Physical distancing, loneliness and depression during COVID-19

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Contributors to COVID burnout

Stress as balance or imbalance

Lack pleasant events, inactivity, lack of social connections

Loneliness

THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS
Michelle Obama Says She's Dealing With 'Low-Grade Depression' During Lockdown
August 6, 2020 - 12:54 PM ET
LAUREL WAMSLEY

CHARM
Center for HIV and Research in Mental Health
Loneliness

- **Isolation** and distancing: has to do with number of people near you
- **Loneliness**: a subjective feeling
- **Loneliness**: can lead to low mood / depression

**Pre-COVID-19**

- Approximately 43% of adults over 65 experience loneliness
- Effects of social isolation on mortality approach those of smoking, obesity, and physical activity
Major Depression

- Sadness or depressed most of the time (most of the day, more days than not)
  or
- Persistent loss of interest

With persistent:
- Sleep problems
- Guilt/worthlessness feeling
- Loss of energy
- Concentration problems
- Change of appetite (weight loss or gain)
- Psychomotor retardation or agitation
- Suicidality/hopelessness

*Need first two, and 5 total symptoms*
Example Faculty Concerns

- Remote teaching
  - lack of connectedness
- Separation from family
  - lack of connectedness
- Early career faculty
  - Difficult to setup research programs, use startup funds, work with their new students, worried about productivity
  - Lack of childcare – publish manuscripts between minding at home schooling
  - Lack of hallway collaboration
- Late career faculty
  - Maybe live by self?, work a big part of self worth and self concept
- Pre-existing mental health concerns come up
Three ways to build resilience:

1. Social support
2. Positive events (pleasure or mastery)
3. Unplug and recharge
Do something social every day

Support for needs
Feeling needed
Advice and information

Emotional support
Reassurance of self-worth
Physical assistance

Social connection
Reliable support
Material assistance

Slide courtesy of Dr. Deborah Kaysen, Stanford University; c.f. WHO Psychological First AID Manual
Do something positive every day

- **Pleasurable events:**
  - Hobbies you can do in your home (Baking or cooking)
  - Find “escape” TV, movies, books
  - Listen to music
  - Play with your kids

- **Social events:**
  - If sick of zoom – maybe try other apps like game night or movie night with “discord” or “house party”
  - Patio happy hour / visits; outdoor walks (with masks)

- **Work:**
  - Re-articulate your purpose / professional values and how to enact them

- **Give back:**
  - Volunteer
  - practice compassion
Make time to unplug and recharge every day

Recharging
• Relaxation (progressive muscle, imagery)
• Mindfulness (non-judgmental awareness of the present moment)
• Exercise, Yoga
• Go outside - nature
• Take breaks – set an alarm
• Distraction and humor

Keep a schedule –
• Working from home doesn’t mean living at work!

Unplugging
• Limit consumption of the news
• Shut off your phones and computers

Seek mental health help
• If distress or impairment is too high
Q&A (Resources Below)

University of Miami Faculty and Staff Assistance Program.
  • [https://www.fsap.miami.edu/](https://www.fsap.miami.edu/)

CHARM
  • website: [https://charm.miami.edu/resources/covid-related/index.html](https://charm.miami.edu/resources/covid-related/index.html)
  • Workshops available (Wellness initiative: collaboration with Psychiatry and Psychology Departments)
  • Email: charm@miami.edu; ssafren@miami.edu

Mass General Hospital Psychiatry Department
  • [https://www.massgeneral.org/psychiatry/guide-to-mental-health-resources](https://www.massgeneral.org/psychiatry/guide-to-mental-health-resources)

Helping children and families cope with COVID
  • CAMAT Program (Jill Ehrenreich-May, Ph.D.)
    [https://camat.psy.miami.edu/research/co-parent/index.html](https://camat.psy.miami.edu/research/co-parent/index.html)
  • Guide for parents (Annette La Greca, Ph.D.)