Health: The Big Picture

Stress: The Silent Illness

Alsira Valderrama

There is a silent illness known as stress. It comes from the pressure of being responsible for taking care of our family. Our responsibilities have grown. Many people are experiencing crises in their lives, such as losing their jobs or their houses or both. We support our family here and my husband’s family in Cuba. We ask ourselves, “How can we pay the bills when our wages are the same and everything we need is more expensive?” The stress of dealing with all these financial problems results in an imbalance in our lives. It is difficult to stay physically healthy when your mental health is suffering.

Alsira Valderrama moved to the U.S. from Colombia in 1999. She is studying ESOL at the Methuen Adult Learning Center.

Where is the Wealth?

The top 10% of the income-earners own 71% of the wealth.

The middle 30% own 25% of the wealth.

The bottom 60% own 4% of the wealth.

Look at the picture on the right. Draw a circle around each grouping of people and their wealth. How did the illustrator use images of people and wealth to represent the different percentages? Does access to wealth affect access to health? Make your own drawing of how you think wealth should be shared among people.