



## Media Call on Psychologists as Financial Crisis Deepens

by Public Relations Staff

September 30, 2008—As the U.S. struggles with the emotional fallout of the worsening financial crisis, the mass media are turning to psychologists for guidance and citing findings from the American Psychological Association's (APA) stress surveys.

The annual APA Stress in America survey, a cornerstone of the association's Mind/Body Health public education campaign, provides a snapshot of America's stress levels. The results touch on what's causing us stress, the impact on health, work and relationships, and what we're doing to manage our stress.

According to a smaller supplemental poll conducted in April, about three-quarters of respondents said they are stressed about money. While the 2007 annual APA survey found a similar percentage, the 2006 Stress in America Survey found a lower 59 percent of respondents were affected by stress related to their finances.

On the Sept. 19 edition of CNN's "American Morning," medical correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta presented a segment on stress and the economy, (<http://www.cnn.com/video/savp/evp/?loc=dom&vid=/video/health/2008/09/19/gupta.stress.health.cnn>) using APA's findings from the 2006 annual and April 2008 supplemental surveys to demonstrate growing levels of stress. The segment also illustrated the long-term effects of stress on the body and offered tips from APA's New Jersey Public Education Campaign (PEC) Coordinator Dr. Rosalind S. Dorlen.

Among the APA members, many of them PEC coordinators for their state, who have addressed the effects of stress and how to cope in recent media coverage:

- **Dr. Brad Klontz**, a Hawaii psychologist who helps clients improve their financial health, talked to *The New York Times* (September 25) about the emotional context of money: "When people come for help around money, it goes so much deeper than what is in their bank accounts. It's a portal into unresolved family histories and generational history patterns."
- **Dr. Nancy Molitor**, Illinois PEC coordinator, explained the importance of taking action rather than panicking in the *Chicago Tribune* (September 21, "Handling a mental recession: Psychologists say perspective is key"): "It's appropriate to be anxious. It's not helpful to panic. Panic disables people and renders them ineffective to cope." She also shared tips from the APA for dealing with money and financial stress in the *Chicago Daily Herald* (Sept 17, "Is There Any Good Economic News Out There?").
- **Dr. Rosalind S. Dorlen** spoke with the *The New York Times* (Sept 25, "How to Treat a 'Money Disorder'") about taking control and with *USA Today* (September 26, "Financial Fears Send Nation's Stress Soaring") about the effects of stress on children.
- **Dr. Stephanie Smith**, Colorado PEC coordinator, noted for the *Wall Street Journal* (September 17, "Wall Street Got You on Edge? Join the Club") that we can ratchet down anxiety by turning off the television or closing the newspaper and focusing instead on what is within our control: "We don't need to know all the gory details ...We can control how much we are spending on eating out, or getting our latte or getting our new fall clothes."
- In the same *Wall Street Journal* piece, **Dr. Mary Alvord**, Maryland PEC coordinator, highlighted the importance of keeping perspective. In the *Washington Post* (Sept 17, "The Check Up: Washington Post Health Blog, "Life's Big Questions: How Can I Face This Financial Stress?"), Dr. Alvord also urged maintaining perspective: "I think it's important we need to be informed. But don't get sucked into too much of the gloom and doom. Understand it's a difficult time right now. But it's important for people to put it into perspective."



- **Dr. Elaine Ducharme**, Connecticut PEC coordinator, has many clients concerned about their finances. She explained to the *Record-Journal* of Connecticut (September 22, "Fiscal and Mental Health Affected by Recent Crisis") that dwelling on the negative only serves to make one anxious.
- **Dr. Jane Blackwell**, Utah PEC coordinator, shared simple ways to reduce stress with *The Salt Lake Tribune*, (September 25, "Stressed Out? Blow Bubbles, Expert Says"), including blowing bubbles: "To have good bubbles, you have to listen to yourself breathe, which is a relaxation technique. If you blow too hard, the bubble will pop. To have good bubbles, you have to be in control."

Along with pointers from members, many of the articles cited APA Stress in America Survey results, as did the *Washington Post* (September 21, "No Longer Ready to Retire" and Bloomberg.com (September 19, "Mental-Health Lines Buzz U.S. in Recent Depression").

The 2008 APA Stress in America survey, whose results are slated for release in October, will highlight how stress is affecting the residents of eight major metropolitan areas throughout the country.

## APA Help Center

The Help Center at [apahelpcenter.org](http://apahelpcenter.org) offers brochures, tips and articles that psychologists can print out and distribute in waiting rooms, to patients and in community settings. Stress-related resources include *Managing Your Stress in Tough Economic Times* (<http://apahelpcenter.org/articles/article.php?id=171>) and *10 Ways to Build Resilience* (<http://apahelpcenter.org/featuredtopics/feature.php?id=6&ch=4>).

Once released, the 2008 Stress in America study results will be available at the APA Help Center.