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Multicultural stress workshop held

■ **COUNSELING:** Speaker outlines ways of coping with the pressure people of color feel as part of a small group

By Amy Boytz
Freelance Reporter

Students of color coping with stress was the topic of a workshop presented by the Counseling Center on Friday in the Multicultural Center.

The workshop was the first in a series aimed at students of color put on by the Counseling Center. Robin Holmes, assistant director of the Counseling Center, and Christina Castro, a graduate teaching fellow at the Counseling Center, spoke to University students and faculty about the stresses in the lives of people of color on campus.

Statistics show that people of color have many stress-related health problems, Holmes said.

"People of color [have] more illnesses and problems. Being in a society that's not supportive of people of color causes stress," she explained.

Feeling that you are single-handedly responsible for the completion of a project or major event causes a great deal of stress, said Castro, who is also a member of the Counseling Center's multicultural committee.

"The expectations of you as an individual" are major causes of stress "because there are so few [people of color] here," said James Florendo, an academic advisor and faculty member of the Office



CHAD PATTESON/Emerald

Christina Castro leads a forum on stress in the Multicultural Center.

of Multicultural Affairs. "I don't know if it's 'how did I get to this point,' but rather 'how do I get out of it?'" Florendo said.

Castro and Holmes believe it is important to realize that one person cannot achieve everything.

"Maybe it's not something you can fix; maybe you can make it better," said Holmes. She said it is OK to step back and let someone else take over for a while.

The best way to deal with stress, Castro and Holmes said, is to confront the issue, seek support and talk about it.

The community is a big part of helping with the relief process, they said.

Holmes and Castro recommended forming talk groups. It is one way to bring everyone together, they explained.

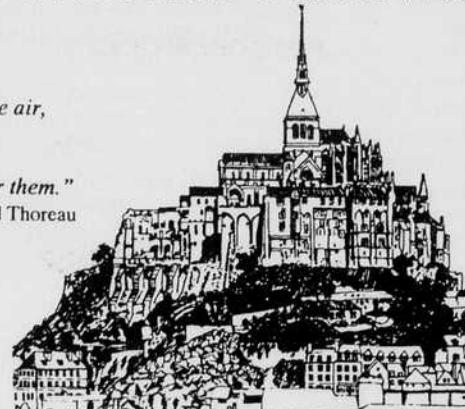
Another good route they recommended is to find an outlet.

"You've got to get small things" to help you through stressful times, Holmes said. She suggested things like a short nap, a relaxing bath or dinner at a favorite restaurant. Florendo mentioned ceremonial dancing as another outlet.

"[It's] hard to view stress relief as a priority," said Castro. With all of the other deadlines to meet in a day, time must be taken out to care for yourself, she explained.

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

"If you have built castles in the air,
your work need not be lost.
That is where they should be.
Now put the foundations under them."
—Henry David Thoreau



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