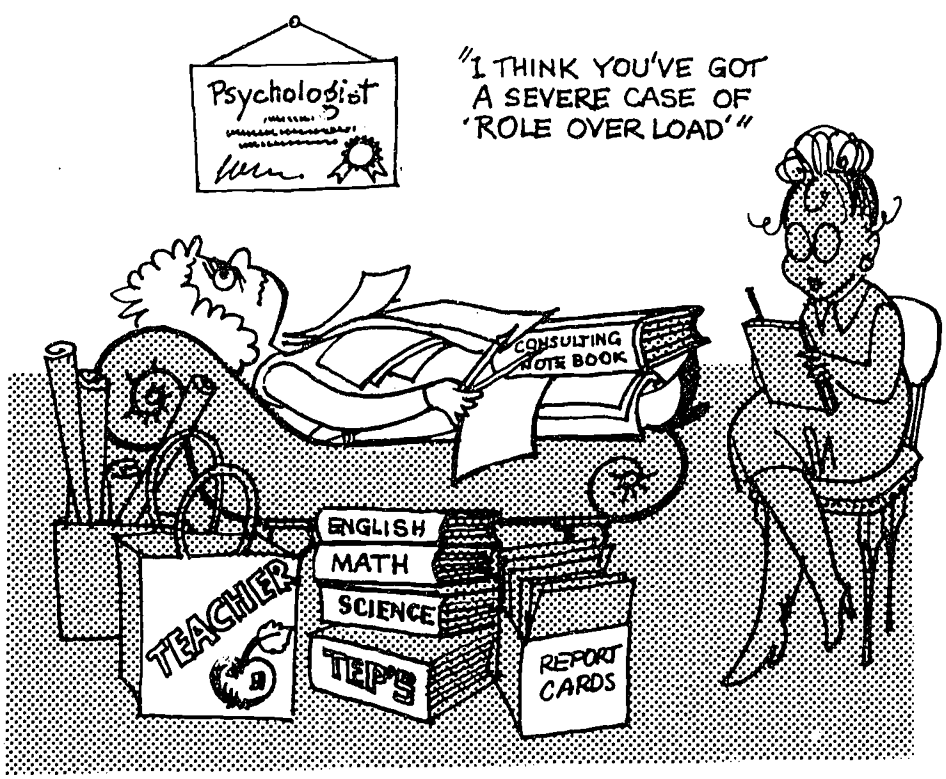
Poor job design consists of administrative action that creates role descriptions which are inappropriate, inefficient, and/or impossible to implement successfully.

Gary (Case 4) was placed in a no-win situation. The resource room program at the high school was ill conceived, the groundwork needed to make it work was not attempted, and critical leadership support was not available. Assuming a program that is effective in the primary grades will be similarily productive at the high school level is certainly folly. Administrators obviously did not do an effective needs assessment, review alternative program possibilities, lay the groundwork with high school personnel, or use the special education expertise available to them. Rather, a need presented itself and the simplest and most easily implemented program was selected. Of equal concern is the lack of administrative support and Gary's responsibility without authority. Both of these factors create terribly stressful conditions for special educators. Placing teachers like Gary in such situations guarantees failure, dissatisfaction, and often results in the burnout of an otherwise competent professional and mentally healthy individual.

ROLE CLARIFICATION

The stressors specified by Colarelli (1978) and indicated in the four cases are supported by preliminary data on teacher burnout on special services personnel collected in Connecticut (Bensky, Shaw, Gouse, Bates, Dixon, & Beane, 1980; Shaw, Bensky, Dixon & Bonneau, in press). The data indicate that the best predictors of stress are related to *role clarification.* The educator who has clear role expectations will have significantly less stress than one who is unclear as to what is expected in his or her job. On the other hand, if there is a discrepancy between the special educator's perception of the role and others' expectations for that role, then stress is significantly increased. Each of the cases described earlier is faced with one or both of these role clarity variables as major stressors.

A preliminary analysis was done to evaluate which specific job related activities special educators find most stressful. A rank ordering of these factors by special classroom teachers in-



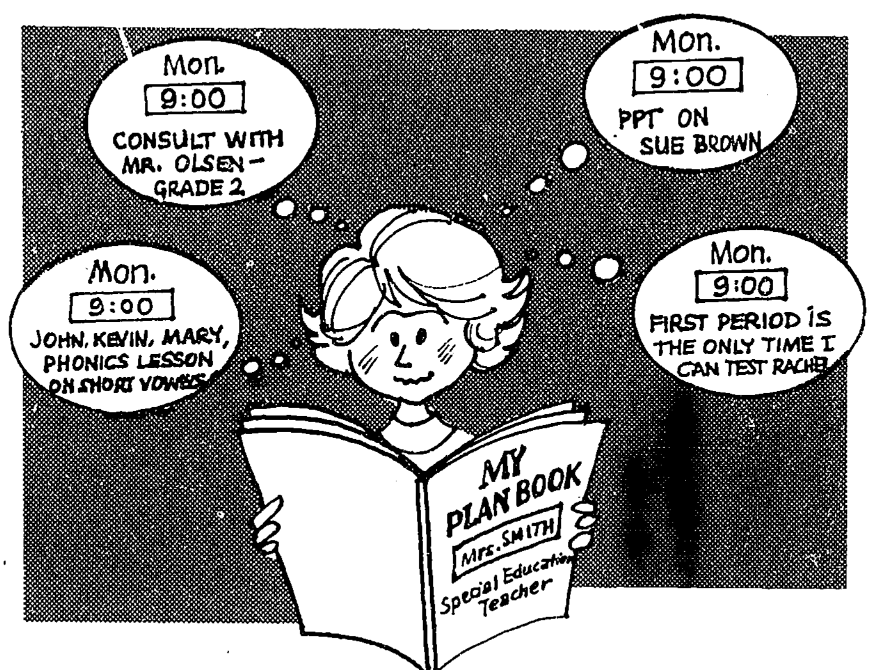
dicates the following to be the most stressful: (a) pupil load, (b) teaching (implementation and preparation), (c) job related work after hours, (d) interaction with parents regarding placement decisions, (e) parent conferences. For resource room teachers, the five greatest stressors are (a) diagnosis and assessment, (b) pupil load, (c) teaching (preparation and implementation), (d) evaluation by supervisor, (e) job related work after hours. It seems that the problem of stress for special educators may relate to the interaction of providing direct service to handicapped children while trying to fulfill the mandates of P.L. 94-142.

It must be reiterated that the role clarity variables (clear role expectations and discrepancy in role expectations) have more impact on stress than do all the specific job related stressors discussed earlier.

The special class teachers (mostly self contained) in the Connecticut sample tend to experience less stress than the resource room teachers. This can be explained by the fact that the roles of special class teachers have not been greatly changed by P.L. 94-142. Their responsibilities focus on providing direct service to handicapped children rather than implementing the placement and due process mandates of the law. Resource room teachers in Connecticut, on the other hand, are faced with significantly altered role descriptions. They are now heavily involved with educational diagnosis, placement team meetings, monitoring IEP's, and consulting with classroom teachers, in addition to their traditional direct service responsibilities.

There will not only be differences in stress between roles, but within roles as well. The variability of the data indicate that stressful factors will differentially affect special services personnel. This is no surprise since individuals have varying abilities to manage stress. In addition, one individual may successfully cope with environmental stressors but have difficulty with physical stressors. Another individual may manage the environmental stressors in the home (e.g., keeping the house clean, dealing with teenage children) but become burned out by the environmental stressors at school (e.g., communicating with colleagues, managing the resource room schedule).

No matter what the circumstances, it is important that effective change strategies, based on systematic assessment of stress, are implemented so that burnout of special services personnel and organizations is prevented. The next chapter will describe approaches for assessing the mental health status of individuals and organizations.



Chapter 3: Assessing Individual and Organizational Stress

SOME CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before discussing how one might go about assessing stress, two contextual considerations should be mentioned. First, it is apparent, even to the casual observer, that the degree of compliance with P.L. 94-142 varies greatly between school districts. This is true even in the face of vigorous monitoring effects by state departments of education and various agencies of the federal government.

However, it is also apparent that, despite the differences between them, almost all districts are experiencing the same growing pains, particularly in such areas as management, due process, and service delivery. It does not seem to matter whether the district is rich or poor, well staffed or understaffed, urban or suburban. The impact of the law, or at least the perception of that impact, is the same for everyone. Some examples follow:

1. Many regular education teachers are having a difficult time finding or, when located, gaining access to inservice or personnel development programs that can aid them in acquiring the skills to work effectively with handicapped children in regular classes.
2. Teachers, diagnosticians, and other staff are finding it almost impossible to meet, in a timely fashion, the requirements of annual and other periodic reviews.
3. Members of the school placement team and other school staff are becoming increasingly more involved in mediations and due process hearings. Many decisions are being found against school districts, in spite of what the laws say or imply about (a) unilateral placements by parents and outside agencies, (b) the importance of least restrictive environments, (c) the provision of services comparable to those offered to students in the regular education program, and (d) the school district's responsibility to pay only the special education costs for outside placements.

The second contextual consideration has to do with understanding how one defines *mental health*, as well as how one views the relationship between individual mental health and organizational health. In other words, before beginning an assessment of individual and organizational stress, one must have a good notion about what constitutes a healthy individual or organization. Chaplin (1975) defined *mental health* as "a state of good adjustment with a subjective state of well-being, zest for living, and the feeling that one is exercising his talents and abilities" (p. 313). Another view of mental health was provided by Marie Jahoda (cited in Bennis, 1966). She described a healthy personality as one who "actively masters his environment, shows a certain unit of personality, and is able to perceive the world and himself correctly" (p. 52).

While both definitions of individual mental health can be easily related to organizational health, the general question of "What is healthy?" still remains. The reason for this is somewhat revealed in a statement of caution by Lazarus

(1976) about the problem of defining mental health:

> If one defines mental health without reference to the conditions of life, past as well as present, one of its major components—the environmental situation—is being ignored. This makes the establishment of a standard of health highly inequitable, and perhaps of little meaning. The existence of the problem makes the attainment of *absolute standards* of mental health quite difficult, if not impossible. What is needed also is a *relative standard* for considering the person's functioning in the light of the circumstances of his or her life (p. 182).

In summary, the person or group attempting to assess individual and/or organizational stress must deal with two important contextual considerations. In respect to the impact of P.L. 94-142, it is clear that stress situations may vary from district to district, but the perception of that impact is experienced almost uniformly by everyone. Also, the use of a relative rather than an absolute standard of health is important to remember. The improvement of individual mental health and organizational health should be carried out with local environmental conditions, as well as external influences, in mind.

ASSESSING STRESS THROUGH OBSERVATION

Based on the two contextual considerations discussed earlier, we suggest that an assessment of stress in schools is essentially a diagnosis of the environmental conditions influencing the organization or individual. This diagnosis can be accomplished primarily through simple observation by one or more people. Of course, other methods of collecting data, such as surveys and polls, can be employed as well. The point here is that there must be a conscious, systematic effort made to determine what factors seem to directly or indirectly bring about the stress conditions. This would be true in both individual and organizational situations of stress. As this diagnosis is carried out, it is suggested that some sort of general framework for categorizing the observations be used.

Organizational Stress

Hersey and Blanchard (1972) provided two models that can be useful. The first model is, perhaps, more suitable for organizational stress conditions. This model, described in modified form in Figure 1, involves three variable classifications: causal, intervening, and output.

The observer using this model to diagnose the environmental conditions that might be causing stress situations should first have a clear understanding of the *output variable* involved. For example, the output variable of "poor planning and placement team decisions" is not articulated clearly enough to be useful to the observer as he or she begins systematic observations. However, a more helpful description of the output variable might be, "inappropriate or negative reaction by other staff to planning and placement team decisions."

Based on this determination, the observer can begin investigating such intervening variables as the staff's perceptions or attitudes regarding the decision making activities of the planning and placement team. For example, does the classroom teacher feel that the planning and placement team can never know as much about the child as she does? Does this lack of first hand knowledge prevent the team from making effective and appropriate placement decisions?

Once the output and intervening variables have been observed or investigated, determining the *causal variable* becomes a relatively less difficult task for the observer. The causal variable is the most important of the three variables in the Hersey and Blanchard model. Any attempt to directly modify the output or intervening variables will usually be less effective than changing the causal variable. In the example used here, the observer may discover that the variable causing negative staff reactions to planning and placement team decisions is an organizational or management one, such as the lack of opportunities for other staff to become personally involved in planning and placement team activities.

Individual Stress

The second model offered by Hersey and Blanchard (1972) is a model by which the diagnosis of the environmental conditions that influence an individual staff member might be carried out. The authors postulate that the environment for the individual consists of at least himself, his followers, associates, superiors, the organization itself, and its job demands. It is important to note that all these variables are interacting components of

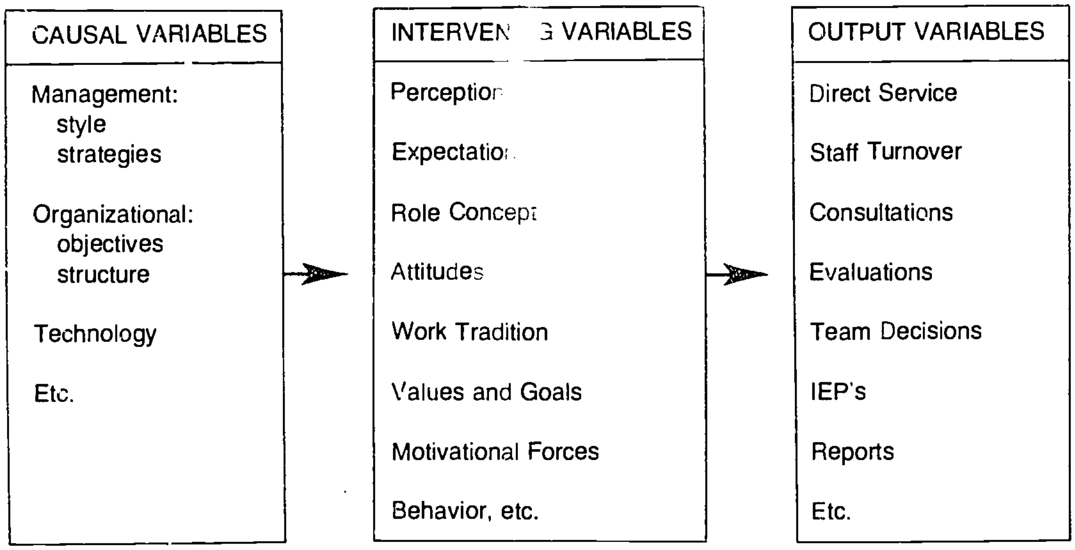


FIGURE 1. Relationship between causal, intervening, and output variables.

the organizational setting in which the individual exists.

No doubt, each of us can recall an instance where someone we knew was caught up in a stress situation caused by poor interaction with one or more of these components. In a situation like this, one should be careful to analyze all the environmental components interacting with the staff member. While the change strategy eventually employed to eliminate the stress might involve only one or two of the components, it is always good to get the complete picture first. An analogy for this is the situation where a psychologist administers a complete WISC, but does not find it necessary to make recommendations relating to the results of every subtest.

Figure 2 is a modified version of the Hersey/Blanchard model, illustrating the environmental variables interacting with a guidance counselor in a hypothetical school district. Here it appears that the interactions between the counselor and the environmental components of "associates" and "followers" are both generally positive. However, the counselor's interaction with "job demands" is sometimes negative and, at other times, positive. On the surface there would seem to be little or no reason for the negative interactions between the "superiors" and "organization" components and the counselor. After all, the counselor gets along well with her colleagues, is effective with parents and students, and performs her duties well enough to be retained on the staff. Upon closer examination it can be noted that the counselor in this case deals with both special and regular education students. It also appears that the counselor answers to both the principal and the director of special services, and is a member of two different departments.

