

Help for stressed students

By B.J. Thomsen
Of the Emerald

It is not uncommon for students to occasionally feel "stressed out" during their college years. But when an overwhelming feeling of pressure begins to impede on everyday living and presents problems with school and relationships, it may be time to seek help.

A recently-formed group that attempts to teach people how to deal with stress meets Mondays at noon at the Newman Center. This program, known as "Recovery," is open to anyone having a difficult time dealing with problems of stress, says Vira Martins, founder of the Newman Center stress sessions.

The Recovery method, founded in 1937 by Chicago psychiatrist Abraham Low, is a technique of controlling anxiety through muscle control, Martins says.

At the meetings, which began this fall, members take turns sharing stressful encounters experienced during the week, she says.

The other members of the group then trace the method through which the stressful situation might have been successfully dealt with using Low's prescribed outline of steps for regaining control of a body incapacitated by stress, Martins says.

The group follows the advice of Low's book, "Mental Health Through Will-Training."

Martins, who has been using the Recovery method for 15 years, believes the meetings can be invaluable for students dealing with the everyday stress that life at a large university tends to generate.

She is especially concerned with the dropout rate among freshman at the University. According to Kathy Pyfer, acting director of orientation, 9.2 percent of the University's freshmen drop out or transfer.

The Recovery approach is unique in that there is no formal group leader or professional,

Martins says. A group member is designated to keep the meeting on track and to follow the procedure outlined in Low's book. This gives the students a chance to learn and practice the Recovery procedure and become proficient at combating stress, she says.

Although the program is free, participants are asked at the end of each session to donate what they can. The collected money goes to Recovery Inc., in Portland, and pays mailing costs for new materials sent to the group.

A person can go to as many or as few meetings as he or she is comfortable with, Martins says. Once participants learn the Recovery technique, they may not feel the need to attend meetings any longer, she says.

This group was formed partly because of a need in the University community for a discussion group.

Most people, however, gain important self-confidence in the meetings and want to continue the process, she says.

While Recovery groups were common in Eugene a decade ago, they slowly disbanded because of a lack of group leaders, she says.

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This program differs from others because it is a step-by-step method people can learn and use in the outside world to reduce stress before it does damage, she says.

The Newman Center is located at 1850 Emerald St. and the phone number is 343-7021.

Diplomat banned from U.S. travel

EUGENE (AP) — A high ranking Soviet diplomat has canceled several Oregon appearances because of last-minute travel restrictions imposed by the U.S. State Department.

Organizers of the appearances say the travel ban apparently is in response to the recent Soviet denial of travel permission for a U.S. diplomat of similar rank.

Sergei Rogov, who holds the rank of first secretary at the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D.C., had been scheduled to speak to the Willamette World Affairs Council luncheon Wednesday at the Black Angus Restaurant. He was to arrive in Oregon on Monday for two appearances in the Portland area.

In Eugene, Rogov was to speak on "Summit Prospects: U.S.-Soviet Relations."

Lewis and Clark College professor Joseph Ha, who arranged for Rogov's visit, said he was notified of the cancellation Friday by Phillip Gregory, a U.S. State Department official.

"Mr. Gregory told me it had nothing to do with our program or with Mr. Rogov himself," Ha said. "He explained the cancellation was due to the reciprocity policy — one of our first secretaries of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow was denied permission to travel to one of the Soviet republics."

Bruce Amberson, a spokesman in the State Department's press office in Washington, said he was unable to track down the particulars of the situation. But he said the story related by Ha "has a ring of truth to it" and would be consistent with similar U.S. responses to Soviet actions in the past.

"The reason for all these travel restrictions in the first place is tied to the reciprocal nature of our relationship with the Soviets," Amberson said. "U.S. diplomats live and operate under very restrictive arrangements over there, so our travel restrictions are based on theirs."

Ha said he was "extremely frustrated, disappointed and embarrassed" by the last-minute cancellation.

"I cannot understand — but I respect the decision of our government," he said. "Whether the policy of reciprocity is good or bad, I cannot say."

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