

Stress management begins in college

By Dianne Danowski
Emerald Contributor

Although college life offers students a chance to learn how to handle stress, the campus environment also provides a great number of unhealthy alternatives to stress management.

Students may substitute these alternatives: overeating, drug abuse and reclusiveness as strategies for coping with stress and its side-effects: stress-related burnout and depression.

Because it is often in college that life-long patterns for dealing with stress are developed, it is crucial that students take the proper steps toward learning how to cope with their problems, according to a psychologist and a minister, both who work with University students suffering from stress.

Dr. Andrew Thompson, a counseling psychologist at the University's Counseling Center, contends that causes of student stress, stress-related burnout and depression are as numerous as the approximately 800 students that visit the center each year.

And although the results of chronic stress are the same for many, what mentally or emotionally debilitates one person may not bother another.

"One won't be bothered a bit, and for the other, it will be horrific," Thompson said.

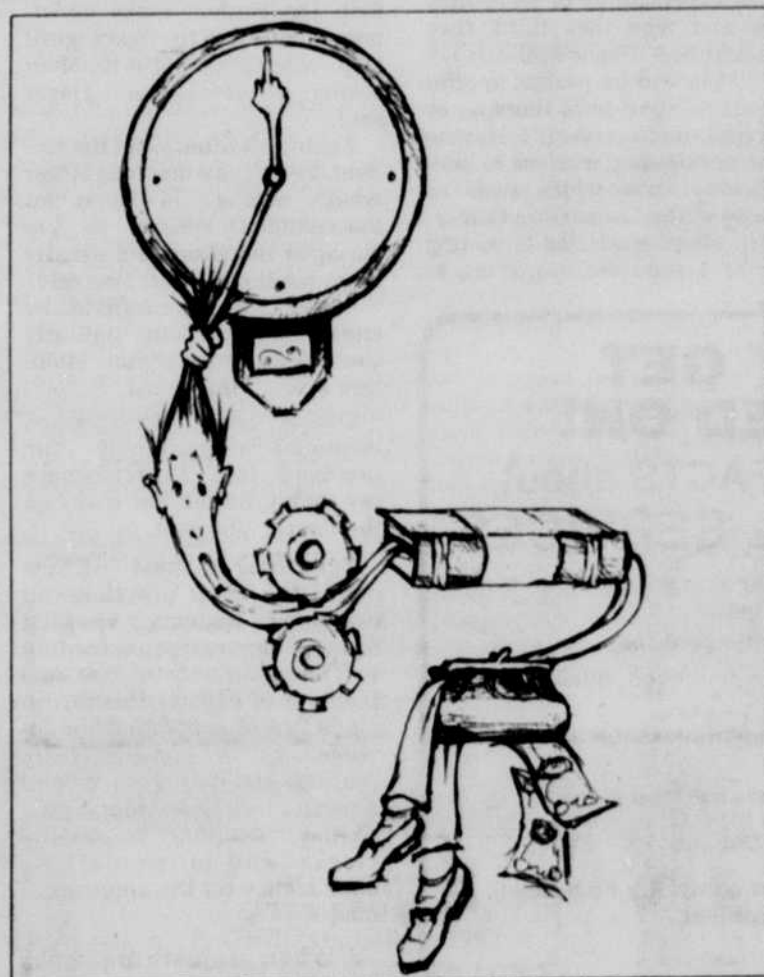
College stress often is the result of significant changes in the student's environment. Contributing to this are academic, social and parental pressures.

Stress that becomes intolerable leads many to burnout — the most often listed reason students leave school, according to the University's Office of the Registrar.

Dropping out of school, drinking or taking drugs are typical responses to burnout. Some students may experience lethargy or irritability. Others become depressed and in extreme cases attempt suicide.

Most of the students seeking help from Thompson at the Counseling Center receive individual professional counseling, whether they were referred there by another physician or a roommate.

When a student comes to him, Thompson said he often will listen to what isn't said rather than what the student readily admits. A change in or



Graphic by Lorraine Rath

lack of attention to physical appearance, or general non-responsiveness, can warn Thompson that the student is extremely stressed out or depressed.

He also pays close attention to how the student describes his or her recent activities versus their normal daily routines, which usually yields a discrepancy.

"There is usually a significant drop-off in meeting obligation," according to Thompson, who notes how often students miss class and observe lack of interest in a job or in meeting

new people. A student who is under a great deal of stress or who is depressed will tend to be reclusive and despondent, he said.

Rev. Thomas Heger, campus Presbyterian pastor and a program coordinator for the University's Campus Interfaith Ministry, asks students who he counsels to take a serious, objective look at themselves in order to determine what's wrong. "Then they can see that they are responsible for their

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"priestess of Apollo has conflict of interest"

The Firebrand
Marion Zimmer Bradley

The Firebrand is a retelling of the story of the Trojan War from the point of view of Cassandra, royal princess of Troy, by the best-selling author of The Mists of Avalon. It opens with Cassandra's birth, as a twin. Her brother, Paris, is sent to live with a family of shepherds because of the superstition that twins bring bad luck, and she is unaware that she has a twin except that she keeps having visions in which she sees the world through his eyes.

Her mother, Queen of Troy, was an Amazon before her marriage, and when Cassandra is about twelve she spends a happy year riding with Amazon tribes and learning about women's autonomy. When she returns to Troy, she decides it is her calling to dedicate herself to being a priestess of Apollo, although within her there continues to be a conflict between the "old ways" (the Earth Mother) and the "new gods" (Apollo). She feels the pull of both.

It is Marion Zimmer Bradley's finest work - a romantic, historical epic, with a story familiar to every reader, told from a woman's point of view. She has breathed new life into a classic piece of myth and history, with the same sense of time, place, character and drama that made Mary Renault an international and beloved best-selling author.



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