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CONTACT: David White, CAE- Executive Director
(512) 788-0207
tpa_dwhite@att.net

Women More Likely To Report Symptoms of Stress

APA and SCPA Offer Stress Management Tips for Mother's Day

Columbia, South Carolina, May 8, 2014 — In today's busy world, many women work to balance considerable responsibilities at work and at home. Women make up 47 percent of the total U.S. labor force according to the U.S. Department of Labor. In addition, an American Psychological Association (APA) workplace survey found that nearly one-third of employed adults report difficulty balancing work and family life. As families across the country pause to celebrate the women in their lives this Mother's Day, the South Carolina Psychological Association is calling attention to the unique stressors that women face and the health consequences they may experience as a result.

According to APA's 2012 Stress in America™ survey, women are more likely than the general public to report symptoms of stress ranging from feeling depressed or sad to experiencing headaches and changes in sleeping habits. The survey also found that 43 percent of women say their stress has increased since last year.

“As health care decision makers and often caregivers for their families, women tend to put others' needs before their own,” Dr. Jeannine Monnier, SCPA President said. “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 all the moms we know a break to help lighten their stress and enjoy the day.”

APA and SCPA offer these healthy lifestyle strategies for busy women, mothers and caregivers:

Take care of yourself— Set aside time at least once a week to engage in healthy activities that you enjoy. Try going for a long walk, listening to music or reading something that interests you to relax. Making time for yourself will help you manage stressful situations and allow you to better care for the whole family.

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.

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. Last-minute 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 help — Enlist and accept help from others including friends and family. Identify ways your family can help with specific needs that must be met like providing 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. 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 stress and mind/body health, visit www.apa.org/helpcenter and follow @APAHelpCenter on Twitter. To find out more about the South Carolina Psychological Association, visit www.scpsychology.com and follow us on Twitter at @SCPsychological.

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South Carolina Psychological Association is the only professional organization in South Carolina representing all areas of psychology: academic, practitioner, public service, and students. As a 501 (c)(6) professional association that represents the professionals of psychology in South Carolina, South Carolina Psychological Association has the purpose to advance psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting human welfare; to foster and maintain high standards of practice, teaching, and research in the field of psychology; and to make available to the public information regarding psychology as a science and as a profession.

The American Psychological Association, in Washington, D.C., is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States. APA's membership includes more than 134,000 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 the creation, communication and application of psychological knowledge to benefit society and improve people's lives.