

LIFESTYLE



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Timely Information for Personal Success

PTSD More Prevalent than First Thought

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, whether in the context of a soldier returning

from war, a person who just got into an automobile accident, or another situation — everyone, regardless of circumstances, is left feeling hopeless or paralyzed with fear.

Most recently, Dutch researchers found that many children whose parents were diagnosed with cancer suffered from PTSD. The research concluded that even after five years, the children still displayed the same symptoms. As Nina Danielson explains in her book, *What to Do When Your Therapist Isn't There*, "We store these memories in parts of our mind that are not easy to access. These memories do not go away, however, and live on in our unconscious — causing anger, sadness, or panic without a logical cause."

With PTSD becoming more common than was originally thought, it is important to recognize the symptoms. If you feel overwhelmed by your emotions, or you're constantly overreacting and responding to situations with more intense emotion than cir-

"...it is important to recognize the symptoms."

cumstances actually call for, you might be suffering from PTSD without even knowing it. Danielson suggests seeking help if you notice the following symptoms:

- Constantly overreacting and responding to things with more intense emotion than the situation actually calls for;
- Nightmares, hypervigilance, anxiety, depression, or flashbacks;
- Being flooded by feelings over which you seem to have little or no control;
- Suddenly feeling as though the other person is "the bad guy," and that you have been tricked or duped, and are in great peril; and/or
- There is a large gap between your intellectual awareness and your emotional response. ♦

What to Do When Your Therapist Isn't There, \$15.95, is available from Hatherleigh Press (www.hatherleighpress.com). Danielson, MSW, is an experienced therapist and lecturer with 30 years of experience.

Laughter's Still the Best Medicine

By Elaine Ambrose

A well-timed anecdote about the befuddled customer who forgot his address can be the perfect icebreaker to dispel tension in a serious staff meeting.

While timing should be considered, experts agree that laughter in the workplace can improve morale, relieve stress and burnout, and impact the bottom line. A hearty belly laugh can lower blood pressure, exercise the lungs, pump more oxygen into the bloodstream, and activate endorphins that make us feel good. It's sobering to learn that young children laugh or smile more than 400 times a day, while adults can be lucky to muster up a few chuckles. Kids shouldn't have all the fun. However, you don't want to become known as the joke of the company because of tasteless and silly behavior. These are some guidelines to remember:

- **Know your audience** — Don't even think about jokes that include sexuality, reli-

continued on Page 2

Healthy Recipe: Swiss Onion Soup

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 medium onions, thinly sliced
- freshly ground pepper, salt to taste
- 2 cups cubed, crusty French bread
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar (optional)
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1/4 pound quality Swiss cheese, diced
- 3 cups reduced-fat 1% milk

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Calories per serving: 223
- Fat: 10 g.
- Protein: 11 g.
- Sodium: 333 mg.
- Carbohydrates: 24 g.
- Fiber: 1 g.
- Saturated fat: 6 g.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Melt butter over moderate heat in large stockpot or Dutch oven. Add onions, season with salt and pepper, and cook until soft, but not colored.
2. Cut bread and add it to the pot along with the sugar. Stir constantly for about 1 minute, so the bread absorbs the butter.
3. Add chicken stock and bring to boil. Simmer for 20 minutes. Slowly add cheese. Reduce to low simmer. Cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes.
4. Heat milk in microwave until steaming. Slowly stir it into pot. Don't let the soup boil or the cheese will separate and milk will curdle. Serve immediately.

Serving size: 1 bowl. ♦

LifestyleTIPS®

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Relighting after Burnout!

We all have the potential for job burnout. While it's important to recognize burnout and address it, it's also important to "relight" so burnout doesn't occur again. Consider these options:

- **Hold certain times sacred.** This can be a time for quiet breathing, praying, or mentally preparing for the day. Whatever it is, mark off a block of time on your calendar each day, and treat this time like gold.
- **Learn to say "no."** No one but YOU knows what you can really get done in the course of a day. Establish limits that honor the needs of the people around you, while preserving the integrity of what you can honestly do.
- **Create a workspace that nurtures your soul.** Whether it's filled with pictures of your kids or something else, your space must "speak to you."
- **Exercise to burn off stress.** Make the time!
- **Pay attention to the wind and the waves.** No one can sail a ship alone — seek the help of your EAP. ♦

Laughter's Still the Best Medicine

continued from Page 1

gion, politics, ethnic background, or someone's personal appearance. It's a good idea to avoid gross stuff as well. During a briefing of a company's new health plan, the male facilitator joked that mammograms would now be conducted at Hooters. The men laughed. The women threatened to sue.

- **Be sure to laugh at yourself** — A middle-aged speaker can win over an audience by joking about her age. Just don't go overboard, or they might think that you're a loser.
- **Include company anecdotes** — It's always a good idea to joke about the things that employees can relate to, including tasteful stories about products, competitors, difficult customers, and production goals. Jokes can be positive, too. Consider someone who's lost a lot of weight. "Look at Roger. He's a shining example of corporate downsizing!"
- **Use humor to diffuse tension** — You might, for instance, start a presentation with a mock exaggeration: "The light at the end of the

tunnel has been turned off due to budget constraints." However, AVOID the temptation to criticize the boss! One employee actually told this joke during a heated meeting: "Jim is a seagull manager. He flies in, makes a lot of noise, takes a crap everywhere, and then leaves." The worker who told the joke was encouraged to take his humor to a different job.

- **Remember, there's still work to do** — While everyone needs a daily dose of humor, remember that you're paid to do a job, not to be the class clown. Don't let jokes distract you from your work. Avoid emailing jokes on company time and company equipment, too.

Companies that incorporate humor into the workplace experience a notable decrease in staff turnover and absenteeism. Have some fun! ♦

Elaine Ambrose is an award-winning comedic speaker and author, including the new book, "Menopause Sucks." For more information, visit www.millparkpublishing.com.