Any individual stress experienced by the guidance counselor in this situation most likely is related to the problem of serving two masters simultaneously. Without a systematic procedure for observing and diagnosing stress, this fact may have been overlooked. Further, the isolation of the "superiors" and "organization" environmental components as possible stressors in this situation facilitates further diagnosis by way of the procedure illustrated in the first model (Figure 1). Based on the information and insights obtained through these methods of observation, it is likely that the interventions or change strategies developed and employed to reduce stress will have a positive effect on both individual staff members and the organization as a whole.

As we stated earlier the modified Hersey and Blanchard models are just two examples of systematic procedures for diagnosing the environ-

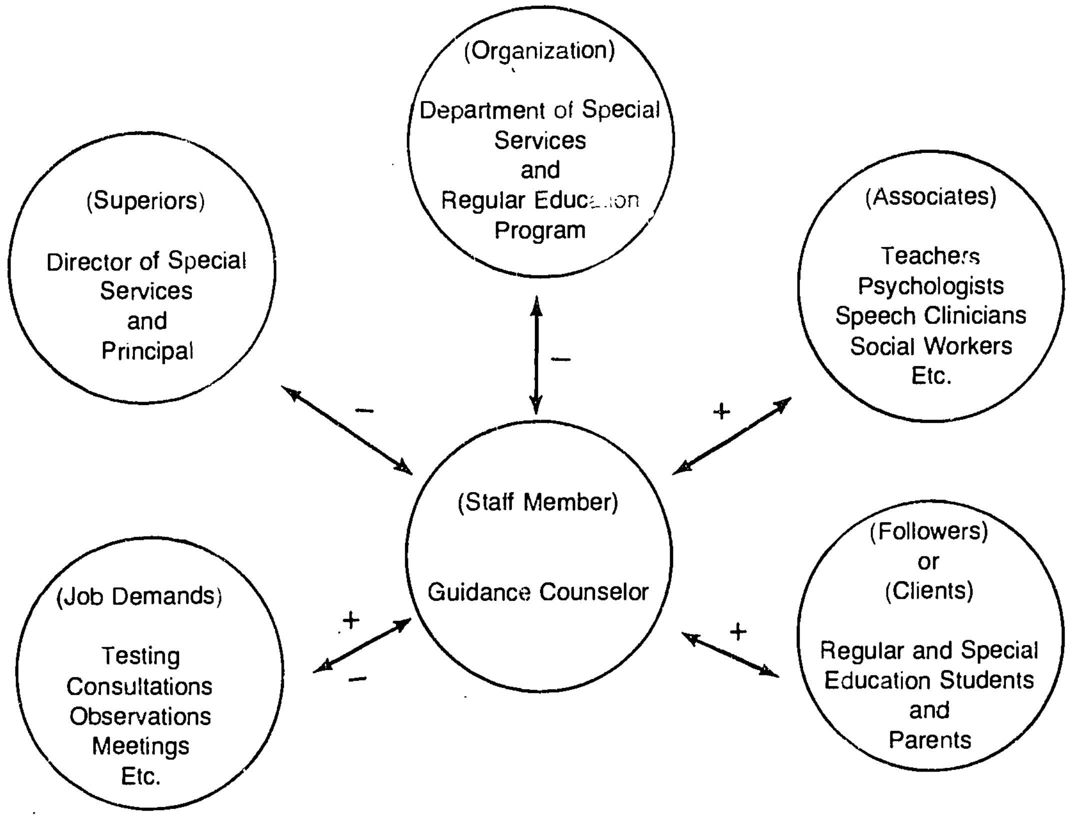


FIGURE 2. Interacting environmental components: positive (+) and/or negative (−).

mental conditions influencing the organization or individual. One of the advantages of using a systematic approach to diagnosis and observation is the great likelihood that the resultant stress reducing strategies implemented will be more effective in the long run. Such strategies should be focused either on the organization itself or on the personnel who keep it operating. In some situations the emphasis may be on both.

The recent impetus toward improving the educational opportunities for handicapped youngsters, and the emerging state and federal mandates to local school districts have been long in coming. However, the shock to local school systems and their staffs has been significant and stress producing. This reality forms the foundation for Chapter 4, where general organizational and personnel management strategies for reducing stress and preventing burnout among the special services staff are discussed.

Chapter 4: Modifying Special Education Policies and Procedures

In the case of most school districts, the passage and implementation of P.L. 94-142 in the late 1970's has brought about significant changes in existing local special education policies and procedures. The practical benefits that have accrued for children and parents are many and continue to expand with each legal interpretation of the law. However, the benefits of the law for special services personnel have yet to be viewed, on a practical level, as a definite blessing. To be sure, some will argue, philosophically, that whatever helps the handicapped youngster also helps the teacher of the handicapped. Still, the impact of the law on special services personnel has not been fully appreciated, and the negative reactions by some of these individuals to the stressors created by the law threaten the very purpose and intent of the law itself.

It is clear that a resolution of the stress related concerns about P.L. 94-142 voiced by many special educators will require a number of creative approaches by leadership personnel in order to prevent and/or deal with the problem of burnout. Currently, not enough attention is being given to the need for approaches that involve various aspects of organizational and personnel management. Recognizing that policy and procedural modifications will vary from district to district, we suggest that every special services department begin to consider the following activities.

ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

1. **Develop or modify special education policies and procedures so they efficiently meet the mandates of state and federal laws.**

In an effort to meet both the spirit and letter of sometimes conflicting state and federal laws, school districts have created cumbersome and unnecessary procedures that are nearly impossible to implement consistently. Particular problem areas are placement team processes, IEP's, identification of least restrictive alternatives, and determining what program is adequate or appropriate for a specific child. For example, it is extremely impractical to require staff members and parents to sit through a 2 hour planning meeting, collaboratively working out each and every detail of a child's IEP. Preliminary work done by staff and shared with parents prior to the meeting may significantly reduce the amount of work and time needed to complete the IEP in one sitting.

2. **Use a cross section of staff to regularly monitor and review (at least once a year) existing policies, procedures, documentation routines, etc.**

Providing time, money, and/or other incentives to encourage staff involvement in the revision and streamlining of forms and procedures accomplishes two objectives. First, it is the quickest way to identify problems that are causing a reduction in the effectiveness and efficiency of services. Second, it provides an opportunity for staff to renew their understanding of the purpose and procedures of those policies that seem to be working effectively.

3. Encourage understanding (knowledge) and support (attitude) for local special education policies and procedures.

All constituent groups within the local education community should be formally inserviced on the major aspects of P.L. 94-142 and state laws pertaining to the education of the handicapped. This includes board of education members, parents, citizens, and professional staff. A successful inservice program with the board of education first will facilitate the implementation of other workshops with other groups later.

4. Specify, delimit, and agree in writing to the roles and functions of special services staff.

The traditional practice of simply assigning "caseloads" to staff is often short sighted. If a resource teacher is assigned 30 students, what proportion of the time should be devoted to direct service, consultation, or evaluation? These are legitimate functions for the resource teacher and will be expected by other members of the education community. Because of the unique nature of special services work, it is suggested that staff roles and functions be initially developed internally within the special services department.

If possible, avoid negotiating "job descriptions" with the teachers' bargaining unit. Even if a teacher organization was willing to negotiate differentiated job descriptions, developing and implementing a districtwide contract containing such provisions would be a nightmare for both sides. For example, should the special education teacher be given more compensation for writing IEP's after the working day? If not, how can he or she teach and write objectives simultaneously during the day? If so, should the regular education teacher be compensated for writing lesson plans after school?

5. Share role and function descriptions with other school personnel, seeking agreement in those areas that impact on both special and regular education.

All school personnel should be made aware of what special services staff members are doing, or should be doing, in each building. Regular classroom teachers should clearly understand what consultation and evaluation services they can expect special services staff to perform. School administrators should be made aware that psychologists, social workers, speech clinicians, and even some special education teachers have clearly defined roles and functions, and their relatively "flexible" schedules should not be viewed as an opportunity to give these personnel assignments outside their areas of responsibility.

6. Establish the special services department as a personnel development unit within the school district.

The widest range of instructional, evaluation, and counseling skills within a school district is usually found within the special services department. Financial and administrative support should be provided to encourage special services personnel to design, develop, and implement a variety of skill and knowledge building inservice sessions for specific target populations within the individual schools and/or the district. These inservice sessions should be relatively short in duration, single purpose, experiential rather than theoretical, and designed to meet local situations. These "mini-inservice" workshops should complement larger efforts by the special services department to sponsor major workshops and/or seminars utilizing experienced and dynamic consultants from outside the district.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

1. Hire professional staff with the ability and willingness to fulfill the multiple role responsibilities of a special services staff member.

School districts should aggressively seek to hire individuals with personal mental health, flexibility, and a willingness to acquire the knowledge and skills required of special educators in the 1980's. Selection of the best qualified candidates from teacher training institutions is a prerequisite. In addition to high academic performance as students, potential candidates for appointment should possess college related and/or other experiences that indicate an ability to function effectively in interdisciplinary, multicultural learning/teaching environments.

Some school districts have already experimented with competency based writing tests as a means of screening potential candidates for teaching positions. Why not develop a "well being" questionnaire that focuses on the candidate's capacity to cope with the known stressors that permeate today's educational environment? This procedure might have a positive impact on staff turnover, as indicated by the number of new teachers who burn out, quit, or are terminated within their first 5 years.

2. Provide adequate orientation and ongoing inservice support to new staff for at least their first year.

Such support may take the forms of specially designed inservice opportunities, "buddy systems" using more experienced staff members, and/or periodic "mental health" meetings. Wherever possible new staff should be brought in at least one week prior to their assuming sole responsibility for their assignments. If hired for a week on a "substitute" or "consultant" basis, the new staff members are afforded the opportunity to review caseloads, study IEP's, observe classes, or simply consult with other staff and supervisors regarding their specific responsibilities.

3. Use noncertified personnel to maximize professional staff efficiency and overall productivity.

Very often the key to improving the delivery of special services within a district is differentiated staffing, and not necessarily the hiring of additional professional staff. If local money is not available, a variety of state and federal resources can be obtained to hire teacher aides and clerical staff to assist both regular and special services staff. These staff members can assist in instruction, supervision of children, monitoring of student behavior, organizing materials, typing reports, maintaining student folders, and the like.

4. Periodically review (about every 3 to 5 years) staff assignments for the purpose of providing staff opportunities to experi-

ence different types of students and/or working environments.

With the trend toward establishing noncategorical instructional units in special education, more teachers can be given the opportunity to work in both self contained and resource room environments, with bright or low achieving handicapped students, and on secondary and elementary levels at various times during their teaching careers. Similarly, speech clinicians, psychologists, and social workers can have experiences on all levels. Very often a voluntary transfer to another building or level will "renew" a staff member whose ability to continue coping with stress situations in the current assignment seems to be waning.

If changing or rotating staff assignments every 3 to 5 years seems too disruptive, then school districts might take advantage of other organizational changes to carry out this activity. For example, closing schools and changing grade organizations due to declining enrollment may provide such opportunities. Also, instead of placing a long term substitute in the classroom of the teacher on sabbatical leave, why not temporarily transfer another staff member from another building and replace that person with the substitute?

5. Openly recognize and reward the good work and positive efforts of individual staff members.

Parents, students, and other teachers should be encouraged to provide positive feedback to a teacher who develops a new curriculum idea, organizes a special instructional unit, teaches a good lesson, writes a good report, or succeeds with a particularly difficult child, parent, and/or colleague. Administrators should be on the lookout to "catch a teacher being good." Rewards can take the form of formal recognition at meetings or in staff newsletters, or special opportunities to learn, grow, and share with others. While merit pay or extra compensation are possible rewards to be considered, very often individual staff members are equally appreciative of less tangible forms of recognition.

6. Provide personal and confidential support systems to special services personnel having problems coping with stress.

This can be formally or informally provided in a number of ways. The district can include free, confidential counseling for job related stress as part of the staff's fringe benefit package. One creative central office administrator discretely rearranged the schedule of a particularly competent school psychologist in order to make her available for staff counseling activities in a particular school. Another approach is to train staff members in group processes and then provide group meetings for special class teachers, speech clinicians, guidance counselors, and others, where staff can share both professional and mental health concerns and solutions.

There are indications that in 10 years school systems will be providing for their staffs comprehensive mental, physical, and emotional support programs to almost the same degree that personnel development programs in instruction, testing, and human relations are now being provided. Furthermore, school administrators, commercial health insurance providers, as well as teacher organizations may begin to see the merit in sharing the costs for such programs and services on an equal basis.

CONCLUSION

The growing problem of stress resulting in burnout among educators in general will likely reach epidemic proportions by the early 1990's. An ongoing assessment of the problem and the success of interventions aimed at dealing with it must be started in each school district. The 12 organizational and personnel activities outlined in this chapter are suggestive of the areas where policies and procedures might be modified in order to reduce stress and minimize burnout among special services personnel.

Those administrators and supervisors who are taking these steps already should be encouraged to continue their efforts. Those who have not should be prepared to witness a steady deterioration in the quality and quantity of services provided by their staffs for handicapped populations. While many individual special services personnel have and will continue to devise their own personal means for coping with stress, it is very important that these individual efforts take place within a supportive organizational context.

Chapter 5: Inservice Training Program

The inservice training needs of educators, especially special services personnel, are many and varied. However, when you develop the focus of inservice programs for stress management and burnout prevention the list tends to become more specific. In addition, the model of delivery of the inservice is important. The Department of Health Promotion (St. Louis University Medical Center) has developed a variety of cost efficient, program effective, and generalizable inservice models that attempt to follow a process to explain, demonstrate, train, and practice stress management and bumout prevention *skills*. The response from the special services and educational community has been overwhelmingly positive. Participants have reported acquisition, assimilation, and use of skills taught in the inservice model. What follows is a summary of the literature integrated with this model.

EFFECTIVENESS ACROSS FINANCES AND OUTCOMES

In the past, inservice training for special services personnel consisted of a "consultant" talking about one issue as it related to their professional development and the personnel being designated "to sit." Times have changed and the technology and methodology of inservice training has also changed (Shaw & Bensky, 1980). Recently, models of inservice training have been developed that answer the common criticisms of training of the past (Morsink, 1979; Rude, 1978; Skrtic, Knowlton, & Clark, 1979; Weick, 1979). Some criticism and negative feedback include: focusing on only one key element, knowledge, attitude, or skill because of limited financial resources or poor planning; lack of reinforcement and incentives for participation by professional staff (mandatory attendance sessions from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.); limited usefulness, applicability, and generalization of the content of the inservice training to everyday professional activities; lack of relationship between participant needs and content; uniform format of inservice delivery. With respect to P.L. 94-142, several authors have seemingly addressed these problems (see Shaw and Bensky, 1980). It is particularly important to attend to the suggestions regarding the development of a model for inservice training around stress management and burnout prevention.

GUIDELINES FOR INSERVICE

It is too often reported by educators that the inservice program they attended created more problems (stress reactions) than solutions. It would indeed be ironic if any inservice program on stress management and/or burnout prevention tended to create more negative stress reactions. In order to avoid this problem, any attempt at the development of a model of inservice for stress management and burnout prevention should use the following guidelines:

Develop Multiple Levels of Intervention

With professional educators it is not enough to just provide a 3 hour workshop on stress or any related topic. Evidence from a variety of sources suggests that all people are not *ready* for the same intervention at the same breadth and depth. Any knowledge, attitude, and skill training intervention in stress management and burnout prevention should take this into account. A multilevel approach that provides varying degrees of intervention is suggested. The less intense the breadth and depth the shorter the time allotted for the program. It is interesting to note that starting with less intense, more educational approaches tends to separate those who want training from those who do not.

