

Survival Skills and Strategies



For the Family Lawyer

The Main Reason for Calls is

Stress! Stress and more stress...



Stress

- The elephant in the room
most common cause of sick-
leave in law firms



Work Stress common reasons

1. Heavy workload
2. Tight deadlines
3. Lack of recognition by employer
4. Long hours
5. Fear of missing costs/billable hours targets
6. Unrealistic expectations
7. Undue scrutiny / micromanagement
8. Bullying by managers/colleagues
9. Fear of redundancy
10. Poor relationships with colleagues

Why is Family Practice so stressful?

- Family Law is the most complained about area of law
- Must manage client expectations
- Area of law heavily influenced by what the other person does and how they behave – effect on costs
- Families are not businesses but your firm is

Why is Family Practice so stressful?

- Costs can spiral – cases less predictable
- Your clients likely to more stressed that in other areas of the law
- No-one wants to see a family lawyer – costs them money and they only come out with half the house they started with
- Clients are often under the influence of family and friends

Why is Family Practice so stressful?

- Clients are often under the influence of family or friends who have offered their advice on what needs to happen
- An increase in litigants in person as the other party who you have to deal with in addition to your own client
- A working day can be unpredictable/urgent court appointments, clients with crises – difficult to plan

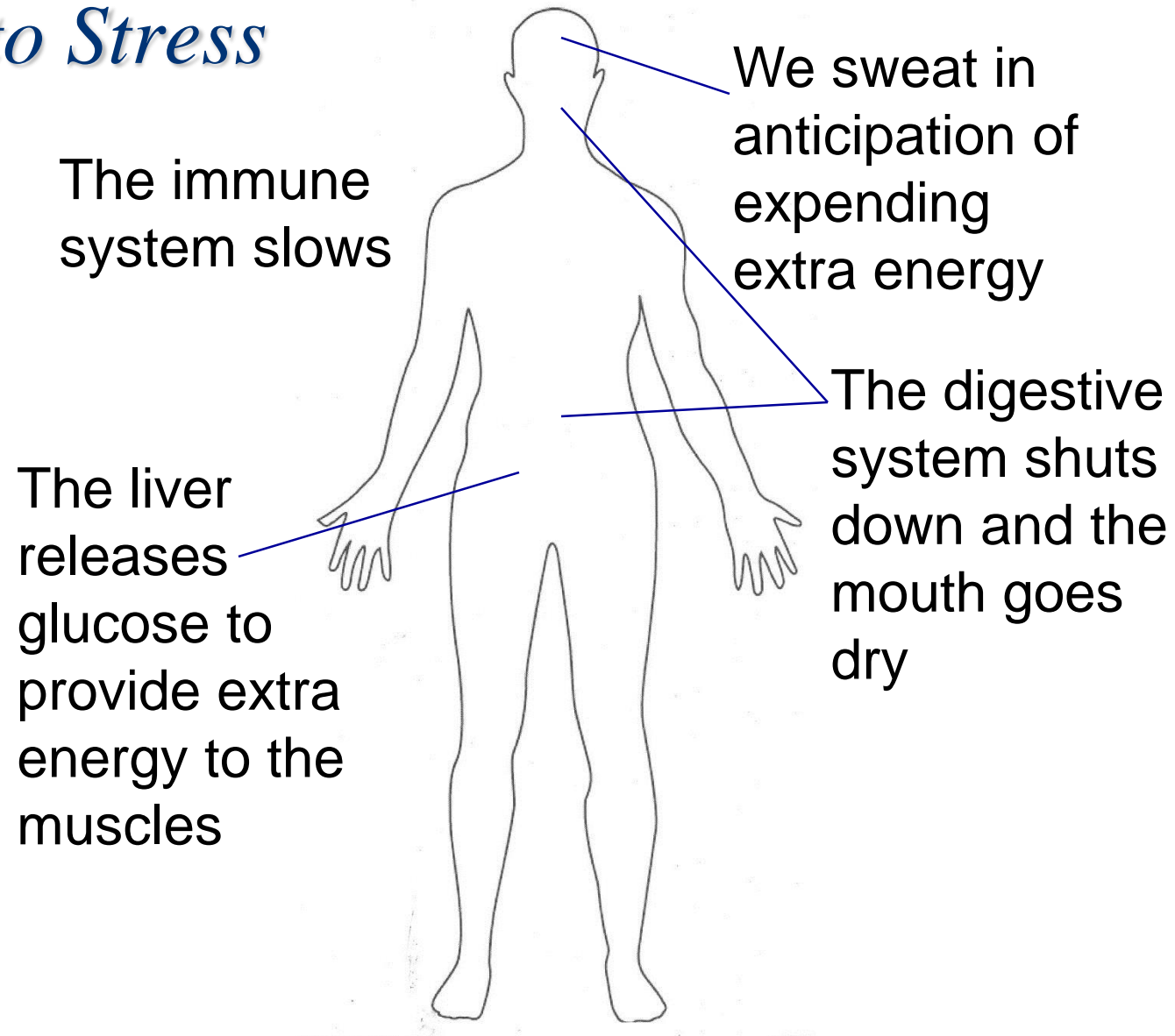
Why is Family Practice so stressful?

