COVID-19: MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES & RESILIENCE

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AGENDA

• Psychological Impact
• Interpersonal Impact
• Resilience and Coping
• Concluding Comments
PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT
QUESTION

• WHAT PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED YOURSELF AND/OR NOTICED IN OTHERS IN THE FACE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?
COMMON FEARS

• Falling ill and dying
• Infecting loved ones
• Losing livelihoods or economic stability
• Being socially excluded or quarantined
• Being separated from loved ones
  • Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2020
GRIEF

• Denial - *This virus won’t affect us*

• Anger: - *You’re making me stay home and taking away my activities*

• Bargaining - *Okay, if I social distance for two weeks everything will be better, right?*
  
  • Berinato, 2020; Kessler, 2019
GRIEF

• Sadness: - I don’t know when this will end

• Acceptance - This is happening; I have to figure out how to proceed
  – Acceptance is when we control what we can and come to peace with what we cannot control

  • Berinato, 2020; Kessler, 2019
COMMON PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTIONS

• Anxiety & worry
• Somatization
• Frustration, anger, irritability
• Helplessness and powerlessness
• Guilt
• Sadness

• Anhedonia
• Disruptions of appetite & sleep
COMMON SYMPTOMS

• Panic
• Moderate to severe depression
• Significant substance misuse
• Severe insomnia/hypersomnia
• PTSD-like symptoms (e.g., startle, avoidance)
• Hopelessness
• Significant withdrawal
• Suicidality
SUICIDE

• Rates unknown but,
  – Portland police chief says suicide calls are up during coronavirus outbreak – 911 calls for suicidal behavior are up 23% from the 10 days prior to the COVID-19 outbreak
  – Man in India who assumed he contracted the deadly coronavirus killed himself fearing he would infect his family
  – South Korean in charge of COVID-19 commits suicide
SUICIDE

• Why?
  – Prior mental health problems exacerbated by stress
  – Interpersonal conflicts
  – Economic concerns and financial instability that is overwhelming
  – Loss of loved ones and other important people
  – Existential concerns - fears of death, sense of alienation/isolation, lack of meaning and purpose
SYMPTOMS - CHINA

- Psychological impact moderate to severe – 53.8%
- Moderate to severe depressive symptoms – 16.5%
- Moderate to severe anxiety symptoms – 28.8%
- Moderate to severe stress levels – 8.1%
- Decreases in positive emotions and life satisfaction
  - Li et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020
SYMPTOMS - CHINA

• Predictors of greater psychological impact and more significant symptoms
  – Female gender
  – Student status
  – Specific physical symptoms (myalgia, dizziness, coryza)
  – Poor self-related health status

• Wang et al., 2020
SYMPTOMS - CHINA

• Predictors of lower psychological impact and fewer symptoms
  – Specific up-to-date and accurate health information
  – Precautionary measures (e.g., hand hygiene, wearing a mask)
    • Wang et al., 2020
SYMPTOMS – HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS IN CHINA

• Symptoms of depression – 47-50%
• Symptoms of anxiety – 45-98%
• Insomnia – 34%
• Distress - 72%
  • Guo et al., 2020; Lai et al., 2020
SYMPTOMS – HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS IN CHINA

- Most severe symptoms
  - Nurses
  - Women
  - Frontline workers
  - Younger healthcare providers
  - Those in Wuhan

- Guo et al., 2020; Lai et al., 2020
The coronavirus claims two Georgia health care workers

Two Georgia health care workers died late last week after contracting the novel coronavirus, apparently the state’s first medical personnel claimed by the pandemic.
SYMPTOMS - QUARANTINE

• Negative psychological effects
  – Post-traumatic stress symptoms
  – Confusion
  – Anger
    • Brooks et al., 2020
SYMPTOMS - QUARANTINE

• Stressors associated with negative psychological effects
  – Longer quarantine duration
  – Infection fears
  – Frustration
  – Boredom
  – Inadequate supplies and information
  – Financial loss
  – Stigma