In any event, the major goals of a stress management program might be to (a) develop for each participant a personalized, comprehensive stress management strategy that prevents the negative effects of stress and increases physical and mental well being and (b) prepare a school system as an organization to use its own resources (direct service *and* trainer of trainers). In other words, an inservice model that uses outside consultants to deliver the majority of the program over a long period of time is not cost efficient nor program effective. Rather, a multiple level approach that trains new inservice trainers (trainer of trainers) is more desirable and efficient/effective. There are many inhouse staff members, if provided the proper training and opportunity, who would make excellent inservice consultants or trainers. This model and the multiple levels of intervention are further described in Appendix C.

Relate Stress Management and Burnout Prevention to a Variety of Areas

The Department of Health Promotion has developed a model that attempts to address the larger issues related to stress and burnout: health and well being (see Appendix for overview). Any model of inservice delivery should attempt to relate stress management and burnout prevention to various components of nutrition; health education and awareness; physical fitness/positive living; habit control; structural, relational and organizational change; and coping strategies. The comprehensive coverage and nature of the program appears to enhance program effectiveness and cost efficiency of the intervention (Department of Health Promotion). These data are preliminary for stress management and burnout prevention programs conducted by the Department of Health Promotion. However, educators have had experience with limited programs that cannot totally generalize to an individual's life nor efficiently solve the problem over time. The lesson should not be repeated with an area as important as this.

Provide a Variety of Strategies and Techniques for Inservice

Especially important for stress management and burnout prevention strategies are the concepts of comprehensiveness and variety. Stress cannot be managed nor burnout prevented for everyone by a singular approach, strategy, or technique. Nor will a singular approach be useful and effective across different stressors or stress triggers. Preliminary data suggest that providing an individual with a variety of comprehensive techniques and strategies to be practiced over time is more effective (Department of Health Promotion, Saint Louis University Medical Center). In other words, relaxation is not the answer for everyone or for every situation. Rather, an approach that emphasizes the physical, mental, and emotional areas for dealing with the stress reaction seems more effective.

For example, as a person in the general field of "helping relationships," a special services professional is confronted with many stressors during the course of a day. As human beings, however, they manifest their stress reaction in many different ways usually dependent on the situation: Sean might experience pain and tension in his lower back (physical); Sue might get a flushed face, dilated pupils, empty stomach feeling and rapid heart beat (emotional); while Kathy might involve herself with mental scenarios of how the situations effect her today, tomorrow and the future (mental). The point is that people manifest stress in different ways *and* usually not in one specific area.

To parallel this variety of manifestations, an equally diverse set of skills to be individually used when the situation calls for it, makes more sense. The issue is to recognize each person as his or her own resource and to help the person use his or her resources. In addition, the development of a more comprehensive program over time will allow for *practice* of skills. As educators, we know that actual practice of a skill will enhance the rate of skill acquisition. The same can be said with respect to the acquisition of stress management or burnout prevention skills.

Differentiate Stress Management from Burnout Prevention

Any inservice program should develop the philosophy that it is essential for educators to maintain control over their own lives and their professional environment. Stress management is the controlling and managing of reactions to stressful situations. Burnout prevention is apparently effective only after an individual is managing personal and environmental stressors. Once the stress reactions are being managed then the stage is set for personal control of the stressors/stress triggers. For example, teaching someone to be more assertive with their peers as a burnout prevention technique makes little sense if the person is not capable of managing the building level of stress that being pushed around brings. Rather, it seems more sensible to help the person manage his or her stress reaction *and* then begin to teach effective prevention techniques.

Provide Motivation

Motivation is the key to enhancing the program effectiveness over time. We are all too familiar with participants who have been "designated to sit" for an inservice program. In most cases, the program effectiveness is decreased by this factor. Additionally, the goals of the training should be directly related to the needs of the participants. Providing irrelevant and unneeded service is a waste of valuable resources and time. The principle of the "three I's" is also applicable here (Bensky, 1980). *Interest, Involvement,* and *investment* are important terms to consider when planning an inservice training session. Establishing participant interest is a key component to initiating motivation in an inservice program. Adult learners are usually not going to be motivated to attend inservice sessions especially if they are not interested. Ways of establishing interest include collaborative planning with participants, and statements about how the stress management programs will directly help participants as people and professionals. This is especially important as the bandwagon of stress management for teachers becomes larger.

Interest is usually a good precursor for involvement and investment. Involvement (increased motivation) can be precipitated in many ways: *indirectly* through collaborative planning of the program and *directly* through actual skill

acquisition. Having someone sit for an hour or two is not as effective in motivational effects as is having someone periodically stand up and actually participate in an ongoing skill acquisition. Finally, investment is an important concept for the realization of long term effects and motivation. In most cases, educators or people will not invest in an innovative strategy that will not yield short and long term *direct* benefits to them. We have all observed educators working long hours (investment) on planning, designing, and implementing a new educational strategy that will help them become more efficient and effective educators. Why? Because it will assist them in delivering quality services to students. The same is valid for stress management/burnout prevention inservice programs. The key is to establish the investment initially to create a starting point for motivation.

As with other concepts and strategies described in this chapter, there is not a singular method or technique for motivating participants. However, the key to effective and successful inservice personnel preparation programs seems to be self motivated and enthusiastic participants.

Use Evaluation as a Feedback and Development Tool

Evaluation as a methodology and strategy would seem important for stress management and burnout prevention programs. Assessing where someone is and where they end up as a result of interventions is important not only in terms of accountability and assessing program effectiveness, but more importantly in terms of assisting in developing a personalized and comprehensive stress management and burnout prevention program. Evaluation and assessment should, therefore, be considered in terms of the mental, physical and emotional well being of the individual.

While these guidelines are by no means comprehensive, they seem to be a good beginning. The Department of Health Promotion has used them in the successful development of their programs. Further elaboration can be found in Appendix C.

Chapter 6: Managing Stress and Preventing Burnout

The problem of stress and burnout is ultimately a concern for the individual professional. As indicated previously, stress is a fact of life for everyone. Certainly, each educator who deals with "problem" students, colleagues, parents, and supervisors faces various stressors each day. How one deals with stress determines whether the result is productive or nonproductive. Productive outcomes of stress include heightened awareness, motivation, strengthening and creativity. An inability to cope with stress, on the other hand, often results in burnout.

It is, therefore, imperative for educators to work toward maintaining their mental health in the face of stressful conditions. In recent years increasing numbers of journal articles have been written with that intent. Most, however, have focused on general educators (Hendrickson, 1979; Moe, 1979; Styles & Cavanaugh, 1977). The intent of this chapter is to describe coping techniques as they relate to the needs and roles of special educators and special services personnel. Alternatives are described in terms of stress management and burnout prevention.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress can be manifested in a variety of ways. As described in the previous chapter, stress reactions can be realized in the mental, physical, and emotional areas. Subsequently, the methods for managing the stress reaction might focus in these areas. Before providing an overview of alternative methods of management, several prerequisite caveats are in order:

1. People tend to empower the term *stress*. In other words, educators seem to give the term *stress* the authority and responsibility to control their lives. Instead, an interesting perspective would be to view stress as a challenge to meet rather than an obstacle to "overcome or get rid of."
2. Focusing on using internal resources tends to make "the challenge of stress" seem more approachable *and* manageable. Being able to use internal resources is a more efficient and effective strategy at both the individual and organizational level.
3. The tendency to think there is a one to one correspondence of problem to solution is an erroneous and costly mistake. There are several variables that can be considered stressors and various stress reactions that might be viewed as manifestations. The key for health enhancement and successful management of the stress response is not to have mastered all techniques but rather to be cognizant of several powerful assumptions. First, we all operate according to a different formula. In one case, certain stressful situations will create a mental, physical, or emotional response or some combination of the three. Second, not all interventions work exactly the same for all individuals. We all know this principle from an educational perspective. Finally, self responsibility/motivation and awareness are essential keys to unlocking the doors of long lasting and relevant change. Therefore, when reviewing the techniques presented

here, it would help if the reader realized the following sequence of necessary steps:

- Establishing self responsibility/motivation for change.
- Awareness of factors and variables in your own formula.
- Discovery of and experience with techniques that assist you in certain situations.
- Refinement/modification to fit individual styles and successes.
- These steps lead finally to positive change, happiness, and an increased sense of mental and physical well being.

The reader should certainly sense that the activities outlined by the Department of Health Promotion (DHP) have taken these issues into account. The DHP believes that if individuals can experience a variety of techniques and are *aware* of the variables in *their* formula then they as individuals can pick and choose the techniques that fit the particular situation or response. It would be naive to expect either one technique to work for one response or all of these techniques to work for one manifestation. Rather, a balance between awareness and efficiency is suggested.

There are other prerequisites for individuals but they are dependent upon the situation, individual, and environment. The following descriptions are examples of a program model developed by the Department of Health Promotion, St. Louis University Medical Center. They are intended to provide an overview of stress management. A more complete description is provided in the Appendixes. These descriptions represent a compilation of over 60 separate techniques.

Mental Strategies

Cognitive Reprograming

There are a number of ways human beings create stress for themselves. This is sometimes manifested in more cognitive ways. For example, engaging in internal dialogues about a situation may be stress producing. Additionally, certain beliefs and constructs we hold may tend to prevent us from gaining a helpful perspective on a situation. The purpose of these strategies is to assist individuals in readjusting their perspectives, beliefs, or constructs in order to engage in beneficial solutions to a particular problem. There has been much written in this area; however, little has been systematically generalized *and* integrated with other aspects of stress management (Lazarus, 1978; Meichenbaum, 1977).

Changing States of Consciousness

Mentally we can also manifest stress in the various states that we pass through. For example, when under high levels of stress our sleep state tends to be disrupted or we tend to be mentally overstimulated. Again, using internal resources, a person can alter these states of consciousness to be better able to manage a particular situation.

Visualization

The ability to visualize situations, experiences and feelings has been demonstrated to have therapeutic value with adults and children both in personal and professional situations. From a stress management perspective individuals can benefit from visualization skills for improved performance in professional situations, for energy and strength, and even for fun and health. For example, a special services professional who visualizes an anxiety producing situation of administrative or parental interactions through mental scenarios may visualize the situation in terms of productive, appropriate behaviors, which can have significant impact on the stress that may be manifested in the mental area.

Physical Strategies

The manifestation of stress in the physical area has been known for many years. Special services personnel report of tension headaches, lower back pain, and even hypertension, ulcers, and mild coronary disease as long term effects of continual exposure to negative stressors. The following strategies again are means to an end: to assist an individual to manage the stress that may be manifested in the physical area

Integration/Balance Exercises

It is a well known fact that special services personnel extensively make use of their mental capabilities during a day. The human brain is functionally split in two. Briefly, the right hemisphere controls the left side of the body and the left hemisphere controls the right side of the body. Within most special services professionals' lives there is a dominance of the left hemisphere. In these situations, when one hemisphere is working overtime and the other is not, the situation is not optimum. In fact, the imbalance created by the overworking of one hemisphere is usually stressful and nonproductive.

To counter this reaction, and help manage the stress response manifested in this area, there are several exercises designed to integrate, balance, and coordinate the two hemispheres. The consequence after learning, practicing, and applying these techniques is usually renewed energy and an overall improved sense of well being. It should be noted that these exercises require demonstration *and* practice to successfully apply them to daily life. Exercises include the cross crawl, head-arm rotation, and 6 and 12 count two arm integration.

Posture/Movement Techniques

The next time you have the opportunity, observe a person walking, climbing stairs, standing from a sitting position, or sitting in a chair from a standing position. If you observe carefully and closely you probably will notice several traumatic or unnatural movements that are stress producing. Continuing your observations, you may talk with several colleagues who report the tension they feel in their necks or backs, especially in stressful situations or at the end of the day when they have completed ten annual reviews, two assessments, and one staffing. The point is that the stress is manifested via physical areas. The purpose of these strategies is to provide a variety of skills to help manage stress manifested in this area. For example, training covers several areas such as nontraumatic movement—how to move without creating more stress; how to release strain, tension, and stress that is manifested through posture. These techniques are again dependent upon practice and application. They are developed in such a manner as to permit easy practice and application to the worksite.

Emotional Strategies

As with the other two areas, stress is also manifested in the emotional area. For example, we have all experienced these manifestations of stress: shortness of breath or inability to relax and concentrate. The focus of the following strategies is to use and build upon the body's natural response to counter the emotional manifestations of stress.

Breathing/Centering

When a human being is in an anxious or stressful situation one of the body's natural tendencies is to increase the rate of breathing. For example, if you were in a staffing and an irate parent or staff member started to attack you professionally, we might expect your heart rate *and* breathing to increase. In fact, your face might get flushed and palms sweaty. When the situation passes (the staffing is over, you or the other person leaves the situation) the natural tendency is for you to let out a big sigh and comment, "Whew, I'm glad that's over." The big sigh and release of breath is the body's mechanism for relaxing the nervous system. In fact, research has suggested the strong interrelationships between physiological patterns (such as breathing) and psychological states. The purpose of the breathing/centering exercises is to help individuals purposefully control a simple physiological pattern as a stress reaction intervention.

Relaxation/Self Suggestion

Benson (1974) has stated that each of us possesses a natural and innate protective mechanism against the "stress reaction" response—the "relaxation response." He submitted that the relaxation response creates positive bodily changes that bring the human being into a healthier balance. Benson's main tenet is to teach people a variety of relaxation techniques they can call forth whenever they desire. As part of the previous described strategies and techniques, the Department of Health Promotion suggests several systematic techniques for managing the relaxation response. Techniques include progressive relaxation (breathing, visualization, and tensing), autogenic training, lumbar relaxation, and meditation. These techniques are appropriate for individuals in a variety of situations, but again the issue of practice and application to the appropriate situations are essential.

Conclusion

The mental, physical, and emotional strategies/techniques described are important steps in the management of stress reactions. These are a direct result of extensive work in the Department of Health Promotion, St. Louis University Medical Center. There are several issues that are important to consider in addition to suggestions previously mentioned. First, the stress management strategies described are individually oriented. The model, therefore, presupposes the individual can learn, practice and apply various techniques to his or her specific situation. The point being that the use of internal resources in the management of stress is a more appropriate and efficient strategy than teaching "the technique or strategy."

Second, and following the previous issue, as human beings, we do not always manifest stress in the same area (mental, physical, or emotional). In fact, we sometimes manifest stress in two or three areas simultaneously. The human condition is one where stress will be caused by a complex interaction of events. The management strategies, therefore, need to have the potential to be comprehensive. For example, mentally a special services professional may be experiencing stress and tension through mental scenarios of "how something might turn out" as well as tension in his or her lower back. For this situation, a person with a variety of techniques could apply one or a combination to help manage the stress in the situation. The main issue is one of synthesizing the strategies to be able to apply the most appropriate in a given situation.

Finally, the extent and nature of skill training usually requires a method for insuring the assimilation of the material and skills. For example, when conducting programs, the Department of Health Promotion combines the skill training sessions with comprehensive written descriptions of the skills covered. This allows for two important outcome behaviors:

1. The ability to assimilate and practice skills after formal inservice training is completed and the consultant has left. The human brain can process just so much; learning complete and detailed written information usually helps in the practice and generalization of the skills.
2. The eventual application of newly acquired skills in the natural environment.

