

## **WORK RELATED STRESS, DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY**

Everyone experiences stress in their lives, and many experience stress at work. Most are able to deal with pressures on the job without it seriously affecting the rest of their lives. At times, however, that pressure may trigger depression and anxiety and an inability to function adequately at work as well as in other areas of one's life. It is important to know what the signs and symptoms of debilitating stress are and to receive the appropriate level of care.

### ***Be Aware of Signs and Symptoms of Job Related Stress and Depression***

- Significant changes in sleep/appetite/weight
- Feeling pressured and burned out
- Deep sighing throughout the day
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering important things
- Feeling irritable, frustrated, angry and snapping at others
- Decreased interest, motivation and energy
- Withdrawal from others
- Feeling as though you cannot shut your mind down
- Losing pleasure in life
- Feeling guilty about the impact these changes have upon your life
- Feelings of hopelessness/helplessness/despair
- Thoughts of suicide or self harming behaviors

## ***Know the Appropriate Level of Care***

- Outpatient Individual Therapy/Medication Management
- Intensive Outpatient Therapy
- Partial Hospitalization (5 days per week; home at night)
- Inpatient Hospitalization

Many are able to be treated on an outpatient basis by their primary care physicians, psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, psychologists and mental health therapists. When the symptoms become extremely debilitating, however, it will be important to consider a higher level of care. The Life Revitalization Intensive Outpatient Program has been of tremendous assistance in helping those on short term or long term disability from work prepare themselves to return to a productive and rewarding lifestyle both on the job and in general. It is a 7 week, 3 day per week, 3 hour per day program. The main goal is to teach such individuals healthy coping skills rather than place them on leave from work with no guidance which often results in relapse of symptoms. I often use the analogy of learning to drive a car. Our children watch us on a daily basis drive all over for approximately 15.5 years of their lives. At that age, however, we do not hand them the keys and expect them to drive. We teach them. The Life Revitalization IOP is very similar. Patients are taught skills which prepare them to return to work and improve the quality of their lives rather than simply being placed on short term or long term disability and expected to improve or even worse, simply exist.

### ***Be an Advocate for Your Appropriate Level of Care***

- Seek consultation from a licensed mental health professional
- Be diligent about complying with their medication and therapy recommendations
- Consider short term disability from work if your symptoms are seriously affecting your work performance
- Don't retreat to home, often under the covers, waiting and hoping to get better
- Be proactive and discuss possible higher levels of care with your healthcare or mental health professionals
- Consider the Life Revitalization IOP