- Family clients are often more needy/dependent upon you
- More emotions involved than any other area of law?
- High cost to your clients – losing children/their home/their partner/income
- 24/7 availability?

What Is Stress?

- Stress occurs when the pressures experienced by the individual are perceived by them as exceeding their capacity to deal with them, in a situation where coping is perceived as important.
- Not all stress is bad!

How the Body Responds to Stress



Stress in the Workplace

- **Psychological Signs**
 - Anxiety and panic attacks
 - Low self esteem
 - Loss of confidence
 - Faulty thinking
 - Feeling of persecution
 - Self criticism

Stress in the Workplace

- **Behavioural Signs**
 - Boredom
 - Apathy
 - Poor memory
 - Untidy
 - Working long hours
 - Poor performance
 - Intertia/prevarication
 - Lateness
 - Absence from work

Stress in the Workplace

- **Emotional Signs**
 - Mood swings
 - Lack of enthusiasm
 - Guilt
 - Loss of confidence
 - Lack of self-esteem
 - Lack of concentration

Consequences of Failing to Manage Stress

- Reduced performance
 - Mistakes
 - Claims
 - Lack of pleasure in work
- Health problems
 - Heart disease
 - Depression
 - Increase in alcohol use

What is most likely to affect you?

- Matrimonial is the most complained about area of law
- Must manage client expectations
- Area of law heavily influenced by what the other person does and how they behave – effect on costs
- Marriage and family are not business relationships

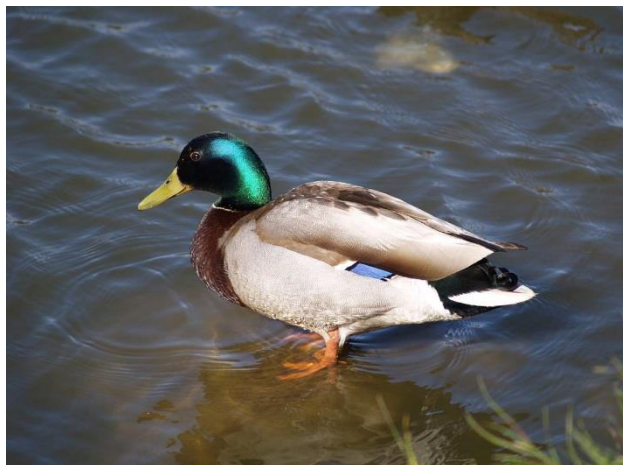
How stress affects Resolution members

- Costs can spiral – cases less predictable
- Your clients likely to more stressed that in other areas of the law
- No-one wants to see a matrimonial/family/child care lawyer – costs them money and they only come out with half the house they started with

Consequences of Failing to Manage Stress

- Reduced performance
 - Mistakes
 - Claims
 - Lack of pleasure in work
- Health problems
 - Heart disease
 - Depression
 - Increase in alcohol use
 - Vicarious trauma

Which are you?



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Why Us?