After being able to practice the skills within the structure of the written descriptions, most individuals are usually better prepared to apply the techniques to their daily personal and professional lives. The next section will describe several alternative strategies to deal with burnout prevention.

BURNOUT PREVENTION

As you may recall, burnout or stress prevention is usually only beneficial after an individual is managing the personal and environmental stressors. In other words, burnout is a result of a person's not having or taking the time to manage the situation. Usually, the person reaches his or her adaptability limit and an extremely long recovery period is necessary. Burnout prevention emphasizes the personal control over one's professional and personal life. There are many different ways this control can be manifested. Three are suggested here.

Relational Strategies

Interpersonally, a special services professional can manifest burnout in a number of different ways: low tolerance for ambiguity, poor self control, and inappropriate staff relations, to name a few. Following are some simple suggestions a professional might want to use in preventing burnout in his or her life.

Be Positive about Yourself and Your Profession

Allow a "moment of glory." Too often, schools are not very positive places to be. Students, supervisors, parents, and colleagues do not often tell you what a great job you're doing. It is, therefore, important for special educators and special services personnel to accept and acknowledge positive feedback. When someone does praise you, don't reject it. We are very good at allowing false modesty ("I didn't really do anything special") or embarrassment to rob us of our just rewards. A response like, "Yes, I really worked my butt off and it's gratifying to see the results; it means a lot to me that you've noticed," will not only allow you your moment of glory but will encourage the person gracious enough to bestow some positive reinforcement on a fellow human being.

Look for the "silver lining." It is often helpful to seek out the "silver lining" in an otherwise dismal situation. As a consultant to regular classroom teachers, it is not unheard of to walk into a classroom that has received hours of your support only to find calamity prevailing. At that point it is easy to give up in total frustration. A better alternative, however, is to try to find some glimmer of hope in that situation (e.g., it could have been worse if I hadn't been there; her behavior management techniques were terrible but she was teaching a good lesson) or to immediately go to another classroom where the teacher has succeeded by implementing your recommendations.

In the same vein, looking for and being gratified by progress in very small steps will encourage you to keep coming back. When a special education teacher works with a learning disabled child, small increments of learning are planned, evaluated, and reinforced. When attempting to change adult behavior, particularly that of a teacher who may feel threatened because help must be sought to overcome a problem situation, a similar process should be implemented (Shaw & Shaw, 1972).

Remember the children you serve. Remember *why* you have chosen to be a special education teacher or member of the special services staff. Focus on the personal, professional, and philosophical reasons that give meaning to your working hours. Keeping your thoughts on the handicapped children you serve, your pride in professional accomplishments, and your empathy for those who society often rejects, will help you cope with a narrow minded principal, difficult parents, an inane meeting, or the endless paperwork that passes through your hands.

Make Work as Enjoyable as Possible

Try to enjoy working with the children in spite of what else is happening in your professional or personal life. Appreciate the spontaneity, sense of humor, and growth you see in your students. Have fun in your classroom—talk to the children, be yourself, take field trips, etc.

No matter how hectic your day seems, try to find half an hour or 45 minutes in which you can change gears, rest, and relax. Find colleagues who will talk about the latest best seller, sports, opera, or something not related to school. Some educators find going off alone to read, jog, pray, or knit allows them to face the rest of the day refreshed. It would be helpful to employ the principles of relaxation alluded to earlier.

Provide for environmental stimulation by making your office or classroom a pleasant place to be. Bring in posters, plants, pictures, or anything else which *you* enjoy and which make it "your" place. Encourage your students to do the same (within limits!).

Develop Positive Relationships with Others

Create a support group of colleagues or friends who will meet regularly to help each other deal with problems. Professionals should be encouraged to share positive experiences and discuss alternatives and solutions to problems, as well as "unload" the week's burdens. Support groups can include the teachers in one school, special services personnel from across the school system, colleagues from your special education training program or friends who are not educators.

Since most special educators and special services staff are isolated from one another they should work at getting together. Occasional meetings to share ideas, techniques, and problems can be most helpful. In rural areas, regional meetings or conferences may be necessary to provide this opportunity. Visits to personnel in other schools or school districts can also be helpful in stimulating new ideas and developing relationships. Sharing with a colleague who is still "turned on" by professional challenges may rekindle your own flame. It is important to encourage administrators to recognize these opportunities as part of the school's personnel development responsibilities.

Take the time to be involved in the social activities of your school(s). It is too easy for special educators and special services personnel to become isolated from the general educators with whom they work. It is, therefore, important that they make a reasonable effort to participate in staff parties, school social events, and the faculty volleyball team. However, it is important to avoid the pitfalls of taking on too much or feeling guilty because you're not participating in some school functions.

Meet Your Personal Needs

Take a "mental health day." Educators in general, and special educators in particular, are too often convinced that they are indispensable. They drag themselves into school whether or not they are physically or emotionally capable of doing their job. Educators should be willing and able to take off for what is known (albeit unofficially) as a "mental health day" when it is needed. Too many mental health days, however, are a sure sign of problems that will require further action by the educator. To avoid the "indispensable" syndrome, special educators should have clear plans and materials set aside that will enable both the substitute and your students to survive a day without your presence.

Seek out personal learning experiences. Professional and personal growth require that we keep learning. Certification requirements and school salary schedules encourage educators to take additional coursework. Seek programs of study that are interesting and stimulating as well as appropriate for meeting requirements. Programs that provide new skills needed on the job (i.e., consulting, teaching reading, diagnosis) or that broaden your base of knowledge (a special educator taking courses in psychology or sociology) are ideal. Dropping a course that is irrelevant, poorly taught, or too time consuming may also be very therapeutic. Seeking out personal learning experiences can likewise add productive dimensions to an educator's experience. Taking classes in ceramics, knitting, car maintenance, or home repair, for example, can provide a myriad of benefits. Not only do they develop new skills and interests, but they might even save you money.

Recognize and learn from mistakes. Suggesting that educators avoid guilt and not worry is stating the obvious. Trying to implement those suggestions, however, is more trying. Mistakes can be made in diagnostic evaluations, in placement decisions, and during classroom instruction. Special educators and special services personnel should note that even P.L. 94-142 does not demand perfection. Good faith efforts in developing and implementing the IEP is all that is required. Educators should not seek to become callous and, therefore, not be concerned with mistakes. Rather, recognizing and learning from mistakes should be a source of professional pride, not guilt.

Be prepared for accountability. One great source of fear for those working with handicapped children relates to the current focus on accountability. We *can* expect that at a parent conference, placement team meeting (particularly the annual review), due process hearing, or teacher evaluation conference we will be asked to defend our professional competence or educational program. Each special educator or special services staff member should be ready, if not eager, to make such a presentation. Ongoing diagnostic testing, observations, progress checks, criterion referenced testing, assessments of IEP objectives, and work samples should be organized and available for such a purpose. If consulting, parent counseling, or educational evaluations are part of your job description, "logs" should be available that indicate what you did, with whom you did it, and provide some indication of the results.

Create a "worry time." If you still insist on worrying, it is helpful if you manage and monitor your worrying time. You should start by setting aside a certain amount of time each day to worry. Then you write down the two or three concerns for the day. You can then enjoy the rest of your non-worrying time. At the next day's worrying time, you have to evaluate whether or not your worrying time helped you deal with the concerns listed. If it helped, you add five minutes to the worrying time, but if it didn't help, you take five minutes off the scheduled worrying time. Within one week your worrying time should be stabilized at its optimum level.

Structural Strategies

These strategies refer to the structures and logistics that surround every professional's job. Time, deadlines, overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and poor job design are just a few structural deficiencies that confront a professional after he or she is managing the stressors. To prevent burnout, the following strategies may be useful from a structural perspective.

Organize Your Time
Get yourself organized so you use your time efficiently and productively.

Set realistic and flexible professional goals and objectives. Don't set up expectations that will be impossible to meet. That only results in failure, frustration, and guilt. Sharing those inflated expectations with others (e.g., telling regular classroom teachers you can consult with them twice weekly while you are carrying full time direct service responsibilities) creates additional pressure that results in stress. Setting expectations too low, on the other hand, can create lethargy and lack of motivation ("rust out").

Establish priorities. Each day there seem to be many jobs which must get done. It is helpful to establish priorities so you deal with needs in order of importance. As one job is successfully tackled at a time, a sense of accomplishment can develop. You may discover that low priority items may not have to be done at all. Special services personnel with an interest in other time management principles should look at some of the sources indicated in the bibliography.

Leave your work at school. One of the major problems educators face is bringing work home after school. This causes problems in that schoolwork seems never to be finished and it often interferes with personal/family life. One way to break that cycle is to avoid bringing work home. Some educators have found staying at school until five or six o'clock in the afternoon may be required. Another alternative is going into school very early in the morning to grade papers, do planning, and set up the classroom. Staying in school until as late as seven or eight o'clock in the evening on Friday may allow you to enjoy the remainder of the weekend without having schoolwork hanging over your head. Planning a late dinner on Friday night (candles, wine, and children in bed—all optional) may be very therapeutic. Each of these alternatives requires a degree of sacrifice and discipline; however, if they succeed in allowing professionals to live a life out of school, they may be very worthwhile.

Pace yourself. Managing time is certainly a key to dealing with stress. Approaches to help avoid wasting time and prevent procrastination include setting realistic time lines, getting high priority work done early in the day (when we tend to work most efficiently), and including time for yourself in each day. It is imperative that educators do not get so involved in trying to do everything at once that they create a treadmill, with no end. Special educators, particularly new ones, should not expect to master every aspect of their profession immediately. Nor should they expect to be able to meet everyone else's needs in terms of consultant services, diagnostic evaluations, and so on, while providing direct service to children. It is necessary to pace oneself, not only each day, but for each week and each year. The social worker or psychologist who wants to revise the entire placement team process or modify the role of special services personnel should expect that goal to take considerable time to fulfill. Small steps to achieving those goals should be identified and cherished.

Allow transition time. Make the trip home a time of transition from school to home. Review the *good* things that happened during the day, or think about your plans for the evening. Some professionals find soft music or prayer helpful in "cooling down" from the stress of the day. Whatever method you use, see that you arrive home ready to begin the second part of your day.

Enjoy your time outside of school. A family life characterized by love, respect, and meeting of mutual needs will go a long way toward preventing professional burnout. In addition, develop outside interests (hobbies, pets, church activities, etc.) that will give you something to look forward to after school and on weekends. Plan events like extended travel or "nights out" in advance. The last several months of school (including the ordeal of 30 annual reviews) may fly by as you prepare for your summer backpacking trip. Travel is particularly productive because you surely get away from the school environment, meet different people, and have new experiences.

Over scheduling outside activities, on the other hand, can also be a burden. Leave yourself some free time when you are not doing or running. Don't be so busy that you don't have time to do your wash or clean your apartment. Also, if outside activities become so dominant that you get to school exhausted or do not have time to fulfill professional responsibilities, burnout will surely ensue.

Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities

Establish reasonable expectations. It would be most beneficial for special educators and special services personnel to clarify all professional responsibilities with their supervisors at the beginning of the school year. Since most IEP's are written at annual reviews in the spring or early September, specifying student load or class size in addition to indicating responsibilities for diagnosis, consulting, placement team meetings, and due process paperwork should be feasible. This would provide for agreement on justifiable and reasonable role expectations in a noncrisis setting. If modifications in role must be made later in the year, then there is an agreed upon basis for negotiation.

An increase in student load can be counterbalanced by a reduction in consultation or diagnostic responsibilities. This approach would certainly lessen the incredible stress that occurs when a placement team decision results in an "overload." In that case, the special educator must carry the extra burden and attendant stress or must stand up to an administrator and parent in the most inopportune situation (i.e., legally, the child cannot be denied an "appropriate placement" because the receiving teacher believes an "overload" would ensue).

Learn to say "no." Before accepting a new job or new responsibilities, the educator should find out exactly what is required. Make sure questions such as the following can be answered satisfactorily:

- Are the job specifications clear and detailed?
- Do I have the skills necessary to handle the job?
- How much time will be required to get the job done?
- What stressors will I have to deal with when fulfilling my responsibilities?
- What current responsibilities can I relinquish if I take on this new responsibility?
- What is the outcome for me? For my students? For the school?

In asking these questions assume there is a choice to be made. Professionals must learn to say NO! If the answers to the questions indicate that the new responsibilities will create a professional burden, it is the responsibility of the staff member not to accept or, at least, to negotiate alternatives.

Ask for staff support. Given the proliferation of roles and responsibilities for special education and special services personnel in recent years, means should be sought to get relief. Support can come from the increased use of aides to support instructional services or secretaries and clerical staff to handle typing, due process paperwork, and recording the minutes of meetings. The pressure on professionals can also be relieved by the development of curriculum based "objectives banks" to simplify IEP writing, and increased use of computers to handle routine paperwork, sending out form letters, etc. These supports can be requested by staff members through data based requests (e.g., staff members collect data on the amount of time spent during the week on clerical and other nonprofessional duties), discussions with administrators, lobbying with the board of education, and/or formal contract negotiations. Although most schools are faced with severe fiscal constraints, a case can be made that efficient and productive use of professional personnel through increased use of support staff is cost efficient.

Use available human resources. Use the available human resources to their maximum potential. Take the extra time necessary to train an aide or secretary to handle more responsibilities independently. Similarly, running an effective training program for student or parent volunteers can result in greatly increased instructional time in your classroom without enlarging your workload.

Organize your classroom. Improved classroom organization can save time and increase professional productivity. Setting up a catalog system for materials, tests, and instructional techniques can make them more accessible to you and to other professionals who have need of them. Similarly, developing a general filing system so that diagnostic information, IEP's, student performance data, and curriculum objectives are available can improve classroom efficiency. It may be necessary to *order* a file cabinet. Organizing the classroom so that students can function independently by use of a folder system, learning centers, or student contracts may free the teacher to attend more directly to individual student needs. Giving students access to classroom materials such as books, paper, pencils, audio visual equipment, self correcting materials, and *training them* in their use can likewise improve the learning environment.

Be Open to Change, Innovation and New Opportunities

Change your environment. A staff member who is dealing with stressful conditions may find a change in environment very productive. Changing roles from resource teacher to special class teacher, for example, may reduce stress by allowing the special educator to focus on direct service instead of having to cope with the additional demands of diagnosis and consulting. A school counselor who moves from a high school to a junior high school situation may find the job description at the new school more satisfactory. A simple change in environment from one elementary school to another may give the special educator a new perspective, new friends, different students and new supervisors.

Keep yourself motivated. It is important for educators to keep themselves motivated. Seeking out new experiences can be one way to maintain professional interest and prevent stagnation. A special educator can try new instructional techniques, implement an alternative social studies program, or develop new materials. A school psychologist can add a test to his or her test battery or try a new counseling technique. Special educators have found opportunities to work with "normal" children (advisor to student government, swimming coach, etc.) to be a very stimulating change of pace. Keeping abreast of current developments by reading journals, visiting other schools, taking college courses, and attending inservice training programs can also be helpful in maintaining professional interest.

Consider career options. There are many alternative career avenues that special educators and special services personnel should consider to diversify their experience or stimulate interest. Career options include placement team coordinator, itinerant diagnostician, work study coordinator, consultant, and inservice coordinator. In some districts, educators have the option of taking one of those roles for one year and then returning, hopefully refreshed, to previous responsibilities. There are also many opportunities for part time jobs or job sharing (two educators share one job—one works two days per week, the other three) which may provide a change of pace for weary professionals.