• Brooks et al., 2020
During a pandemic, Isaac Newton had to work from home, too. He used the time wisely.
INTERPERSONAL IMPACT
QUESTION

• WHAT RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED YOURSELF AND/OR SEEN OTHERS HAVE TO DEAL WITH IN THE FACE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?
CONCERNS ABOUT CHILDREN

• Being alone without appropriate care or support
• Juggling work and childcare
• Ensuring homework is complete
• Worrying about and/or being separated
• Being aware of increases in child abuse
  • Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2020
WORRIES ABOUT PARENTS

• Knowing that are at increased risk
• Worrying about their level of social isolation, especially as they often are not tech-savvy
• Feeling guilty that not able to spend time with them or care for them
• Being distressed that may not be able to visit them if they get sick
CHALLENGES WITH PARTNERS

• Having problem communicating
• Experiencing considerable conflict
• Struggling with role sharing
• Being concerned about increased rates of intimate partner violence
• Having to do end of life planning
CHALLENGES WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

• Being extremely concerned cannot help out or visit people who are sick in the hospital
• Feeling very upset, sad, and angry that cannot proceed with typical death rituals
CHINA

• Worries about family members contracting COVID-19 – 75.2%
• Increased sensitivity to social risks so avoid social contact
• Social support buffered college students from psychological distress
  • Cao et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020
HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- Anger at not feeling protected by healthcare system leaders
- Reduced capacity to use social support due to intense work demands and not feeling understood
- Interpersonal conflicts in the workplace
- Stress/conflict with family about working at the hospital
- Concerns about loss of people work with and care about
RESILIENCE AND COPING
RESILIENCE

• Refers to the process of adapting well in the face of
  – Adversity
  – Trauma
  – Tragedy
  – Threats
  – Significant sources of stress
RESILIENCE

- Involves bouncing back from difficult experiences and maintaining hope
- Entails profound personal growth in the face of life-changing and stressful situations
- Helps you get through difficult circumstances and empowers you to grow even while experiencing pain and distress
RESILIENCE

- Reflects the use of a range of coping strategies
  - Different strokes for different folks
QUESTION

• WHAT STRATEGIES HAVE YOU FOUND HELPFUL IN COPING WITH THE STRESSES ASSOCIATED WITH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?
COPING – TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

• Fill day with balance of work, necessities, self-care
  – Schedule time for self after or before workday
• Meet your basic needs
• Self-monitor and pace
• Focus on tasks/challenges at hand
• Focus efforts on what is within your power and accept situations you cannot change
COPING – TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

• Give yourself time/space to attend to uncomfortable emotions and grieve the losses associated with the pandemic
• Devote time to navigating various tensions and loyalties
• Be guided by the motto, “good enough” rather than I must work all the time, be perfect, and always put the needs of others above my own needs
COPING: FOSTER AND RE-INVENT WELLNESS

• Take care of your body
• Keep moving
• Practice mindfulness – stay in the present
• Meditate
• Experience time with nature
• Engage in spiritual activities
• Avoid negative outlets
COPING: FOSTER AND RE-INVENT WELLNESS

- Develop and maintain a routine and structure
- Take breaks and pace yourself between stressful activities
- Plan time to relax
- Engage in a hobby
- Keep a journal
- Try something new
COPING: FOSTER AND RE-INVENT WELLNESS

• Be guided by your values
• Shift your perspective to consider positive growth
• Help others
• Treat yourself and others with kindness and compassion
COPING: MANAGE STRESS AND ANXIETY

• Stay informed while limiting media exposure
• Engage in deep breathing
• Name, acknowledge, and accept your thoughts and feelings
• Problem solve and take action
• Cultivate gratitude
• Seek psychological/psychiatric help
COPING: STAY CONNECTED

• Remember, it is **physical distancing** not social distancing or emotional isolation
  
  – Social connection enhances sense of belonging and purpose, increases happiness, bolsters self-esteem, supports physical well-being, and increases capacity to cope with adversity

  • https://www.kevinmd.com/blog/2020/03/i-am-a-physician-and-i-am-not-isolatingemotionally.html
COPING: STAY CONNECTED

