

Title:

Cooking up Stress and Anxiety

Word Count:

611

Summary:

Introduction to cooking; Restaurant chef ladder; tasks of each chef inside the restaurant's kitchen; television shows that gives you an overall view of whats happening inside the kitchen; also the expressions of such chefs; how stress and anxiety is seen inside the kitchen.

Keywords:

stress and anxiety, anxiety

Article Body:

Gone are the days when people think of cooking as a task that should be done "only by women." In the past, women were traditionally relied upon to cook the meals for the family, do the dishes and clean the house, and be in-charge of just about every domestic task there is. But times have changed and women now play very different roles in society unlike what women of the previous decades were accustomed to. This change in gender roles has affected both women and men --- especially in terms of taking the lead kitchen. Today, both men and women now appreciate the art of cooking. People with exceptional culinary skills are highly compensated. For that reason, it is no wonder that the stress that used to part and parcel of cooking is now experienced by both men and women. Food, after all, is about pleasing the senses of people who partake of one's kitchen creations.

Cooking and stress are not often associated with each other. The word "cooking" easily connotes gustatory pleasures and not stress which is often linked to one's work at the office or to problems at home.

But it should not be a surprise to know that stress and anxiety now affect the men and women who do the cooking as much as the salesman who tries to meet his daily quotas or the manager who faces enormous organizational challenges.

In restaurants, for example, there are now more male cooks or chefs. These kitchen experts follow a so-called "chef's ladder" that defines the rankings and specific tasks of each person in the kitchen. There is the head chef or "Chef de Cuisine" who visualizes the dishes in accordance with the restaurant concept of dining. Next would be the Executive Chef, who actually runs the whole kitchen,

manage the costs, hire and fire staff, revamp the menu, do certain administrative tasks. Under them would be the Sous Chef who make the daily specials, takes inventory, watches over the staff, and does the hands-on work in the kitchen. Also called the "Expediter", the Sous Chef makes sure that the food gets to the table in a timely manner, a task that requires coordination and time management. With the same level as the sous chef, the pastry chef is in-charge of the pastry section of the restaurant. Mostly women reserved for women, this job requires preparation of chocolates, souffles, and sweet pastries.

Under these chefs would be the line cooks who are the ones who actually cook the food. The line cooks are divided according to certain cooking specialty. Another key member of the kitchen is the Chef de Garde Manger who manages the cold food section that includes the salads and desserts.

If you have watched an episode of the t.v. cooking show, Iron chef, you would probably know how stressful it is to work as a chef or a line cook. In that show, the cameras usually show the stress and anxiety in the chef's faces as they try to prepare a certain number of meals under time pressure. Anxiety is also seen on the chef's faces when the judges are tasting their dishes.

In another popular reality-based television show called Hell's Kitchen, several people enter as contestants in a game that is supposed to select the next "big chef" in town. Being a reality show, Hell's Kitchen often shows the stress and anxiety on the faces of the contestants while the host shouts and gets mad at them for not doing certain things right in the kitchen. Anxiety grips each contestant as they try to battle out to win the throne of being the next best chef.