

FEATURES

Burnout still threat to college students

by paige white

staff writer

He stares vacantly at the open textbook. Somewhere, beyond the fog in his brain, he vaguely remembers a time when he used to breeze through his reading assignments. But now, the open book on the desk in front of him seems to sap his energy. Visions of two term papers due the next week dance through his head. He yawns, looks over at his roommate and says, "Man, am I burnt out."

It is no coincidence that so many students are becoming bored and apathetic as the middle of the semester approaches.

"We know that in models of coping, people can cope with any situation for 6 weeks," said Dr. Laura Hammond, Counseling Psychologist at the Counseling and Testing Center. "After that, they need to find a way to deal with the situation."

Hammond said that a very common reaction to pressure is to pull away from the stressful situation. The stress is replaced by boredom, which can make the person feel burnt out.

"It's the end of psychological energy," psychology Professor Terry Knapp said. "The person experiences a

passivity and a neglect of routine activities."

Knapp said that when a person doesn't find what he is doing rewarding or satisfying, then that activity no longer has any meaning for the individual. He said that college students are particularly prone to burn out.

"They are coerced into taking courses where they're not interested in the subject matter," Knapp said. "They are escaping a punishing grade. That's not positive reinforcement."

Like Knapp, Hammond also believes that students need to find ways to experience immediate rewards.

"In one of the major theories of burn out, the basic idea is that you're putting in a lot of energy into something and not getting anything out of it," Hammond explained. "You can't just expect a diploma at the end of 4 years. That's too little, too late."

"One of the tricks of the trade is learning how to mix hard classes with easy classes, and classes that are interesting with classes that are not interesting to you," Hammond continued.

She added that many students here cause themselves added stress when they try to do too

much. She said that it is usually not feasible to take 18 credits a semester, work 40 hours a week, and have a healthy social life all at the same time.

Since UNLV is a commuter school, students here are also prone to a more subtle but ongoing stress that can lead to burnout.

"On a campus like this, you don't feel very involved," Hammond pointed out. "A lot of people look for college to be the center of their lives. On a campus with a lot of commuters, that doesn't happen as much. You just come and go to your classes, and then you leave."

Sometimes, in trying to deal with their boredom, students get themselves into trouble. Hammond said that she finds that many students turn to drugs and alcohol, which only make things worse. "Stress is something all of us are always under," Hammond said. "It's important to know how to cope with it."

The Counseling and Testing Center on the second floor of the library offers free counseling to all students, faculty, and staff. The psychologists there are prepared to help people control stress and manage their time.

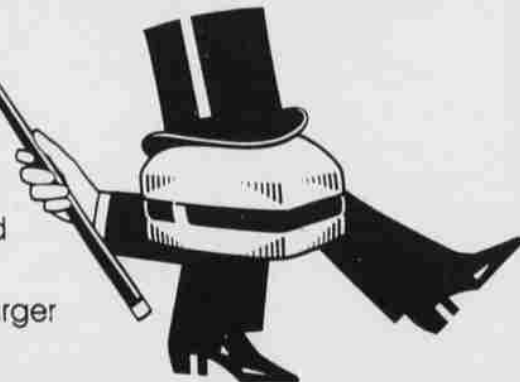
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Schizophrenics see the world in a different light according to prof

by robert danner

staff writer

Dr. Russell T. Hurlburt, Associate Professor of Psychology, picked up his slurpee as if to take a drink.

"You and I," he said, "visualize this drink as having a total or complete shape, whereas a schizophrenic sees only a partial image of the slurpee."

The UNLV professor was explaining his controversial views and research on the twisted mental behavior of a schizophrenic which recently appeared in an article published in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disorders*.

The psychologist glanced at the clock on the wall, leaned forward and said, "Psychologists define schizophrenia as a major mental disorganization in which individuals lose contact or distort reality. People with this disorder see or hear things which do not exist."

He said schizophrenics display abnormal symptoms of behavior uncommon to most people. They suffer from delusions of persecution in which someone is out to get them.

They believe the world is populated by organisms that are trying to kill them or they have delusions of grandeur, believing that they are Jesus Christ.

Hurlburt said schizophrenics also display sudden changes in emotions or thought. Their language frequently has *loose association*, in which case a conversation digresses so completely from the original subject that the listener becomes confused as to how the transition occurred.

He said psychologists use the term *clang association* to describe the severe thought process of a schizophrenic.

"The schizophrenic," he said, "will start talking about one subject. Suddenly he will say that the king of England said the person should be in the

gallows." "When this subject digression occurs, it is severe. Many times, the conversations are about impossible things."

Hurlburt said his research tries to explain how inner experience differs for a normal person from that of a schizophrenic, and how his own understanding is different from most psychologists.

He said most psychologists think that inner experience is like inner speech. When a normal person is talking to himself, he is not moving his mouth.

Psychologists also think the inner thought world and outer speech world of a schizophrenic are similar. It is difficult to keep track of these *loose associations* and *meanderings of meaning*.

Hurlburt said he does not agree with these theories. His research into schizophrenia shows that most schizophrenics

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