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MEN LESS LIKELY THAN WOMEN TO BELIEVE THAT STRESS CAN HAVE AN IMPACT ON THEIR HEALTH

The Georgia Psychological Association encourages men to consider their own stress as Father's Day approaches

Georgia, June 11, 2012 — Men tend to report less stress and put less of an emphasis on the need to manage it than women, according to results from a recent survey by the American Psychological Association (APA). This Father's Day, with millions of families taking time to appreciate and give thanks to the men and fathers in their lives, the Georgia Psychological Association (GPA) encourages men and dads to pay closer attention to their daily stress, as it can contribute to a strain on both their mental and physical health.

Although men are more likely than women to say they do enough to manage stress, in reality, their rate of stress-related illness appears to show that they're not doing enough at all. According to the APA survey, *Stress in America™: Our Health at Risk*, men tend to put less emphasis on managing stress than women (52 percent vs. 68 percent, respectively, reporting that it is very/extremely important). Men are less likely than women to report using healthy stress management strategies, including reading (31 percent vs. 51 percent), spending time with family or friends (32 percent vs. 44 percent), praying (22 percent vs. 41 percent), going to religious services (17 percent vs. 24 percent), and seeing a mental health professional (1 percent vs. 5 percent). At the same time, men are more likely than women to report having been diagnosed with the types of chronic physical illnesses that are often linked with high stress levels, such as high blood pressure (32 percent vs. 23 percent), type 2 diabetes (12 percent vs. 7 percent), and heart disease or heart attack (6 percent vs. 2 percent).

“We spend a lot of time talking about the impact of stress on mothers or women,” said Angela Londono-McConnell. “However, the stress fathers and men face is just as real and gets far less attention, which, as research shows, is bad news for their health. It is important that men take action to manage their stress in healthy ways to avoid chronic illnesses.”

During Father's Day, GPA recommends these approaches to men and fathers for healthier stress management:

- **Identify your sources of stress.** Everyone experiences stress differently. What events or situations trigger stressful feelings for you? Are they related to your children, family, health, financial decisions, work, relationships or something else? It is important to learn your own stress signals.
- **Understand your coping mechanisms for stress.** Determine if your stress management strategies are healthy or harmful. Does your approach to managing your stress ultimately do more harm than good? Avoid risky behaviors, such as gambling, excessive drinking and smoking, which are often used to temporarily alleviate stress.
- **Adopt healthy ways to manage stress.** Consider healthy stress-reducing activities—taking a short walk, meditating, or talking things out with a supportive friend or family. Keep in mind that unhealthy behaviors develop over time and can be difficult to change. Don't take on too much at once. Focus on changing only one behavior at a time, like identifying one unhealthy behavior and trading it with a healthy one.

- **Seek help from close contacts.** Talk about stress with friends and family whom you can trust. Getting things out in the open can help you identify, then navigate your feelings and work toward a solution. Accepting help from supportive friends and family can also improve your ability to persevere during stressful times.
- **Ask for professional support.** If you continue to feel overwhelmed by stress, you may want to talk to a psychologist who can help you better manage stress, develop healthy coping strategies and change unhealthy behaviors.

For more information on managing stress and mind/body health, visit www.apa.org/helpcenter, follow APA's Psychology Help Center on Twitter @apahelpcenter, and read the "Your Mind Your Body" blog at www.yourmindyourbody.org. Details of APA's *Stress in America* survey can be found at www.stressinamerica.org.

Since 1946, the Georgia Psychological Association, a 501(c)(6) organization, has been heralded as a leader in advocacy, a pacesetter for public education programming, a provider of quality continuing education opportunities and a proponent for the livelihood of psychology. Our referral network not only assists members, but provides the public-at-large the opportunity to connect with psychologists. The membership of the Association is comprised of clinical psychologists, academicians, industrial and organizational psychologists, graduate and undergraduate students across the state of Georgia. Visit www.gapsychology.org for more information.

The American Psychological Association, in Washington, D.C., is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes more than 137,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants, and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting health, education, and human welfare.