



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# WOMEN STRESS ABOUT FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES AND HEALTH CONCERNS

## *Georgia Psychological Association offers tips for stressed-out women this Mother's Day*

Georgia, May 7, 2012 — In today's harried world, it is not uncommon for women to wear many hats in their families. More often than men, statistics show they are tasked with caregiving responsibilities for both children and family members inside their home.<sup>1</sup> As families across the country pause to celebrate the women in their lives this Mother's Day, the Georgia Psychological Association (GPA) is calling attention to the unique stressors that women face as caregivers and the health consequences they may experience as a result.

According to the American Psychological Association survey, *Stress in America™: Our Health at Risk*, women are more likely than the general public to cite family health concerns (57 percent for women, 53 percent for the general public) and family responsibilities (62 percent for women, 57 percent for the general public) as sources of stress. In general, caregivers, both men and women, are also more likely to report higher levels of stress than others in the country (6.5 for caregivers, 5.2 for the general public, in 2011, on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is little or no stress and 10 is a great deal of stress).

“As health care decision makers and often caregivers for their families, women tend to put others' needs before their own,” said Angela Londono-McConnell, Ph.D. “With so many competing responsibilities, women often don't take time for themselves and their overall wellness can be compromised. This Mother's Day, let's give women a break and help them find healthy ways to manage stress and live well.”

For Mother's Day, GPA offers these healthy lifestyle strategies for busy women, mothers and caregivers:

**Take care of yourself**— Set aside time to engage in healthy activities that you enjoy or that help you relax. Identify hobbies, increase exercising or eating healthy foods. Making time for yourself will help you better manage stressful situations and allow you to better care for the whole family. Also, find something that makes you laugh – humor is important, and laughter can really make life a whole lot easier.

**Recognize how you deal with family stress** — Some people deal with stress by engaging in unhealthy behaviors, such as smoking, drinking, comfort eating, or yelling and becoming irritable. Remember that stress is inevitable. What makes the biggest difference is how you manage that stress.

**Reach out to others** — Enlist and accept help from others including friends and family. Identify ways your family can help with specific needs that must be met like proving a meal or babysitting so you can find time to take a break and rejuvenate. Take time to connect with your girlfriends when you are feeling overwhelmed. Strong female friendships can help women overcome stressors.

**Keep things in perspective** —Remind yourself that each morning offers a new start and take things one step at a time. Realize that there is no one perfect way to parent. Staying optimistic lowers stress.

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<sup>1</sup> Navaie-Waliser, M., Feldman, P. H., Gould, D. A., Levine, C. L., Kuerbis A. N., & Donelan, K. (2002). When the caregiver needs care: The plight of vulnerable caregivers. *American Journal of Public Health*, 92(3), 409-413.

**Prioritize** — You can only do one thing at a time. Delay or say no to the unimportant tasks, and make appointments for more important tasks, such as spending quality time with a spouse or child.

**Be organized** — Keeping the family and yourself organized reduces stress. Put family health information in separate folders; get family members to keep laundry in color coded baskets; keep book bags in assigned bins. Harried searching for things adds to mom's stress. Enlist your children's help in developing an organization plan for your household - if they are involved in the planning, they will be more likely to follow through.

**Ask for professional help** — If you feel overwhelmed by stress or the unhealthy behaviors you use to cope, you may want to talk with a psychologist who can help you address the emotions behind your worries, better manage stress and change unhealthy behaviors.

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

*Since 1946, the Georgia Psychological Association, 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. GPA's 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.*

*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 154,000 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.*

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