

STRESS MANAGEMENT VIDEOTAPE TREATMENT

for State Bar of California

The Stress Management Videotape is structured in four sections. The titles of these sections will appear as questions on the screen before each section in the videotape.

I. What Causes Stress?

This section begins with five short testimonials showing attorneys griping about the stress in their lives. They will touch on both work-related and personal situations. Dr. Watts introduces himself and comments on how common these complaints are. He tells the audience to take a look at themselves and we see a list of stress indicators. He then talks about the prevalence of stress and why the legal community should address it.

II. What Happens Physically?

We see a dramatic sequence in the control room of the brain intercut with an attorney waiting for a difficult client who is already 15 minutes late. We hear the attorney's internal monologue about how his schedule is ruined, he'll have to skip lunch again, and this client is so demanding. Meanwhile in the brain, the controller calls up different parts of the body, raising blood pressure, increasing stomach acid and tightening shoulder muscles. Then the attorney lights up a cigarette and starts drinking coffee as he continues his negative self-talk. The brain control room reacts to these stressful stimulants and brings on a blinding headache. Sound effects contribute to the increasing chaos in the brain control room.

Dr Watts discusses stress and the body. He explains the "fight or flight" syndrome and how stress can affect people physically.

III. What Can Stress Do To My Life?

We now see the same attorney after his client has arrived. Everything is going wrong. The client tells him that she's planning to switch law firms unless she sees some changes. His wife calls to tell him about a family crisis. His secretary pages him on the intercom to tell him about a court date moving up. His doctor calls to tell him he has an ulcer. The client is getting increasingly outraged by all the interruptions. The attorney, feeling overwhelmed, calls up his clients' contract on the computer and his hard disk crashes. The scene fades to black.

Dr. Watts talks about the link between stress and disease and how continual stress can weaken the immune system.

IV. How do I Handle Stress?

The people who gave testimonials in the opening describe their ways of coping with stress. One person exemplifies a re-entry attorney who has made diet and exercise changes; another attorney is a mother who is altering her lifestyle by cutting her practice to part-time; a third changes jobs within the field because, besides other signs of stress, he was drinking too much. And a fourth, a procrastinator, learns better time management skills. The fifth gets professional help, consequently changes her attitude and learns how to see stressors differently.

Dr. Watts discusses how perception plays a big role in determining how someone experiences stress. We return to our attorney calmly talking on the telephone in a neat and tidy office. The coffee and cigarettes are gone. He's telling a friend about how finding out about his ulcer made him realize he had to change. He talked to a professional who helped him make lifestyle changes and change his attitude towards the stress in his life. He's interrupted by a frantic call from his wife and we see how he now handles it differently than before.

Dr. Watts then suggests stress management techniques including diet, exercise and relaxation.

We see the phone number and hear him say, if you need assistance or have any questions call the LPAP. We see the LPAP logo and roll credits.

CAST

Stressed attorney--white man, 40's, slightly overweight, disheveled

Control room operator--white man, 50's, wiry, neatly dressed

Client--black woman, 50's, professional, classy

Voices--wife, doctor, secretary