MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS DURING COVID-19

SUPPORTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS

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OUTLINE

1. Psychological challenges faced during crisis situations
2. Strategies to support your mental health and wellbeing
3. Considerations for staying healthy at work
4. Supporting family and friends
IT’S OKAY TO NOT BE OKAY

• Emergencies are always stressful

• A number of sources of stress
  • Fear and anxiety about the illness and consequences
  • Forced adaptation
  • Strain on social networks

• Increased incidence of mental health problems – primarily anxiety
  • Exacerbation of existing mental health problems
Phases Commonly Seen in Disasters and Emergencies

**“Community Cohesion”**
Honeymoon phase can last a few days or months: resilience skills are vital here

**“Heroic Phase”**
Occurs during and right after impact; often thought of as “resilience”

**“Disillusionment”**
Can last 3-6 months or years and generate severe personal and psycho-social-spiritual disorders: resilience skills are especially vital here

**“Recovery”**
Coming to terms and working through grief can take months/years: resilience also skills vital here

**“Bounce Back”**
If enough time exists for recovery, many eventually return to some semblance of pre-crisis levels

**Pre-Disaster**

**Warning** (years/days/hours)

**Impact**

**Some People Remain Dysregulated**

**Another Disaster Can Prevent Recovery**

**Anniversary Reactions Can Cause Regression**

But those with good resilience skills use the trauma as a catalyst to find **New Meaning, Purpose, and Hope**

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH

• Acceptance
• Challenge negative thoughts
• Limit intake of stressful information
• Stay connected
• Practice proactive health management behaviours
• Focus on what you can control
• Good coping vs. bad coping?
CHALLENGING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

Common Thought Traps:
1. Catastrophizing
2. Black and white thinking
3. Emotional reasoning
ABOUT SELF-CARE

• It’s hard work!
• Facing stressors rather than avoiding them
• Intentional habits and practices that support wellbeing
THIS ISN’T BUSINESS AS USUAL

• Empathy and understanding
• Changing productivity expectations
• Clear need for direction and prioritization

We aren’t working from home during a pandemic.
We are staying safe at home during a pandemic and trying to get some work done.
PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

For Employees
• Acceptance
• Establish new routines to fit your life
• Connect with colleagues
• Access workplace supports

For Managers/Leaders
• Over-communicate
• Seek clarity over compliance
• Role model healthy behaviours and balance
• Clear direction and priorities
TIPS FOR SUPPORTING OTHERS

• Ask and express concern
• Listen and understand
• Encourage help
• Connect back and provide practical support

Crisis Services Canada: 1-833-456-4566 (24/7; ENG + FR)
TIPS FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN & YOUTH

• Keep them active and engaged
• Establish and maintain routines
• Help them connect to peers
• Engage as a family unit
• Be kind to yourself
QUESTIONS?
CONTACT INFORMATION

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