• Prioritize your relationships – finding compassionate and trustworthy people to connect with
• Talk with allies/trusted co-workers and receive support from one another – if work in high risk situations
• Share your experiences and concerns with understanding and supportive family/friends during and after work - if work in high risk situations
COPING: STAY CONNECTED

• Plan with family ways to manage competing demands
• Address directly concerns about infecting loved ones
• Interact with others in multiple ways despite being physical distant (e.g., technology)
• Start new social traditions
• Be your own best advocate with members of your social support network (practical needs, mental health)
COPING – PROMOTE TEAMWORK

• Foster team unity
• Step forward when you can
• Check-in with one another regularly
• Communicate constructively
• Respect differences
• Interact with tolerance, patience, and compassion
COPING – PROMOTE TEAMWORK

• Seek out peer consultation regularly
• Recognize and celebrate the contributions of colleagues
• Debrief after difficult situations
• Seek out team consultations or support groups
## COPING – NAVIGATE EXISTENTIAL CONCERNS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ULTIMATE CONCERN</th>
<th>EXISTENTIAL CONFLICT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEATH</td>
<td>Wish to perpetuate existence versus reality of mortality</td>
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<tr>
<td>FREEDOM</td>
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<td>Search for meaning versus the absence of inherent meaning</td>
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- Yalom, 1980

**Ultimate Concerns and Existential Conflicts**

- **Death**
  - Wish to perpetuate existence versus reality of mortality

- **Freedom**
  - Wish for structure versus reality of groundlessness

- **Isolation**
  - Wish for connection versus the reality of aloneness

- **Meaninglessness**
  - Search for meaning versus the absence of inherent meaning
COPING – NAVIGATE EXISTENTIAL CONCERNS

• Engage in meaning-making both professionally and personally
  – Critical for what we cannot control and in our darkest hours, which is so much of COVID-19
  • Berinato, 2020; Kessler, 2019
CONCLUDING COMMENTS
WE’RE IN THE WATER- NOW WHAT.
REACH OUT TO WHO AND WHAT YOU KNOW HELPS
DO THE THINGS THAT YOU KNOW TAKE CARE OF YOU
SELF-CARE CAN BE CHEAP AND EASY

- https://zoo.sandiegozoo.org/live-cams
- https://www.virtualyosemite.org/virtual-tour/
- https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/musee-dorsay-paris
CHALLENGE THE NEGATIVE BELIEFS ABOUT CHANGE
GO IN THE DIRECTION OF THE CHANGE
IT’S OKAY IF YOU END UP ON A DIFFERENT RAFT

Two roads
diverged in a wood,
and I took the one
less traveled by,
and that has made
all the difference.

ROBERT FROST
THE GUIDES ARE AVAILABLE AND LOOKING TO HELP YOU
Opinion

I Spent a Year in Space, and I Have Tips on Isolation to Share

Take it from someone who couldn’t: Go outside.

By Scott Kelly
Mr. Kelly is a retired NASA astronaut who spent nearly a year on the International Space Station.
WE ARE ALL CONNECTED
(Scott Kelly, retired NASA astronaut)

• Seen from space, the Earth has no borders. The spread of the coronavirus is showing us that what we share is much more powerful than what keeps us apart, for better or for worse. All people are inescapably interconnected, and the more we can come together to solve our problems, the better off we will all be.
WE ARE ALL CONNECTED

• One of the side effects of seeing Earth from the perspective of space, at least for me, is feeling more compassion for others. As helpless as we may feel stuck inside our homes, there are always things we can do — I’ve seen people reading to children via videoconference, donating their time and dollars to charities online, and running errands for elderly or immuno-compromised neighbors. The benefits for the volunteer are just as great as for those helped.
WE ARE ALL CONNECTED

• I’ve seen humans work together to prevail over some of the toughest challenges imaginable, and I know we can prevail over this one if we all do our part and work together as a team.

• Oh, and wash your hands — often.
CARING AND CONNECTING DURING COVID-19