Emotional Wellbeing

Discussion & Thoughts
led by Amanda Gartner, MA, LPCC
What do you hope to gain from this lunch & learn?

Please voice or write in the chat box anything you want reviewed/discussed today.
Common Themes of Spring 2020

- Anxiety of the unknown & change
- I can’t shut my mind off
- Trouble sleeping
- Worried about the future
"What did you do today?"

Had a breakdown.
Figure 1: Stress-Vulnerability Model

Alcohol and Drug Use

Worsens

Biological Vulnerability to Symptoms

Helps

Coping:
- meaningful activities
- healthy lifestyle
- supportive relationships
- strategies for coping with problems and symptoms

Helps

Stress

Worsens

Medications

Helps

Hazelden Foundation
Honest answers to the question “How are you?”

“The show continuously, unapologetically, ferociously plows into subjects most people are too uncomfortable to touch.”

- The Atlantic

more ways to subscribe

LATEST EPISODE
April 28, 2020
Bad Moms

Terrible, Thanks for Asking: How's it Going in There?
Stress in Outbreaks

Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children.

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Worsening of mental health conditions
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

Ways to Cope with Stress


Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.

Take care of your body.
- Take deep breaths and stretch.
- Try to eat healthy, balanced meals.
- Exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs.

Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.

Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
How are you managing your stress?

Please voice your thoughts and discuss with each other!

How are you NOT managing stress?

How is the stress of other people impacting you?
The quarantine state of mind is having 3 solid days where you feel pretty well adjusted, followed by a sudden, unexpected dip into what we call "the hell zone"
Polyvagal Theory

The stress response + the nervous system

https://catherinehale.co.uk/understanding-our-trauma/
The nervous system with a neuroception of threat:

FREEZE
- Collapse
- Immobility
- Conservation of energy
- Dissociation
- Numbness
- Depression
- Raised pain threshold
- Helplessness

FEAR IMMOBILISED

DORSAL VAGAL (LIFE THREAT)
- Hyperarousal
- "I CAN"
- "I CAN'T"
- FIGHT
- movement towards
- Rage
- Anger
- Fear
- Irritation
- Anxiety
- Frustration
- Calmness in connection
- Settled
- Groundedness

FLIGHT
- movement away
- Panic
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Worry & Concern

SYMPATHETIC (DANGER)
- Hyperarousal

FEAR MOBILISED

The nervous system with a neuroception of safety:

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
- Connection
- Safety
- Oriented to the environment
- Curiosity / Openness
- Compassionate
- Mindful / In the present

VENTRAL VAGAL (SAFETY)

Parasympathetic Nervous System
- Dorsal Vagal Complex
- Increases
  - Fuel storage and insulin activity
  - Immobilisation behaviour (with fear)
  - Endorphins that help numb and raise the pain threshold
  - Conservation of metabolic resources
- Decreases
  - Heart rate
  - Blood pressure
  - Temperature
  - Muscle tone
  - Facial expressions and eye contact
  - Depth of breath
  - Social behaviour
- Attunement to human voice
  - Sexual desire and responses
  - Immune response

Sympathetic Nervous System
- Increases
  - Blood pressure
  - Heart rate
  - Fuel availability
  - Adrenaline
  - Oxygen circulation to vital organs
  - Blood clotting
  - Dilation of bronchi
  - Defensive responses
  - Likelihood of premature ejaculation,
  - Vaginismus, inability to orgasm and painful sex
- Decreases
  - Fuel storage
  - Insulin activity
  - Digestion
  - Salivation
  - Relational ability
  - Immune response

Parasympathetic Nervous System
- Vagal Vagal Complex
- Increases
  - Digestion
  - Intestinal motility
  - Resistance to infection
  - Immune response
  - Rest and recuperation
  - Health and vitality
  - Circulation to non-vital organs (skin, extremities)
  - Oxytocin (neuromodulator involved in social bonds that allows immobility without fear)
  - Ability to relate and connect
  - Movement in eyes and head turning
  - Prosody in voice
  - Breath
  - Facial expression
  - Capacity for sexual pleasure
- Decreases
  - Defensive responses

VVC is the beginning and end of stress response.

Adapted by Cathleen Hale from Ruby Jo Walker.
Normalizing the stress response:
You might be stuck in an activated state, leading to difficulty remembering things and challenges finding motivation because you are in a survival state of mind.
I don't know who needs to hear this, but you don't have to use this time to try to do everything you've always wanted to do ever and you're not a failure if you aren't using this as "extra credit" time.

