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**Emotional Overtime**

**What to do when your feelings start to overwhelm you**

**on the job.**

**Posted by the Asbury Park Press**

**BY BOBBI SEIDEL STAFF WRITER**

Andrea Zapcic remembers well the moment her emotions bubbled to the surface at work.

"I had a theater company, and we were going to present the first show after the Strand Theatre in Lakewood had been renovated, about 10 years ago," said Zapcic, 48, now the assistant superintendent of recreation for Brick.

Two hours before showtime, she learned the theater had failed a sprinkler-system inspection. The show would not go on.

"People had bought tickets. Money had been spent on the production. There was so much involved. We had to get people to stand outside to tell people arriving that there would be no show," she said "It was overwhelming".

Her male business partner was angry, but she began laughing.

"When he asked me what was so funny, that's when I processed what I was feeling," she said "I said: "You don't understand If I don't laugh, I'll start crying And if I start crying, I'll never stop ' It was the way my emotions were coming out"

Today, she never shows such emotions at work, the Brick resident said.

(DARYL STONE STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

**Beverly Baskin of BBCS Counseling Services in Freehold**

"I'll go in my office and shut the door for a while. Or I'll go outside and take a walk," Zapcic said.

"If I ever feel that kind of pressure, I remove myself from the situation and calm myself. And I'm very careful of how I speak when feeling such emotion".

The reactions of Zapcic and her partner reflect how many men and women express emotion, particularly at work. And Zapac's ways of handling job stress now are exactly what counselors recommend.

"I think usually with men, the tendency is to express anger more frequently than anything else. I think, unfortunately, it's an emotion men are more comfortable with," said Alan A Cavaiola, an associate professor in the Department of Psychological Counseling at Monmouth University, West Long Branch. I think across the board women are more expressive with all emotions".

The differences are societal, he said.

"I think it does have a lot do with gender role expectations. That still exists," Cavaiola said. "A good example of this is the rate of depression. Men are said to have low rates and women to have high rates.

'But what we're finding is the rates are about the same, but women express their feelings more and seek help, much to their credit," he said.

Yet more women today are expressing anger in the workplace.

"Women who are in high positions are strong women and sometimes will react the same way a strong man will react. You see this with a lot of people in power. They don't cry. They blow," said Beverly Baskin, who with her husband, Mitchell Baskin runs BBCS Counseling Services based in Freehold.

Any type of emotional outburst affects the perception of people on all rungs of the career ladder she said.

"Its bad because its not handling things in a professional way It's being reactive in the moment" Baskin said.

"I think it depends on the work setting," said Cavaiola, co-author with Neil J Lavender of 'Toxic Coworkers: How We Deal with Dysfunctional People on the Job". 'Take a setting like the military or law enforcement or certain corporations where stoicism is the rule. It can work adversely".

The consequences of emotional displays can be "a cumulative effect." Baskin said.

'When it comes to promotions or downsizing, the way people handle adversity will be under a magnifying glass. Even if a person has great product knowledge and is a good employee, it's all about relationship building," she said.

Anger can be more detrimental than crying.

"Sometimes, crying is not necessarily negative. It really depends on the person who's on the other side of this, the boss, if they're going to be sensitive to this," Cavaiola. 54. said ". If not, its perceived as weakness, and the boss can go after them."

Baskin agreed

**"Many people don't know what to do when someone cries, and they do think that person is weak," she said.**

**Yelling at a co-worker "makes the person feel disrespected," Baskin said, explaining that anger is a form of control.**

**"The angry person controls the situation immediately. People back off," she said. "But in the long run, it's not control because you won't have an ally in the workplace.**

**"Everyone can lose their cool," she added, "but no one wants to walk on eggs, especially with a boss. People will forgive someone having a bad day, but five, six, seven times? People will not forget."**

**Steps can be taken to control anger or tears. Workplace stress is "part of life, and the cycle of the economy is part of life, too. You have to rise above it," Baskin said.**

**Recognize what triggers emotions and what physical signs warn emotions are rising, she said. Signs include a jaw tightening, muscles tensing or a lip quivering.**

**If angry, take a deep breath, she said, and before blowing up, ask yourself: ' Is this worth it? What am I really achieving? Am I feeling threatened by this situation?'**

**If near tears, take a walk or go into the restroom until calmer, she said.**

**Self-control doesn't mean ignoring emotions, including on the job.**

**"People must be proactive about their mental health," Baskin said. "The mind-body connection is strong. We say that what the mind forgets, the body remembers."**

**"It takes about 30 days" of practice for this to become part of a person's responses, Baskin said.**

**If job stress is continuous, and nothing helps cope with it, "don't stay," said Baskin, who advises people to always have an updated resume ready. "You have to get out of a bad marriage. You have to get out of a bad workplace, too."**