Organizational Strategies

Perhaps the most often heard comment from an administrator or teacher is, "You may be able to help people manage their stress reaction, but if you just place them back in the same organization without changing it. . . ." This comment has tremendous validity and personal meaning. Organizationally, there are several issues that must be faced if a school system is to confront the stress of teaching. Change agentry and organizational analysis are just two ways of helping to prevent burnout of professionals in a school setting. The following are some suggestions.

Review Policies and Procedures

Special educators have found doing annual reviews to be a necessary element in planning for handicapped children. It would be similarly productive for educators to meet alone or with their administrators to review special education policies and procedures (including staff roles, forms for P.L. 94-142 compliance, and placement team procedures). This would give staff members a sense of productivity and feeling of authority as well as provide ongoing improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of special education programming.

Become Directly Involved

In many cases, working directly to deal with the issues that cause problems can be both therapeutic and productive. Becoming a member of an inservice training advisory board, curriculum committee, or a task force of the local teachers association may allow you to effectively deal with problems causing stress for yourself and your colleagues. On the other hand, resigning from a committee that is causing frustration or is simply wasting your time, can also be therapeutic.

CONCLUSIONS

The alternatives described are certainly no cure all for managing stress or coping with burnout. We hope they will stimulate action by individual educators, school administrators, and teachers' associations to deal with the problems unique to each school system.

Professionals must recognize that more drastic solutions may be required. Seeking professional [illegible] is certainly appropriate when individual ac[illegible] is not possible or has not been productive. Resigning from a school system to seek a professional career in another town, taking a leave of absence, or permanently leaving the profession must be seen as alternatives on the continuum of coping strategies.

Although a burned out special educator may find happiness as a pottery maker in Vermont, a gold miner in Colorado, or a real estate agent in Ohio, our hope is that the coping strategies described can be helpful in preventing burnout for most special educators and special services personnel.

Chapter 7: What Administrators Can Do

What is the role of the administrator in fostering individual and organizational mental health? How should one approach this problem, and what are the essential tasks to be accomplished? How do we know if our efforts are having a positive effect? To some, these questions sound like those we often ask when preparing an individualized education program (IEP) for a student requiring special services. In a sense, what we are about to describe is very much like the IEP process. In other words, we are suggesting that the administrator's role is to:

1. Diagnose the environmental conditions influencing the organization or individual.
2. Plan and design possible intervention strategies that focus on the stress conditions.
3. Implement appropriate change strategies aimed at eliminating or minimizing stress conditions.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies implemented and the mental health status of the organization or individual; and, if necessary, recycle the process back to task one.

DIAGNOSING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

As stated in Chapter 3, the diagnosis of environmental conditions that create stress and cause burnout can be achieved through systematic observations. Among the various people who could make these observations, it is the local administrator who, perhaps, has the best opportunity to observe many of the important environmental variables affecting the individual or organization. For example, while a teacher may be able to observe a colleague many times in a similar setting, he or she may have little or no opportunity to observe that colleague's interaction with others in a variety of different settings. The local administrator or immediate supervisor more than likely will have frequent opportunities of this type in the normal course of events. Similarly, the administrator's perspective of the organization would generally tend to be wider in scope than an individual staff member whose role and functions are more narrowly defined.

The models described in Chapter 3 can be used as frameworks for conducting systematic observations of individual or organizational stress. Based on these models a number of procedures or steps can be constructed to guarantee that the observations conducted are not disruptive or disconcerting to the staff member or the organizational component. An outline of possible procedures and formats for documenting observations is included in Appendix A.

The settings in which the administrator might conduct his or her observations are myriad. They include any formal or informal event related to the performance of the staff member's professional duties, or the organization's legitimately authorized activities. Observations of staff members should not be made exclusively in the context of evaluation. (Most formal evaluation systems do not have the flexibility among the performance behaviors reviewed to account for such subtle, but real, factors as personality conflicts and individual actions stimulated by political and other nonprofessional motivations.) These data can be gathered by the administrator through direct interactions with the staff member, or indirectly through conversations with students, parents, and other staff. Observations of organizational units may require such settings as department meetings or other group situations, or the review and analysis of organizational procedures and outcomes.

PLANNING AND DESIGNING CHANGE STRATEGIES

Following the diagnosis of the environmental conditions influencing the organization or individual, the administrator should begin planning and designing change strategies that will effectively reduce or eliminate stress conditions. The degree of complexity of these strategies will depend on the severity of the stress condition. In the case of an individual, the severity level of the stress condition might be measured by the number of other persons negatively affected by their interaction with the person under stress. For example, one teacher in a resource room having difficulty performing his professional duties, and being constantly monitored by his supervisor, may not be pulling his weight when it comes to the equitable sharing of responsibilities with his coteacher, aide, and/or tutor. The severity level of the stress condition for an organization might be determined by analyzing the number of intradepartmental operations that have been rendered ineffective. The complexity of the change strategy is just one of several concerns the administrator must address during the planning and designing stage.

Another consideration for the administrator is the method used to evaluate the effectiveness of the change strategy. The objectives and activities of the strategy must be structured in a manner conducive to some type of formal or informal measurement. (We have outlined an approach to evaluating the mental health status of an individual or organization in a later section of this chapter.) The important point is that a general approach to evaluation should be determined before completing the strategy design. If this is done, the administrator can be assured that the implementation of the change strategy will provide some meaningful data—whether positive or negative.

Finally, Hersey and Blanchard (1972) suggested that in planning for change one should keep in mind the four levels of change: (a) knowledge, (b) attitudinal, (c) individual behavior, and (d) group or organizational performance changes. According to these authors, knowledge changes are the easiest to make, while organizational performance changes are the most difficult. It is crucial that the special services administrator realize that his or her role in fostering the mental health of either individual staff members or the organization as a whole will involve at least knowledge, attitudinal, and individual behavior changes. Some might even argue that group performance changes might result from an improvement in the mental health status of a single staff member.

IMPLEMENTING CHANGE STRATEGIES

The models described in Chapter 3 can also serve as frameworks for implementing the necessary changes to promote the mental health of an organization or staff member. The role of the administrator at this point would be to use personal or official power to directly or indirectly bring about changes in one or more of the variables that make up the environmental situation affecting the individual and/or organization.

For example, one local administrator realized that the major cause of stress for special services personnel was not the increased diagnostic, instructional, and compliance responsibilities generated by P.L. 94-142; rather, it seemed the varying competency levels among the staff for carrying out these responsibilities successfully was the major problem. No single staff member seemed to possess all of the prerequisite skills and knowledge to deal effectively with the problems associated with serving the handicapped. However, there were many among the staff who had previosly demonstrated their abilities to solve or effectively deal with certain aspects of these problems.

This administrator's strategy for reducing stress within the organization was to promote a skills sharing process among the staff by encouraging and providing financial support for the implementation of a series of mini-inservice activities. These inservice workshops were proposed and implemented by individual staff members for their colleagues, and usually focused on a specific skill or piece of knowledge. Participants became involved in these activities on a self selection basis, depending on their individual needs and motivation. The workshops were usually single session events of no more than 1 to 2 hours in length.

This strategy helped to reduce the negative impact of stress on the organization by:

1. Improving the professional status and personal self worth of those who proposed, developed, and successfully implemented workshops in which their colleagues participated.
2. Developing a cadre of experienced consultants and inservice trainers who could function both within and outside the school district.
3. Diffusing to a wider extent among the staff those skills and knowledge necessary for effective organizational operations and delivery of services to students.
4. Increasing the number and variety of opportunities for establishing positive interpersonal and professional relationships among the staff.

Obviously, the actual strategies used by a particular administrator would depend on the situation and the people involved. There are no surefire approaches for developing mentally healthy organizations or individuals that are generalizable across all situations. However, there is one thing that is common to all or most situations. That is, the administrator can be viewed as an important variable in situations of environmental stress. Overlooking this fact could mean the difference between success or failure when implementing change strategies.

The supervisor's or administrator's actions must be perceived as credible by the organization and/or the individual. In essence, the administrator must be a visible change agent—not a secret agent who spends his or her time behind the scenes manipulating everyone and everything. Whenever possible, the administrator should avoid coercing the organization or staff member into a particular change. Encouraging or allowing staff participation and involvement is usually more productive in the long run (Bennis, 1966).

EVALUATION OF CHANGE STRATEGIES

How can an administrator determine the effectiveness of the interventions or change strategies employed to reduce stress or its impact on the individual or organization? Again, it is primarily through observation—particularly where strategies to improve the mental health status of an individual staff member are involved. In this situation the question is not whether the stressful condition has been reduced or eliminated, as much as it is the question of whether the individual staff member is better equipped to handle it.

Lazarus (1976) suggested four tasks that a well adjusted person can do in the face of stressful conditions. These tasks serve well as criteria for the evaluation observations conducted by the administrator:

1. Tolerating or relieving all or some of the attendant stress.
2. Maintaining a sense of personal worth despite defeats.
3. Maintaining rewarding interpersonal relationships.
4. Meeting the specific requirements of the stressful tasks, or utilizing available opportunities to accomplish any of the above tasks.

Using these tasks as criteria, the administrator can determine through observation the extent to which the change strategy enables the individual staff member to better cope with the stressful condition.

For example, has the social worker been able to relieve some of the attendant stress by reducing the number of times he or she has to communicate face to face with the department head who likes to discuss in public confidential information about students? Or has the speech clinician been able to maintain his or her sense of personal worth, despite the fact that after 5 years, the school continues to provide a 6 foot by 4 foot windowless room in which to work? And what about the psychologist who had a tendency to practice Gestalt therapy on resistive parents or dissenting colleagues during placement team meetings? Has he or she been able to cease alienating others? Is there evidence of his or her developing and maintaining rewarding interpersonal relationships? Finally, has the resource teacher, who has been working with a particularly disruptive group of students, been able to meet his or her classroom responsibilities in a more satisfactory manner than in the past?

If these questions can be answered positively in these kinds of situations, the administrator may assume that the change strategies used have been effective. Further, he or she may assume that the mental health status of staff members is improving.

When assessing the mental health status of the organization, the supervisor or administrator may want to use a more formal approach. Criteria for determining whether change strategies are working can be extracted from Jahoda's (1958) definition of a healthy personality which we reviewed earlier in our discussion. The three basic statements in this definition can be related to specific criteria in the following manner:

1. "Actively masters his environment," i.e., *adaptability*.
2. "Certain unit of personality," i.e., *identity*.
3. "Able to perceive the world and himself correctly," i.e., *reality testing*.

Within each criteria area certain questions might be addressed by the administrator or the organization itself, in a kind of self assessment. For example, in the criteria area of adaptability the following questions might be raised:

1. Does the organization demonstrate effective problem solving capabilities?
2. Is the organization flexible enough to learn through experience?
3. Can the organization maintain an adequate level of functioning while adjusting to changing internal and external circumstances?

In the area of identity, the questions could be:

1. Are the organizational goals and overall mission generally understood and accepted by the personnel?
2. To what extent are the individual's perceptions of how the organization works in harmony with other perceptions?
3. To what degree does the organization recognize and accept the different perceptions among the personnel as to how the organization really works?

Finally, the criteria area of reality testing might stimulate these questions:

1. To what extent has the organization developed techniques for determining the "real properties" of the environment in which it exists?
2. Does the organization have a fairly objective view of its own strengths and weaknesses?

If a majority of these questions cannot be answered or are answered negatively, then the administrator might assume that the mental health status of the organization needs improving. Even though these eight questions are somewhat general in nature, together they can serve as a framework for judging the effectiveness of efforts aimed at improving the mental health of the organization.

CONCLUSION

It seems important for administrators to recognize the potential disaster that might result from inattention to the mental health needs of their staffs and organizations. Indications of rapid staff burnout are already apparent if we would but recognize them. By *burnout* we mean not only the rate of staff turnover, but also the number of persons who are remaining in their positions but who have literally "given up the struggle" out of sheer frustration and fatigue. This phenomenon can only be detrimental to the whole concept and mission of the special services organizations in school districts.

The role of the supervisor or administrator under these circumstances becomes quite clear. The only way to eliminate or minimize the problems of the burnout syndrome is to attend to it directly and systematically. In short, the administrator must not hesitate to quickly diagnose environmental conditions in stress situations and then plan, implement, and evaluate intervention strategies aimed at reducing that stress. Further, the administrator's concern must be not only for the individual staff member, but also for the organization as a whole. Both may be in dire need of changes aimed at improving their mental health status. Since there is no absolute standard of mental health for individuals or organizations, efforts by administrators to foster mental health must be individualized in order to account for the differences in environmental conditions among people and organizations.

Finally, we would like to caution those administrators interested in adopting the four part role described in this chapter. There is a significant difference between those interventions designed for personal stress situations and those developed to minimize the negative impact of stress experienced by the individual within a professional or organizational context. In a majority of instances, it would be extremely difficult for someone to effectively intervene in another's personal stress situation. While the administrator may indirectly facilitate a person's acquisition of the knowledge and skills for relieving personal stress, he or she cannot directly bring about a reduction of stress—only the person involved can do this. However, where individual stress in professional situations is concerned, the administrator can play a much more direct role by using his or her position power, access to resources, and knowledge to actually change environmental conditions on behalf of the staff member.

Chapter 8: The Role of the Special Services Professional

The role of special services professionals will be slightly different from the administrators' roles mentioned in the previous chapter. There is not only a different perspective but also different assumptions and strategies a special services staff person might use.

ASSUMPTIONS

There are several prerequisite assumptions for the role of special services professionals in developing stress management and burnout prevention programs:

1. Special services professionals must have mastery of the knowledge in their own areas *and* be able to apply it appropriately to program development. For school psychologists this would mean applying their knowledge of psychological principles as it relates to education as well as knowledge of how schools teach children.
2. The special services professional should develop and be able to exhibit certain personality qualities that will facilitate the delivery of a stress management or burnout prevention program. These include sincerity, empathy, a genuine concern for what happens to other people, positive skepticism (Bardon & Bennett, 1974), and an ability to remain open to change and benefit from their successes and failures. Your role will define itself through your actions.
3. Special services professionals should develop personal life styles and professional behaviors that are consistent and congruent with the goals of stress management and burnout prevention. A poorly organized, tense, and anxious person leading a stress management workshop may tend to lessen the impact of the program. As people in the helping profession, special services professionals must be willing to become involved in the actual program as participants *prior* to administering assistance or training. The stress and burnout of helping professionals is well documented. Modeling and practicing what you develop and teach is essential (Bennington, 1980).
4. Special services professionals should avoid a "power hat" role. Instead of promoting the impression of one who "knows it all" or can threaten another's job security, attempt to become involved as one who can assist as part of a team, a facilitator.

STRATEGIES

The previous chapter outlined an excellent change strategy from diagnosis to evaluation. While this model is a central tenet to stress management and burnout prevention, the perspective of the special services professional might be slightly different. First, the concept of individualization is as important to promote for staff development as it is for student learning and development. Individualizing a stress management program would not only include diagnosis and assessment but would include the development of goals, objectives, *and* activities for the comprehensive approach to stress management.

Another important aspect of the individual approach is to set up the personal and environmental conditions to be conducive to the goals and objectives of the stress management program. This could be accomplished in conjunction with an administrator. The administrator can perhaps observe the environmental conditions influencing the organization; but someone should be systematically considering the necessary prerequisites before the implementation of the program. This would include the array of techniques special services professionals have for curriculum development. Second, the relationship of stress management as a precursor to burnout prevention would provide a special services professional with an important role function. Most special services professionals have the assessment skills and competencies necessary to augment the needed assessment of an individual's management and coping ability after stress management training. In addition, some will have already defined roles to take an integral part in the burnout prevention program. As described previously, burnout prevention consists of programs assisting individuals to learn how to control the stress triggers in school. This might include time management, assertion training, intervention methods, etc. Certainly many special services professionals have the capability and predefined roles to provide these services.