It's a pandemic, not a productivity contest.
Unlocking Us: David Kessler & Grief
Dr. Bessel van der Kolk

Addressing the Trauma Response

Author of *The Body Keeps the Score*
Collective Trauma
predictability

ADDRESSING THE TRAUMA RESPONSE
connection

[ADDRESSING THE TRAUMA RESPONSE]
sense of time
[ADDRESSING THE TRAUMA RESPONSE]
safety

[ADDRESSING THE TRAUMA RESPONSE]
How have you already tried any of these tips?

Please voice or use the chat box to share your thoughts!

What hasn’t worked as well?
What would you like to try?
That one serotonin molecule that helps me survive the day
Mayo Clinic Tips

Linda Hubbard, LMFT

Build up resiliency

1. Gather information.

Knowledge of the enemy, fear and issue can reduce anxiety. Gather accurate, factual information from trusted sources to better understand the situation, and help with problem-solving and a greater sense of control. Avoid sensationalized, dramatic information about the pandemic.

2. Establish a new routine.

Many daily routines have changed due to COVID-19. Routine and structure can be helpful and calming. Create a new normal with some practical and enjoyable tasks to become more resilient to chaos and change. Mindfully create a daily and weekly flow of events, such as starting your morning with a relaxing cup of tea or coffee, or breakfast. Other ideas include making a list of projects that you have wanted to accomplish, reading inspirational writings and journaling to record your thoughts, hopes, emotions and concerns.
3. Stay connected virtually.

Reaching out to loved ones is important and can be done through phone calls, texting, emailing and video calls. Consider hosting virtual meetings with your loved ones. Human connection can lower stress and anxiety levels, and build camaraderie. Learn more about how to maintain human connection during social distancing.


Take a few moments to care for yourself each day, such as soaking in a long soothing bath, listening to calming or upbeat music, getting plenty of sleep, and eating healthy food. These habits can help whether you are working inside or outside the home.
5. Look for the good.

Acknowledge and accept that the good and bad are often adjacent in the same moment in life. A person can be sad about one thing but be aware that there’s goodness and happiness in the same moment about another thing. Intentionally look for those good things. Whatever thoughts we feed grow so it can help to purposefully think hopeful, realistic and problem-solving thoughts. Look at the beauty amid the difficulties in life.


Regular exercise and movement helps release built-up fight-or-flight energy. Using bigger muscle movements can help release this energy so you feel calmer. Also, exercise releases endorphins, which are feel-good chemicals in the brain. Try jumping jacks, pushups, walking, running, chopping wood, swimming or lifting weights. Even cleaning the house or moving heavy boxes are good big-muscle exercises. Stretching and yoga also are helpful in reducing stress.
7. Meditate.
Meditation, mindfulness and breathing exercises are good ways to release stress. Now is a good time to learn these approaches and incorporate them into daily habits.

8. Reflect.
COVID-19 enables people to reflect on what is truly important and express gratitude. When life returns to normal, do you want to go back to how things were before or will you reprioritize some things in your life?
9. Reach out.

Everyone is in this together, and that is a comfort. You are not alone. If you feel alone, don't be silent. Instead, reach out to a friend or health care professional. Many people are feeling the same way. If you communicate your hopes and fears, and listen to others, it divides the burden and increases the connection. This decreases the sense of isolation and anxiety.
What has Amanda been encouraging students?
Support.
Be honest with your emotions.
Acceptance.
Boundaries.
Sleep.

Sleep Tips
Mindfulness-based Apps

[headspace.com]

Mindfulness for your everyday life
Stress less. Move more. Sleep soundly.

[calm.com]

[InsightTimer.com]
you are not being selfish for...

* avoiding the news
* feeling upset that you are missing out on things you were looking forward to
* wishing things would go back to normal
* missing your friends and family
* recognising that this is negatively impacting your mental health
* feeling sad you can’t go out

@worrywellbeing
Options & Resources

Call to Mind
NAMI
SAMHSA

- Medicine
- Employee Assistance Program
- Therapy
  - Somatic Experiencing
  - Cognitive Behavioral
  - Dialectical Behavior Therapy
  - Play Therapy
  - Mindfulness
The Power of Vulnerability TED Talk

Brené Brown | TEDxHouston

The power of vulnerability
DISCUSSION

Q&A, Moral support, Tips for each other