The Legal Personality

- Family Lawyers tend to be...
 - Perfectionist
 - Over conscientious
 - Unable to delegate
 - Idealistic
 - Committee
 - Caring

The legal personality Type A

Type A individuals	Type B individuals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• impatient time-conscious• controlling• concerned about their status• highly competitive• ambitious business-like• aggressive• having difficulty relaxing• high-achieving workaholics who multi-task• drive themselves with deadlines,• are unhappy about delays• often described as "stress junkies"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• patient• relaxed• easy-going• generally lacking an overriding sense of urgency

Work-Life Balance Strategies for Success

- Work Relationships
 - Peers/Colleagues
- Taking personal responsibility
 - Your call
- Knowing your boundaries
 - Self-Awareness

The Office - Strategies for Success

- Supporting Yourself
 - Stress proof yourself so less physically receptive to stressors when they occur – be prepared
 - Get a good night's sleep
 - Get fit
 - Eat healthily
 - Drink in moderation

An Alternative Way to Cope

- Mindfulness
 - What is it?
 - How does it work?
 - Where can I find out more?



Mindfulness

“There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so.”

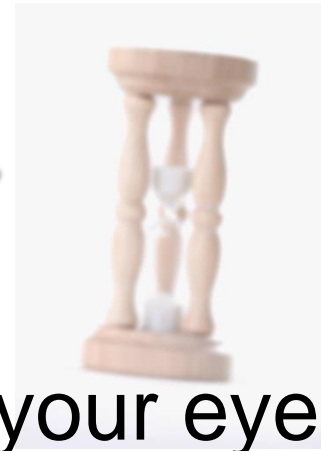
Hamlet, Act II

A Practice Just For You

- Free, Do-Able, Accessible...
- Non-religious
- No funny postures required



Just a Minute



For one minute close your eyes. Just let the thoughts come and go, becoming very aware of where you are, how you are feeling, the sounds you can hear, the smells you sense. All five senses...

You can do this anytime, anywhere. You do not have to close your eyes.

Mindfulness

What is it?

- Mindfulness is being aware of or bringing attention to this moment in time, deliberately and without judging the experience
- Form of Therapy recommended by Department of Health & NICE (National Institute for Clinical Excellence) Guidelines

Mindfulness

What is it?

- Cheap, effective, do-able.
- Does require practice
- More than 10,000 published research papers available
- Helps with immunity

Mindfulness Benefits

- Less danger of experiencing stress, depression, chronic anxiety, addiction, immune problems
- More self-compassion & compassion for others



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Mindfulness Benefits

- Increased experience of calm & relaxation
- Higher levels of enthusiasm and energy for living
- Increased self-confidence & self-acceptance



Mindfulness

Where Do I Begin?

- Read a book, e.g. *Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World* by Mark Williams & Danny Penman
- Sign up for a course. Eight-week one available, requires attendance and daily practice
- Read Ruby Wax's book *The Sane Mind* to find out more; humorous & full of insight
- “Switch off” even for just a minute every day

Emotional Resilience

- Four Pillars



Four Pillars

- PURPOSE
- Consider what gives meaning and purpose to your life both at and outside work
- Remember the five year plan
- Your unique contribution to the world

Four Pillars

- ADAPTABILITY
- How do you handle new challenges?
- How do you handle change and uncertainty?
- Can you see things from someone else's point of view?

Four Pillars

- CONFIDENCE
- Multidimensional
- What are you confident in?
- Own abilities/social situations/dealing with conflict
- Do you know yourself your strengths and weaknesses?

Four Pillars

- SUPPORT
- Emotional support: are you good at giving and receiving it?
- Network support
- Informational support providing facts, advice, perspective; part of your job as a lawyer
- Who/What is your main

*And because life isn't always
like this...*



Who We Are

- 3 helpline staff all former solicitors, Ann, Trish & Mary
- CEO, Elizabeth Rimmer (appointed September 2014)
- Administrator/PA, Anna Buttimore
- Our website
- Our materials
- Our Presentations

How We Can Help

- We actively/non-judgementally listen
- We refer to other agencies
- We do NOT judge
- We emphasise that the call is always 100% confidential
- We may find a supporter to help
- We could refer to the SBA or the SAS
- We support the caller in a pastoral way
- We might suggest The Samaritans

LawCare

- Helpline: **0800 279 6888**
 - Monday to Friday 9am – 7.30pm
 - Saturday and Sunday 10am – 4pm
- Supporters
- Education
- **Twitter** and **Facebook**
- Website: **www.lawcare.org.uk**

Wellbeing Portal

- Personal to you
- Free
- Confidential

