

Coming Through the Perfect Storm:  
*Fostering Resilience for You and Your Team*

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Elizabeth Kalb, Ph.D., MBA, HSPP  
*I have no conflicts of interest to report*

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Objectives

- Review the psychological impact of COVID-19 for the general population
- Review the psychological impact of COVID-19 for health professionals and healthcare organizations
- Outline strategies individuals can use to foster personal wellness and resilience
- Outline strategies teams can use to foster team wellness and resilience

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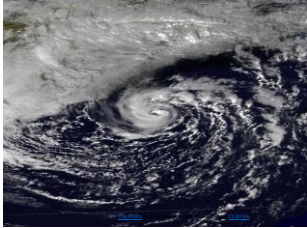
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# March 11, 2020



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# The Perfect Storm

- Worldwide Crisis
- Devasting Outcomes: Death, Disability, Financial
- No/strained resources to manage
- Lack of information/changing information
- No ready solution at hand
- Protracted experience with no definite endpoint

*A Global Mass Trauma Event*

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# Challenges

- EVERYONE was impacted
- Fear/Concerns were real & valid
- Financial stress
- Loss of normal patterns/routines
- Loss of social support networks
- Helped/hurt by media

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With this – *at the same time*

- Racial Injustice
- Social Unrest
- Acrimonious Election Campaign with Lingering Aftermath



*No Safe Harbor*

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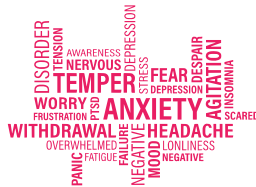
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People experienced

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Difficulties sleeping
- Eating too much/too little
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Being angry/irritable/on edge



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COVID-19 Impacts

- Decline in Physical Health
- 61% gained weight
  - 67% reputed disrupted sleep
  - 25% reported drinking more alcohol
  - 47% Delayed or cancelled needed health care treatment
- Decline in Mental Health
- 48% reported experiencing increased stress
  - 40% reported their mental health worsening

APA Monitor on Psychology April/May 2021 A National Mental Health Crisis

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CDC Impact Data April 2020 through Feb. 2021

- 38% increase in Anxiety and Depression in Adults
- 36% increase in drug overdoses
- 26% increase in suicide attempts

*This is what is known/reported – “the pandemic has also made it harder to access mental health resources, while deepening the need for these resources” Washington Post 5/6/2021*

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As we move to a new phase.....

- Re-entry anxiety – work, school, routine
- Delayed Grief
- Survivor Guilt
- PTSD




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SO.....

If you came through this past year and are currently feeling bruised, battered and tired

*You are not alone*

Your feelings are normal and expected




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As for Healthcare Professionals



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It has been a time of



- Chaos
- Uncertainty
- Overwhelming Demands
- Fear
- Unknowns – had never been through this before

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### Challenges

- Long work hours
- Sustained work stress
- Intense, complex work experiences
- Storage of equipment and staff
- Fluctuating guidelines and standards of care
- Worry about infecting others

Kang et al, (2020); Pfefferbaum & North (2020)

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As a result providers reported

- Increased anxiety – fear of getting sick, fear of infecting loved ones, general worry
- Insomnia/sleep disturbance
- Increased depression
- Increased OCD behaviors
- Burn-Out

*Higher in front line workers, higher in women*  
 DeKock et al. (2021)

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Some findings

Study in China: Survey of healthcare professionals working during the COVID epidemic - 71% of workers reported experiencing psychological distress typically depression or anxiety Lai et al (2020)

Survey of Healthcare workers working during SARS epidemic found 40% reporting PTSD symptoms immediately after, 10% still reporting symptoms 3 years after Ping et al (2009)

Survey of Healthcare providers during SARS outbreak found providers reporting increased distress, isolation and loss Nickell et al (2004)

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And for Providers & Teams.....




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So What can you do? Individuals & Teams



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The Resilience Model



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For Individuals

- Acknowledge what you have gone through and are continuing to go through
- Realize negative feelings and reactions are normal and expected (not a sign of weakness)
- Give yourself permission to take care of herself



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### Start with Good Self Care

- Tend to your personal needs
- Work to get adequate sleep
- Eat reasonably healthy
- Take breaks when you can
- Move/exercise when you can




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### Quiet your mind and body

- Deep breathing
- Decompress from work to home
- Distraction activities to “quiet” thinking
- Exercise or Relaxation to let go of body tension

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### Be kind to Yourself

- Extend your compassion to yourself –*you’ve done the best you can*
- Recognize and appreciate the vital role you play
- Control what you can/ Let go what you can’t




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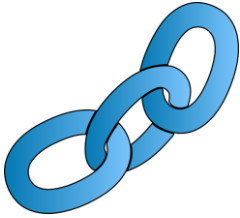
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### Connect with Others



- At work
  - Friends
  - Family
- Support/Distracton

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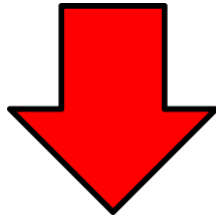
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### Decrease/Dis-connect from

- The Media
- The News
- Negative Social Media
- Work



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### Finally

Seek out professional help if needed



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For Teams




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Team Stressors during COVID-19

- Overwhelming Demands
    - Workload- Staffing issues
    - Acuity of Cases
  - Constant Changes/Shifting – new members, new cases
  - Uncertainty
  - Increased Work-Home Interface Stress
- Traylor et al. (2021)

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Impact on Teams?




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Team Elements that help teams manage stress events

- Leadership
- Good Communication
- Mutual Support

Traylor et al. (2021)

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Leadership

- Empathic
- Authentic
- Collaborative
- Communicates
- Values based and service oriented

Kaslow et al. (2020) Traylor et al (2021)

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Leadership Also



- Has a finger on the pulse of the team and knows what is needed
- Serves as a Wellness Advocate
- Provides Resources for Mental and Physical Wellness
- Thinks "outside the box" for providing needed resources

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### Teams Have Adequate Communication Processes

- Ongoing communication
- Updates as needed
- Share what is known and what is not known
- All are able to ask questions
- All are able to provide feedback

Goal: Everyone is on the same page, everyone knows what they need to know

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### Possible approaches

- Shift "Pre-briefs" – introduce members, determine roles, bring all up to date on status, current situation, challenges, what is expected
- During work encourage all to ask questions, speak up and ask for help when needed
- For conflict – focus on what is right, not who is right
- Post Shift De-Brief – Shout out to successes, how to address challenges

Traylor et al. (2021)

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### Mutual Support

- People look out for each other and step in when they see a need
- People are able to ask for and get needed help and support
- For COVID – support is not just provided in the workplace but can extend to home and family as well
- Don't forget those working behind the scenes!

Traylor et al. (2021)

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After the Storm – How can teams move on?

Three Phases of Team Resilience

Managing

Mending

Minimizing

Alliger et al., (2015), Stoverink et al. (2020)

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Mending/ Minimizing

• Leadership

• Communication

• Mutual Support

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Debrief at all levels

- What worked well? What did not?
- What is needed in the future?
- What needs to be adapted? Modified?
- How did we function as a team?

Focus on processes not outcomes  
View “mistakes” “problems” as learning opportunities

Traylor et al. (2021)

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Team Training for Teamwork best practices



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Promote Individual & Team Well Being

- Have mental and physical health resources available
- Encourage use
- Check on each other, reach out to one another

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Hopefully, eventually.....



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Questions?



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