Third, the special services professional is comfortable with the management and integration of outside and related resources. Since the model of stress management and burnout prevention mentioned previously espouses the use of other health personnel and content, the special services professional would seem to be a natural. The coordination and integration of programs and resources in physical fitness, nutrition management, habit control, health education, and awareness is an important and necessary condition for successful stress management and prevention. The special services professional might be the school system's coordinator.

Finally, as mentioned in Chapter 5, the ultimate goal of any stress management and burnout prevention intervention might be to provide a direct service delivery component and a trainer of trainers component. The special services professional's general operating philosophy should be consistent with these goals: to provide personalized, comprehensive interventions *and* to prepare school systems to be able to use their own resources.

As described in Chapter 7, the administrator's role would seem to be one of coordination: diagnosis, designing and planning, implementing, and evaluating with respect to a stress management program in a school setting. If in fact this process follows closely the process of preparing an individualized education program, then the special services professional would be a valuable team member. Several of these roles are outlined in the following section. They should not be construed as absolute *nor* as replacing the administrator's role. Rather, the special services professional should be viewed as supplementing, not supplanting.

POSSIBLE ROLES

Team Member

The special services professional is obviously a team member who can assist in the four step process outlined in Chapter 7. For example, the administrator might designate a special services professional to validate some of his or her observations made while diagnosing environmental conditions. The special services professional would be a logical choice given his or her observation skills and knowledge. Assistance can be given in the other areas mentioned.

Consultant

The consulting role has been demonstrated to be an invaluable concept in the geometric expansion for the delivery of mental health and related services (Stewart & Medway, 1978). Essentially, the assets of the consultation model are (a) the delivery of broad based services to more professionals and students and (b) the use of a problem solving model of service delivery. The various professions that make up the special services unit (guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologists, etc.) are all gravitating toward this model of service delivery. The same role could be assumed with respect to the planning, designing and implementing of appropriate change strategies aimed at stress management. The special services professional is also a logical choice to deliver some stress management programs. Moreover, he or she would naturally fit into a trainer of trainers model. It should be apparent that if a school system wants to deliver efficient *and* effective services, a consulting or trainer of trainers model is the desired model for action.

Using your own resources is a belabored but important point: this is relevant not only to stress management services for individuals but *also* for organizations such as school systems. The administrator (Chapter 7) could easily use the special services professional in a consulting manner in planning, designing, and implementing programs. For example, Stewart and Medway (1978) defined *school based consultation* as "... (the) delivery of indirect mental health services in which benefiting the consultee's client is seen as the prime concern." However, they clearly stated the major problem in getting consultation started can be attributed to change involving a person's usual method of professional functioning.

Several suggestions follow with respect to initiating and implementing a consultation model that is designed to meet the mental health needs of educators:

1. *Start where the problem is.* Using the appropriate data based framework is important in providing effective solutions.
2. *Define mutual-collaborative responsibilities.* Miscommunications about roles and potential problems can be avoided if both the consultee and consultant's roles and responsibilities are clearly delineated.
3. *Frame the program or intervention in the language of solutions.* A pupil services administrator known to one of the authors has demonstrated more effective consultation interactions when the situation is put in a perspective and language of solutions (Henry, 1980). This makes sense, given the nature of the inservice programs described in Chapter 5. The intent is to help educators use their own resources. Instead of perpetuating an overly extensive analysis of the problem, a consultant may want to help the educator(s) look at and verbalize the situation of stress and burnout in terms of what they can do about it. Language is an important ingredient in progress toward change.
4. *Maximize the opportunities for success.* One of the best ways to fail as a consultant (especially in this area) is to (a) promise magic or mystical solutions to the problems of stress or (b) attempt to intervene in a global, large scale manner. The test approach has been promoted by Owen (1980): "Think small and achieve big."
5. *Be cognizant of the style of consultation.* In general, research has suggested that certain types of educators are more accessible to change through consultation. They include recent entrants to the profession and educators more able to define and articulate the problem. Stewart and Medway (1978) suggested that teachers on the whole prefer nondirective consultants. Add to this the dimension of solution orientation and one can begin to see the importance of style. Consultants must recognize the role of flexibility; it would be unfortunate if the consultant created as much stress as he/she helped the person manage.
6. *Design programs that provide feedback about consultant performance.* Accountability of the special services professional in the delivery of consultation services is important. Evaluative methodologies are an important aspect of consultation for this purpose.

Conclusion

There is no single best role for the special services professional in the delivery of stress management programs. However, it is clear that the two roles are a beginning point. One final point should be addressed. Educational systems are being faced with limited human and financial resources and continually verbalizing their dissatisfaction with their present plight. The role of the special services professional might be best conceptualized then as a *team* member who is responsible for assisting in the development of innovative, solution oriented programs to meet the needs of the system within the given parameters of the situation. The real question is, How long do we complain before we begin to respond?

Chapter 9: Strategies for Preservice Training

Personnel preparation programs in special education have made tremendous improvements in the last two decades. In the "golden years" of the 1960's, they were often guilty of granting teacher certification based on little more than an individual's concern for handicapped children. In those days prospective teachers were given little knowledge of learning characteristics of the handicapped and even less practical experience. Special education teachers too often entered their classrooms armed with the one "box" or approach that was thought to be appropriate for all the handicapped children in the classroom.

In response to the efficacy studies on special classes and the mounting data indicating that no one approach can be successful in remediating all learning disabilities, personnel preparation programs improved rapidly in the early 1970's. Professional organizations such as the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA), The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), and CEC's Division on Children with Learning Disabilities supported revised certification requirements, higher standards and specification of professional competencies. The passage of P.L. 94-142 in 1975 fostered better training in diagnosis, parent counseling, record keeping, and program evaluation. One can now expect newly trained special educators to be able to write thorough educational evaluations using formal and informal assessments, write IEP's including short term objectives, run placement team meetings, work with regular classroom teachers, and develop or modify instructional materials and games, as well as teach children with a range of handicapping conditions.

The challenge of the 1980's is to add a heavy dose of reality to personnel preparation programs. Prospective special educators must not only be made aware of what is out there in the real world, but also what to do about it in order to survive. We simply cannot afford to spend thousands of hours training competent professionals so they can quit in the middle of their first year, or worse, face each day in the schools with resentment, frustration, fear, or disillusionment.

Preservice students certainly must be told what the law, learning theory, research and professional ethics say is appropriate diagnosis, instruction, and programing for handicapped students. Of equal importance, however, is knowing what is actually happening in the schools and how to bridge that gap between theory (what should be) and practice (what is).

This places clear responsibilities on the teacher trainer to be knowledgeable about the professional environment in schools and institutions. The teacher trainer must know about, if not have a "feel for," the stressors facing special services personnel. In addition, there should be an awareness of such things as (a) the problem areas in the implementation of P.L. 94-142, (b) the formal and informal social/political structure of local schools and institutions, and (c) recent changes in state and federal regulations, recent court cases providing new interpretations of P.L. 94-142, parent concerns and pressures, etc.

Most teacher trainers typically have such field based activities as supervision of student teachers and presentations to parent and professional groups as part of their duties. Opportunities for consulting, providing direct service to handicapped students, inservice training, and membership on local and state advisory or parent groups can all be productive in broadening one's reality base. The current trend toward increasing numbers of courses being taught on site in the schools should be particularly helpful.

The techniques to be discussed focus on environmental stressors in the professional experience of special services professionals. It is also important for preservice special services professionals to receive training in managing their stress reactions and preventing burnout by recognizing and coping with stress triggers. Many of the strategies for inservice training described in Chapter 5 are applicable to preservice training as well. Most colleges have programs in educational psychology, counseling, social work, school psychology, and speech, with personnel able to teach elements of stress management or burnout prevention. Even departments such as sociology, political science, and business administration might have personnel willing to teach modules on time management, group processes, decision making, and change agentry. This content could be included in a student teaching/practicum seminar, a short course or, at least, as an elective.

Some of the techniques described may seem harsh or too demanding. It is, therefore, necessary for them to be implemented within the context of a personnel preparation program characterized by (a) respect for the student, (b) exposure to competent and mentally healthy role models (particularly program graduates and master teachers), (c) extensive, productive, and monitored fieldwork experiences throughout the program, (d) positive reinforcement for steps toward professional competence, and (e) a professor-student relationship marked by openness, candor, a chance to question, and opportunities for counseling.

TECHNIQUES FOR BRIDGING THE GAP

Admission Requirements

One of the most important criteria for admission to a preservice program should be experience with the handicapped and/or experience in the school setting. For undergraduates, this might be tutorial, recreational, or camp experience. Experience for graduate students might include regular classroom teaching or being a teacher aide or residential child care worker. Admitting students with experience forms a reality base for the instructor to apply teaching-learning principles and lessens the chance that the students will be surprised by the realities of handicapped students or public institutions.

A Stroll Through the Past

At the University of Connecticut, one of the basic undergraduate special education courses takes an historical perspective of special education diagnosis, instruction, and curriculum. In addition to learning about the major theories and educators of the last century, the students deal with such questions such as: (a) How could hundreds of teachers use that test for 10 years after the standardization manual demonstrated it was completely unreliable? (b) Why didn't teachers stop using that technique when the research clearly indicated it didn't work? How did they feel when they found out? What did they do then?

Practical Assignments

When you want students to demonstrate their knowledge or skill, why do it in isolation when you can put it in a practical context? For example: (a) defend your programing ideas to your disgruntled principal, (b) explain learning disability diagnosis and programing in response to a letter from a parent, and (c) justify your approach to diagnosis as compared to another based on a question at a job interview (a job you want!).

Debate

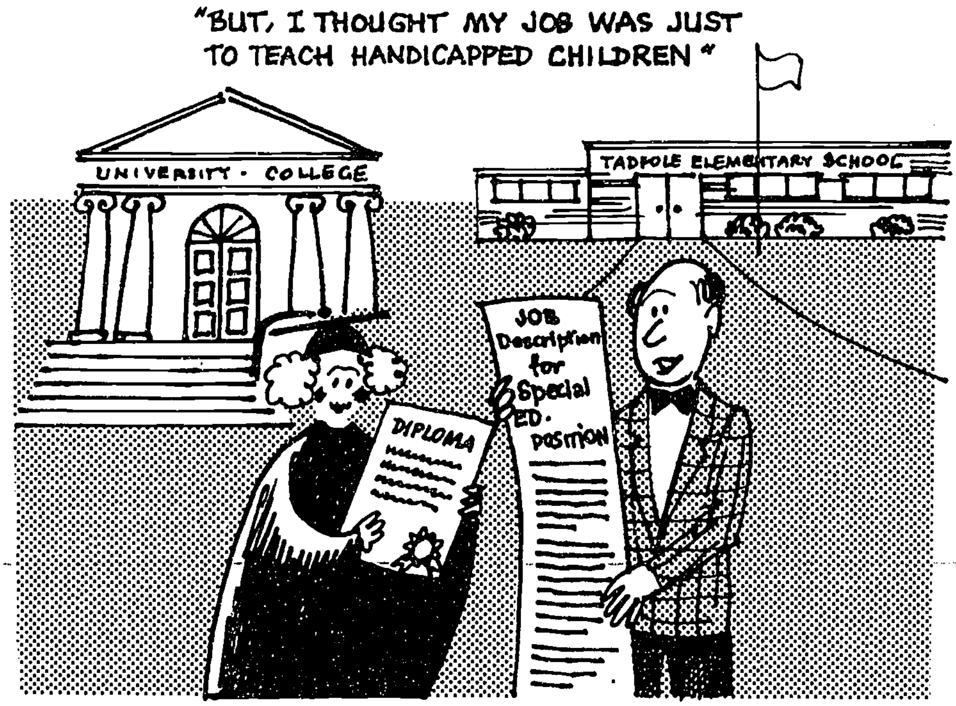
It is important for special educators to be aware of "alternative therapies" such as the Kaiser-Permanente diet. A debate in which the professor plays the president of the local Feingold Association and the students attempt to be rational, data based educators has often resulted in much fireworks and a significant growth in terms of insight and maturity for the students.

Demonstrate Skill In Situ

Giving students the competence to write an IEP or complete an educational evaluation is most important. Providing them with the opportunity to present and defend their IEP or educational evaluation on a real child at a real placement team meeting is even more productive.

Invite Guest Lecturers

It is often helpful to bring master teachers into the class to demonstrate instructional techniques



or materials. When these professionals are present, time should be provided for them to share mental health concerns, real world problems, or personal survival techniques.

In a like manner, having parents of handicapped children share their perspectives can be quite eye opening for preservice educators. Feeling the parents' concerns, problems, frustrations, and resentments (particularly those created by intransigence, poor communication, and insensitivity on the part of school personnel) is quite sobering. Books like *Parents Speak Out* by Turnbull and Turnbull (1978) and *May We Walk In His Shoes* by Woollacott (1979) can also be helpful in providing a parent perspective.

Fieldwork Experiences

Although "lab" schools, simulations, and microteaching are productive approaches for giving students teaching experience, it is imperative that students have extensive involvement with the informal and formal organization and structure of schools. If we expect them to deal with principals, colleagues, and regular classroom teachers we had better give them opportunities to make mistakes and learn in the protected environment of fieldwork experiences.

Plan Ahead

The first year for any professional is terribly difficult. Often, before the new special educator has a chance to stop, look up, and evaluate, half the year is gone. However, more importantly, roles, relationships, and expectations are established. Helping the students brainstorm to develop a checklist of "milestones" or things to do during the first 3 months of the school year can be very productive in helping them get their feet on the ground early.

Rights and Responsibilities

It is important for special services personnel to know the details of both P.L. 94-142 and the state special education law. Knowledge of laws regarding teacher liability, due process, confidentiality, teacher rights, and parent rights are helpful for maintaining mental health and functioning as an advocate for handicapped children.

School Survival

Teacher trainers must accept that time spent discussing school survival may be as productive as time spent learning about writing IEP's or teaching reading. Understanding the politics of schools or how to deal with people is more likely to determine the productivity and acceptance of special services personnel than anything else in the training program. Dealing with the following topics can be helpful in providing preservice special services personnel success in negotiating the political and professional environment of the school or institution:

1. Critical variables in finding/selecting a job conducive to professional growth and personal mental health.
2. The pro's and con's of living in the area where you work.
3. Finding or developing personal/professional support groups.
4. What should I do the first day of school . . . first week . . . first month?
5. Dealing with administrators, fellow special services personnel, regular classroom teachers, janitors, etc.
6. How to listen and how to communicate.
7. Assessing the informal and formal power structure of a school.

CONCLUSION

The reality based activities described could certainly "turn off" or upset students in your training program. One senior special education major recently commented that she was not a teacher yet but she was already burned out. On the other hand, if this kind of preparation can help special educators effectively use their skills with handicapped children and enjoy productive careers, then it is all worthwhile. Recently, several of last year's graduates indicated that the first year was not as bad as they expected. Maybe we're on the right track!

Chapter 10: Summary and Conclusions

Environmental, physical, and psychological stressors exist in every profession. Until recently, the education profession has been relatively unaware or unconcerned about the effects of stress and burnout on school systems, school personnel, and students. This *Primer* has intentionally focused on one subgroup of professional educators—special services personnel. One reason for this emphasis is the fact that educational literature contains relatively little information on stress management and burnout prevention for special services personnel. The second reason is that not everyone within the education profession views special services personnel as having the same stress and burnout problems as other educators. The fact is that, in addition to those stressors experienced by regular educators, special services personnel must deal with nearly every academic, behavioral, or physical problem found in the public school population.

CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1 was devoted to defining terms and clarifying certain concepts related to stress management and burnout prevention. This was followed by a discussion of the effect of stress and burnout on both the individual and the system or school organization. The reciprocal relationship between teacher stress and student performance and/or behavior was cited by way of illustrating the significance of this problem among educators.

CHAPTER 2

A more detailed discussion of the problem of burnout for special services personnel was provided in Chapter 2. Here four case studies were used to illustrate how certain negative stressors lead to unhealthy and nonproductive behaviors among staff. This chapter concluded with a review of research results that show role clarity as being the most significant variable among the several job related stressors discussed.

CHAPTER 3

Two important contextual considerations relating to the assessment of individual and organizational stress were the main points made at the beginning of Chapter 3. The first consideration related to the varying impact of P.L. 94-142 on school districts. The second emphasized the importance of using a relative rather than an absolute standard when assessing individual or organizational health. The major part of this chapter was devoted to a description of two models for diagnosing environmental conditions that influence the organization or individual. The first model was described as an appropriate method for examining the causal, intervening and output variables related to observed organizational stress conditions. The observation and diagnosis of individual stress conditions was discussed next. Here a second model was described as one method for analyzing all the environmental components interacting with the individual staff member.

CHAPTERS 4 AND 5

Throughout this *Primer* every effort was made to provide practical suggestions on how to reduce the impact of stress and burnout on special services personnel. Chapter 4 described 12 different stress reduction activities that focus primarily on the modification of special education policies and procedures. Both organizational and personnel management concerns were considered within this list of suggestions. In addition, an effort was made throughout the chapter to discuss each suggested policy or procedural change in the context of the implementation of P.L. 94-142. Chapter 5 was devoted entirely to inservice training, one of the suggested activities described earlier. Here six guidelines for developing inservice training programs for stress management and burnout prevention were outlined in detail.

CHAPTER 6

While the suggestions and strategies discussed in the previous chapters focused on the special services organization, Chapter 6 provided a detailed description of coping techniques for individual professionals who are attempting to manage their own stress and prevent their own burnout. In terms of stress management several specific techniques were outlined in the mental, physical, and emotional areas. Burnout prevention was discussed in terms of relational, structural, and organizational strategies.

CHAPTER 7

The question of what special services staff members and administrators can do to reduce stress conditions and prevent burnout was, perhaps, the key issue addressed in this *Primer*. The next two chapters were devoted to both global and specific aspects of this issue. Chapter 7 provided a step by step process for the administrator's role. This process should have been familiar to the special services administrator, for it was adapted from the IEP process used in programing for handicapped students. In brief, the process incorporates activities for diagnosing environmental conditions, planning intervention strategies, implementing change strategies, and evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies implemented.

CHAPTER 8

All of Chapter 8 was devoted to a discussion of the role of special services personnel in developing programs in stress management and burnout prevention. Stress reduction and burnout prevention activities and strategies were discussed from the perspective of the special education teacher, the social worker, the psychologist, and other special services staff. After an outline of four assumptions about special services personnel, followed by a general discussion of stress reduction and burnout prevention strategies, the chapter concluded with a description of two possible roles for special services staff members. These roles were team member and/or consultant. Both roles emphasize mutual support, collaboration, and individual involvement.

CHAPTER 9

The effective articulation of training activities between elementary and secondary schools and institutions of higher education continues to be a seemingly insurmountable problem. Chapter 9 attempted to help bridge this gap by suggesting strategies for the preservice training of special services personnel. Here it was suggested that prospective special services personnel should be provided opportunities during their training to acquire the knowledge and skills that will give them a good start in their fields. In the context of stress management and burnout prevention, specific training techniques to be used by teacher trainers who want to give their students a "real world" view of what it may mean to be a special services professional were described.

CONCLUSION

As stated in the Introduction, the information and recommendations presented in this *Primer* should be viewed as only the beginning of our understanding of the problem of stress and burnout among special services personnel. Much more needs to be done in order to both significantly improve upon our basic understanding, as well as to develop viable and practical solutions to this ever increasing problem. On a formal level, schools and colleges of education, in cooperation with local school districts, should encourage and support major research in the areas of stress management and burnout prevention. Teachers and other professionals have been, and will continue to be, our most important resource in education. Neither declining enrollments, staff reductions, nor the supposed surplus of teachers are sufficient reasons for overlooking the urgency of this problem.

On the local level both school boards and teacher organizations should carry out informal study projects aimed at investigating what makes a superior teacher superior and what prevents a poor teacher from becoming significantly better. What are the techniques, skills, knowledge, and attitudes that can help teachers survive the *sturm und drang* of educating students in today's world? It is crucial that similar questions be forthrightly addressed by those of us closest to the problem.

It is clear that in the future, special services personnel will be called upon more and more to be resources not only for students who find school and home environments nonsupportive of their learning needs, but also for those staff members who are faced with similar problems in terms of their teaching. Therefore, it is crucial that special services personnel have opportunities to work out their own stress and burnout problems before counseling and/or working with others. Throughout this *Primer* a number of suggestions and recommendations have been made on how to begin. The question now is not whether we should begin working on the problem of stress and burnout in education. The question is, when do we start?

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Appendix A: Analyzing Observations of Stress Conditions

The forms in this appendix are examples of the types of formats and questions that might be used in a systematic analysis of stress conditions for an organization or for an individual. While these forms are intended for use by administrators, other special services personnel may find them of some value on a personal basis. It is important to note that neither form focuses directly on intervention strategies that might be employed to reduce the stress condition. However, it is intended that the information collected through these procedures will greatly facilitate the development of appropriate intervention strategies.

Figure A-1 is an outline of a process for systematically recording not only what has been observed, but also the more obvious implications or ramifications of the observed stress condition. This process also incorporates a "go—no go" decision for planning the intervention strategy. Stress conditions for the general organization tend to be more complex than stressors impacting primarily on a single individual. Therefore, one must be careful that the intervention implemented does not become another stressor for the organization. In addition, it is possible that a particular stress condition may be a one time situation with little likelihood of future occurrences. For both these reasons, it may be wiser to let things remain as they are. Simply stated, the adminstrator must make a judgment call on this.

Figure A-2 is a structured format of six questions that solicit the information needed for determining the best approach for reducing the stress situation for the individual professional. The format is designed to be used both formally and informally. For example, an administrator may wish to use it in the context of the formal evaluation conference. Or, he or she may use it as a guide for an informal interview with the staff member. Still, the administrator may not want to involve the staff member initially in the completion of this form. Most stress conditions will be first recognized by the individual involved, who more than likely will bring it to the attention of the administrator. However, where administrators become aware of the problem first, it is extremely important that they communicate their observations and concerns to those staff members involved.

FIGURE A-1. Analyzing an organizational stress condition.

Write a four paragraph narrative statement based on the numbered questions below. Expand each paragraph by answering the lettered questions associated with each major question.

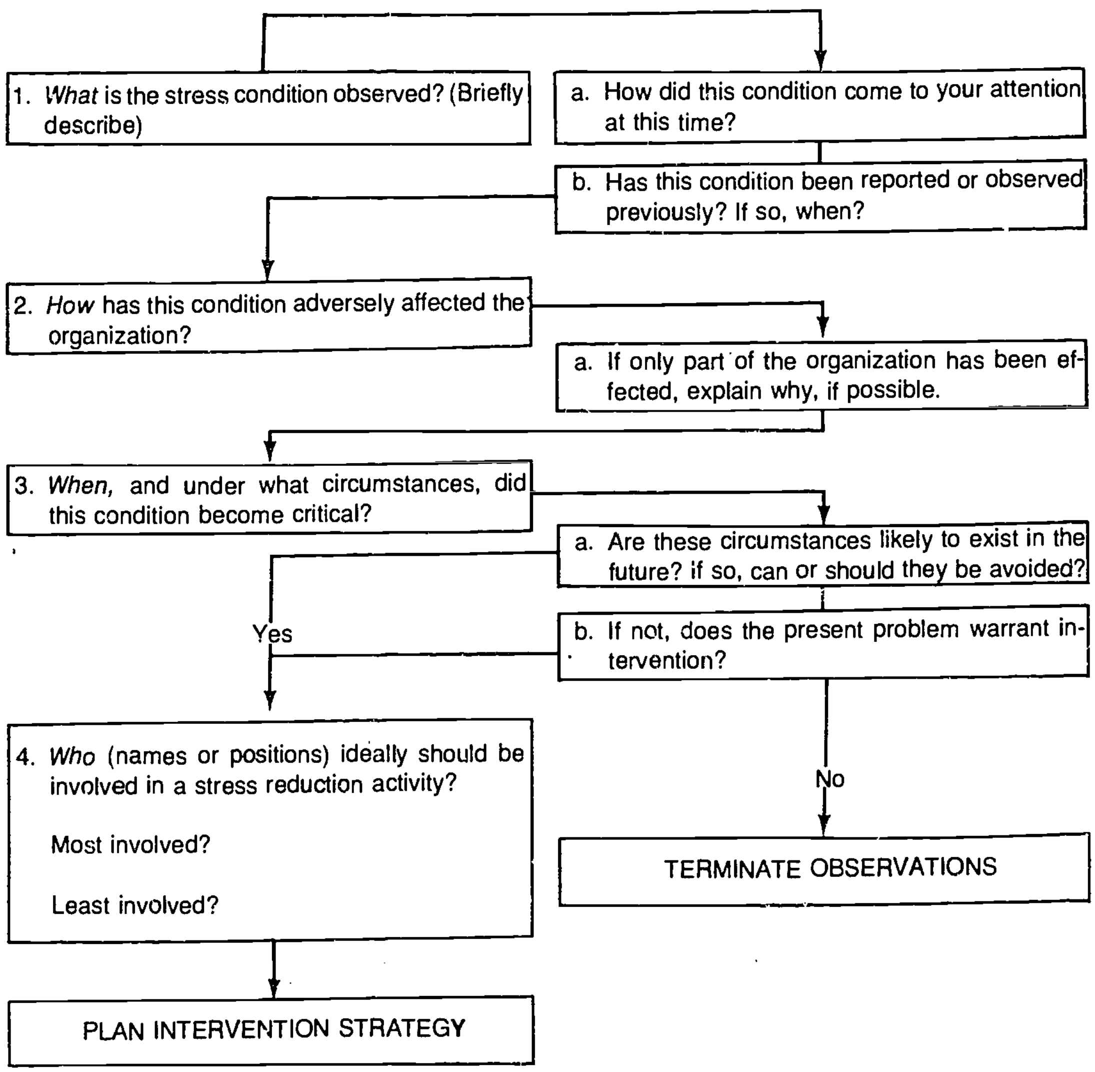

FIGURE A-2. Analyzing a stress condition affecting an individual.

Name of Individual ______________________ School/Position ______________

1. Environmental Location of Stress Condition (Check one and briefly describe situation)

   _____Job Demands _____Superiors _____Organization _____Associates _____Clients

2. How is this stress condition adversely affecting the individual's performance of his or her duties?

3. What are the specific environmental stimulators related to this stress condition?

4. What previous strategies were used to reduce this stress, and why were they unsuccessful?

5. Who are the other individuals, if any, experiencing the same or similar stress condition?

6. In what order of priority should the following strategy areas be considered in designing a stress reduction activity? (Number in priority order from 1 to 4)

   _____Mental _____Relational _____Structural _____Organizational

   Comments:

Appendix B: Bibliography

If someone were to review all programs, speeches, manuscripts, and articles related to stress management and burnout prevention they would be able to publish a book. This appendix will concern itself with articles and programs related to stress management and burnout prevention with educational populations. The authors want to mention, in advance, that an article or program invariably will be missed or overlooked; to these people we apologize. However, this book is a primer—a beginning. Special thanks for this appendix is given to Drs. Marcy Bennington and Mary Zahner whose initial efforts are the basis for this appendix. Finally, it is hoped that this appendix will serve as a basis for all researchers and doctoral students "looking" for a place to begin with a review of literature.

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Appendix C: General Models of Intervention

As outlined in Chapter 5 and throughout this *Primer,* inservice strategies are essential to solving the problem of teacher burnout. The models presented in this appendix will be elaborated with respect to delivery in a school setting.

MODEL 1

The general model of intervention (Figure C-1) emanates from the philosophy of intervention developed by the Department of Health Promotion (DHP), St. Louis University Medical Center. For the purpose of discussion, a *seminar* can be defined as a 1 to 2 hour lecture/discussion session; a *workshop* as a 1 to 2 day session covering most concepts in general and smaller sets of concepts in more detail; a *program* covers all facets of a particular content area; *trainer of trainers* is a level of intervention where a consultant/trainer will train other trainers (professionals or staff) to deliver the program in the school system once the consultant is gone; *consultation* covers intervention activities where a person from outside the system provides expertise on a variety of health promotion interventions. This arrangement can be either short or long term depending upon the needs and wants of the system.

As one can see, this model meets some of the guidelines outlined in Chapter 5: multilevel approach and related to other areas of health. *Health* has been defined in a variety of ways usually emphasizing the physical mode. For this appendix, however, *health* will be defined as a multifaceted concept including the areas commonly referred to as mental, physical, and emotional health. *Stress management* and *burnout prevention* are components of the general concept of health promotion. Briefly, *health promotion* is the promotion of preventive health related behaviors and skills with apparently healthy individuals. It is the synthesis of primary prevention and health education activities.

Why is this point important? First, stress management or burnout prevention programs are only as good as they improve the competence, job performance, energy, vitality, and satisfaction of educators—all factors of health. The literature is replete with research data, case studies, and position papers giving credence to the improvement of health and the resulting rise in job satisfaction and productivity. Second, stress management and burnout prevention programs have covered the country like the hula hoop: Go to most consultants to educational systems and they will profess to have a stress management or burnout prevention program *for you.* While these programs are useful and beneficial in general, they usually resemble sessions where staff receive their yearly stress "inoculation shots." Little attention is given to long range benefits and effectiveness or to the relationship of these programs to other variables such as health, organizational issues and change, positive living, etc. Common complaints from staff include, "This was good but now what do I do?"

This general intervention model acknowledges that staff, school buildings, and even school systems will be "ready" for different levels and types of intervention. Rather than requiring everyone to go to a stress management program, a school system or staff member might want to participate in a stress management workshop or seminar in personal empowerment. (*Empowerment* is a synonym for *enable:* "to make able; to give one strength or authority sufficient for the purpose"). The DHP has found that these empowerment seminars are useful strategies to motivate staff and systems to participate in other facets of intervention. In fact, some individual professionals and systems are only "ready" to participate in seminars or workshops. This should not be construed as a sign of negative readiness. Rather, this is probably the most successful point of departure for that individual or system.

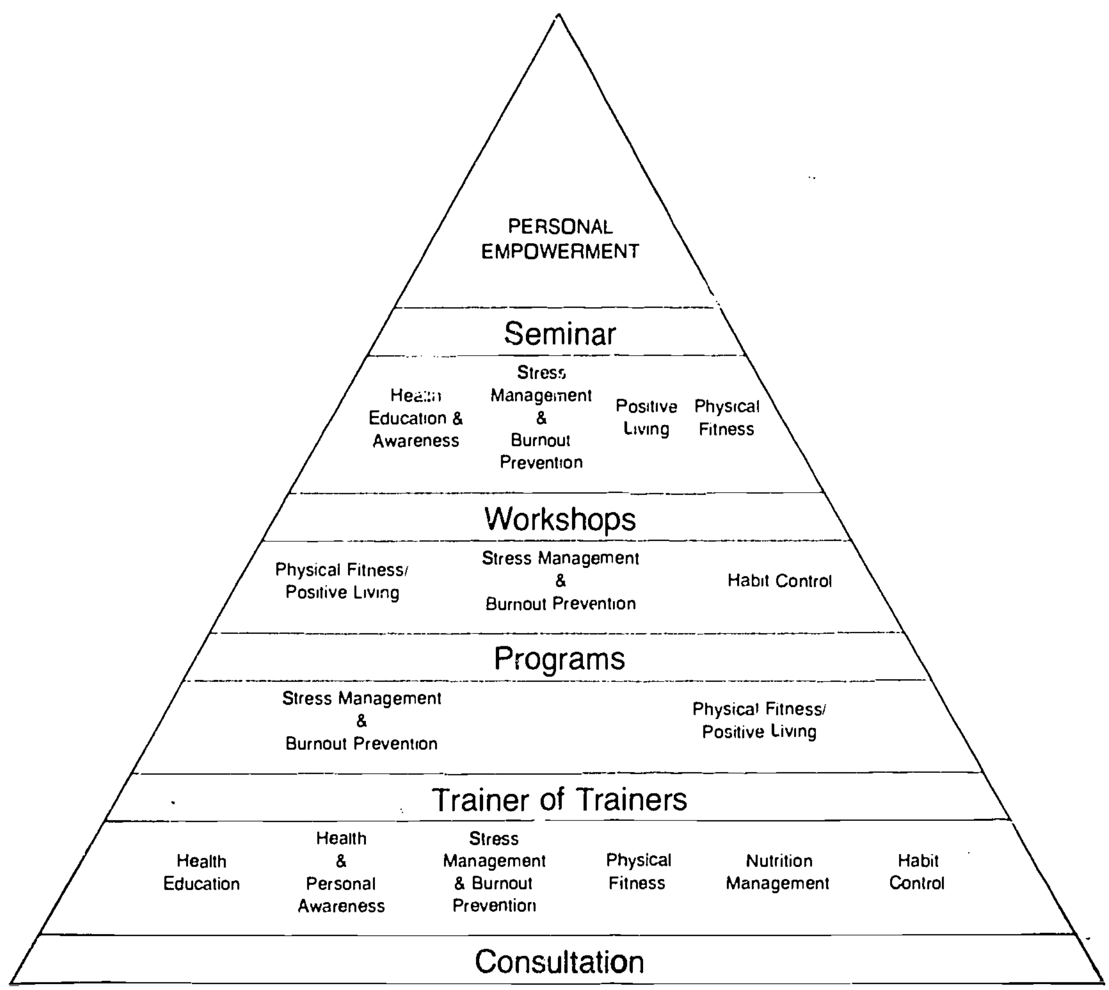

FIGURE C-1. Model 1: Health promotion for educational systems. (Copyright © 1980, Department of Health Promotion, St. Louis University Medical Center.)

MODEL 2

Specific aspects of stress management or burnout prevention are highlighted in the inservice model presented in Figure C-2. This model has been used successfully by the DHP at the workshop, program, and trainer of trainers levels. The content activities of each area have been extensively developed by the DHP. However, it is not the exact nature of the content or activities, but the following issues that have enhanced the model's effectiveness:

Multimedia Supplements

At the seminar, workshop, and program levels it is a useful technique to introduce the concept of stress with a short (20–30 minute) multimedia presentation. Slides, slide-tape, and film programs on the concept of stress are available. St. Louis University Medical Center has produced a film on stress entitled *Stress: A Personal Challenge* presently being marketed by ABC television. There are many other multimedia products available for this introductory use.

Workbooks/Handouts or Manuals

The introduction of written material in a workshop or program can be to the advantage or disadvantage of both leader and participants. However, to enhance the long term skill acquisition and generalization of the workshop and program, carefully and systematically planned handouts can be effective.

For example, at all levels, the DHP has assembled packets or manuals to facilitate the learning experiences. Participants are provided skills and techniques in the actual "workshop" setting via the process of explain, demonstrate and train. Participants can then use the handouts for practice of skills at their own leisure. With this format participants report that they can go home or to their schools and actually use *and* practice a particular strategy or technique they themselves have found useful and worthwhile. This strategy reinforces the concept of empowerment or enabling an individual to use their own resources.

The use of manuals has also been particularly helpful at the trainer of trainers level. The DHP's manuals consist of lesson plans (goals, objectives, materials) as well as activity sheets that explain to the trainers how to deliver the program or workshop. A final caution: Handouts are only good if they are used by participants and the facilitator. Handouts used as fillers usually end up in the circular file. Therefore, planning your handouts to complement and illustrate your program is important.

Tailoring Content to the Audience

As Model 2 demonstrates, there are some categorical means of providing stress in management or burnout prevention information and skills to participants. As mentioned previously, it makes sense to insure that people are managing or controlling their stress reactions *before* covering prevention of the stress triggers. Additionally, as any workshop leader will tell you, no matter how good the workshop material is, the participants will only benefit if they are interested, involved with, and value the material.

Tailoring the components of cognitive reprograming or integration or organizational strategies to special services populations in particular settings is essential. For example, relating information to a rural special services person might be difficult if you used inner city examples (Helge, 1980). While all educators have some common denominators, it is important to recognize setting, professional, and personal differences in your delivery. Therefore, taking generic material and providing relevant examples would be the most beneficial.

Setting Personalized Goals and Measuring Program Effectiveness

One of the most beneficial experiences we have had with program participants is having them first evaluate and diagnose their stressors, stress reactions and general well being and then set some personalized goals for themselves. This process seems to create a more realistic program for them—something they are attempting to accomplish, rather than just going to a stress management workshop. It definitely capitalizes on the three I's (Interest, Involvement, Investment) for participants.

Further, we as facilitators are then able to provide parallel measurement forms (of the instruments used to help set the goals) for individual followup progress/reports, and approximation of total program effectiveness. The methodology and instruments can be self made or have the "psychometric" properties of reliability and validity. At the DHP, we have found the more reliable and valid an instrument is, the better able we are as facilitators to demonstrate personal gains and

FIGURE C-2. Model 2: Program models for stress management and burnout prevention. (Copyright © 1980, Department of Health Promotion, St. Louis University Medical Center.)

Stress Management Program: Strategies for Coping with the Stress Reaction		
Mental	*Physical*	*Emotional*
Cognitive Reprograming	Integration/Balance Exercises	Breathing/Centering
Changing States of Consciousness	Posture/Movement Techniques	Relaxation/Self Suggestion
Visualization Techniques	Pressure/Holding Techniques	Meditation
Burnout Prevention Program: Strategies for Personal Control Over Stress Triggers		
Relational	*Structural*	*Organizational*
Impression Management	Time Management	Assertion Training
Communication Analysis	Resource Management	Organizational Analysis
Intervention Techniques	Job Design & Change	Change Agentry

changes as well as overall program effects. In this time of accountability and tight financial resources, setting goals and having a way of measuring them are important considerations.

Process, Format, and Typical Learning Curve

Figure C-3 illustrates the format most of our sessions follow. The process of *explain, demonstrate, train* and *practice* is used in workshops and programs. Table C-1 relates specifically to our programs which run for consecutive sessions over a longer period of time. The basic underlying philosophy of this format is to provide 25% conceptual material and 75% skill development in any type of staff development activity attempted by the DHP. We have all sat through workshops where the theory of the ivory tower was emphasized.

What most participants want and require is the theoretical background as a base (25%) and then the practical applications of this theory (75%) to their own daily personal and professional lives. An advisor of one of the authors always asked the question, SO WHAT? If facilitators cannot translate the theory into practice for participants to attempt to answer the question, then they have probably missed a step or link. This particular process usually results in a learning curve (Figure C-3). One would expect similar learning results from most groups. While groups may exhibit these general trends, individuals may not. Workshop facilitators might want to use these as approximations, not absolutes, and plan accordingly.

Special Issues

This appendix could easily turn into a "how to" book on its own. Rather than do this, several important special issues will be highlighted.

Time and Materials

First, for workshops, two key ingredients seem to be the time allotted and the amount of material attempted. Frequently, stress management workshops are "crammed" into 2 hours, with the conceptual material overemphasized. Becoming aware of the theoretical bases of stress is important; but so are the practical applications. Leaving people with a strategy or technique, no matter how small, is important (25% conceptual, 75% skill development) for progress and success. This practice would also seem to aid in participant involvement and development.

Public School Programs

Second, are some of the special issues related to establishing stress management *programs* in public school settings? The DHP has found several. If a stress management or burnout prevention program becomes a stressor for someone it would be defeating its own purposes. Issues such as the time of day, being designated or volunteering to be a participant, and training philosophy can easily cause more stress than necessary.

The time of day is the biggest. When do you schedule an ongoing program? Early in the morning before school? During lunch, after school, at night, on Saturdays? Invariably, picking one time slot will result in the following reactions: someone does not like to get up early, lunches are when they take time out for themselves, after school is reserved for conferences and extracurricular activities, nights and weekends disrupt personal, family and social rituals and habits. What to do? Going to a program you really *want* to go to can result in a changing of a routine, pattern or habit *if notified far enough in advance.*

One program run by the DHP had all of a districts' administrators meeting at 6:30 a.m. to begin a program. While this was distasteful to some participants (the ones with the closed eyes and pajamas during the program), eventually they got used to and even enjoyed the early morning routine. We are not suggesting this as a general practice. Rather, if participants *want* the program, they usually can reasonably modify patterns and routines if notified and polled in advance. A good technique is to establish a choice of times with majority rule as a guideline.

Being a designated participant is odious to everyone. It is like being paid to reinforce the consultant's ego. They know they don't want to be there, you know they know that you know

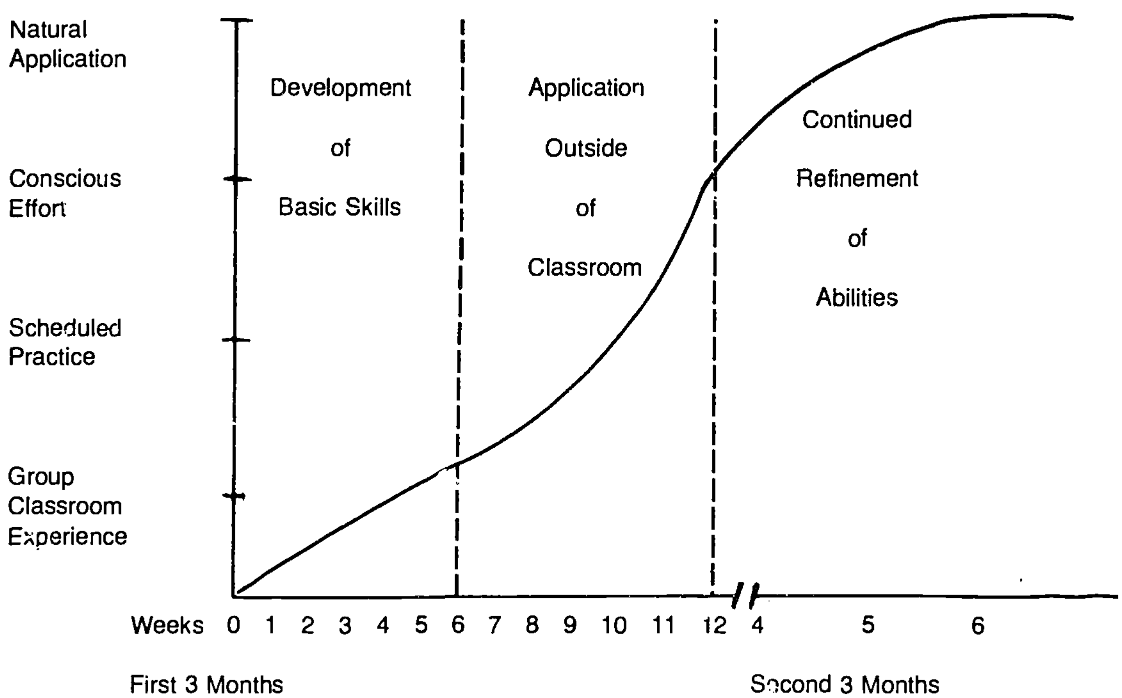

FIGURE C-3. Progress of skill development, application, and refinement. (Copyright © 1980, Department of Health Promotion, St. Louis University Medical Center.)

TABLE C-1
Class Structure

Class Activity	*Description of Activity*
Process	Class starts with participants invited to ask questions, cover material presented in the preceding class and to share experiences from application of techniques outside of classroom.
Conceptual	Ten to fifteen minutes of conceptual information about the nature of stress.
Skill Development	Most of the class is devoted to skill training and skill practice in the following areas:
Mental	
Physical	(each class presents stress management and training covering at least one technique from each area)
Emotional	
Process	Class ends with about five minutes for questions and discussion.

they don't want to be there and everyone is at a disadvantage before even beginning a stress management program. What most districts have found rewarding is asking for volunteers. This process is usually more positive and eventually spreads the good word more effectively over time than designating participants.

The training philosophy really affects all levels (workshops, programs, trainer of trainers). A training philosophy that offers positive, experientially based activities is certainly more productive in helping people manage and prevent stress. In other words, if you can't get rid of stress entirely (which you can't) then you want to learn how to take it in a positive way. Stress management and prevention programs should facilitate these codes of behavior.

Trainer of Trainers Program
Third are the intricate issues related to establishing a trainer of trainers program. There are books and articles just related to this issue. Rather than tell the reader how to do it there are four issues to highlight:

Identifying trainers. The identification of potential trainers is a crucial first step. Finding people that are positive and possess appropriate trainer/leader characteristics is not an easy task. The DHP has found that selecting people that are motivated to be trainers; understand the time, professional commitment and nature of the training task; have experiences working with adults in learning situations; can model behaviors that are consistent with helping others help themselves; and can manage to a relative degree their own stress, to be important factors in trainer identification. This first step can sometimes make or break a trainer of trainers program.

Quality assurance. Quality assurances for the delivery of services by the trainees is the next step. How does one insure that the trainees are delivering quality and effective services? The DHP considers that the extensive use of trainer manuals, practice in simulated sessions, and coaching by the consultant/trainer in real live sessions to be crucial. The DHP uses a trainers manual that explains every step and process to a potential trainer.

Additionally, practice during simulated sessions allows the consultant to correct any major problems before going on stage. This usually includes requiring potential trainers to go through the program as participants before becoming a trainer.

Finally, it is essential that the consultant be able to have spaced opportunities to coach the trainees in real life training sessions. This usually includes systematic feedback about style, content coverage, and overall effectiveness. This feedback is given to trainees after the session with any additional skill development the trainees may require. At the DHP, we have found using teams of two trainers to be an effective method of trainer development. The two members usually complement each other in terms of style and also provide each other the most important support system and practice/feedback vehicle a trainer needs in the beginning of such an endeavor.

Cost effectiveness and organizational support. Because a trainer of trainers model is one of the most cost effective methods of delivering comprehensive services to the school system, one does not want to get bogged down with costly logistics. Important to this end is the establishment of participant groups for the potential trainees and session times for the training sessions. In addition, support from the organization and administration is essential. As mentioned before, establishing groups and convenient times for training require systematic planning in advance of the actual programing: an organizational commitment.

Overall, systematic planning is the key to the overall success of any of the programs mentioned here. Identifying, designing, problem solving, deciding, and, in general, good solid planning will establish a solid base for effective stress management and burnout prevention inservice activities. This appendix has outlined a general model that has been effective in delivering services to public school systems. It is intended as a catalyst for planning and programing healthy change.