

# *Coping With COVID 19: Taking Care of Your Emotional Health*

Prepared By: Professor Joshua E. Bienstock  
Professor Stacey M. Baez

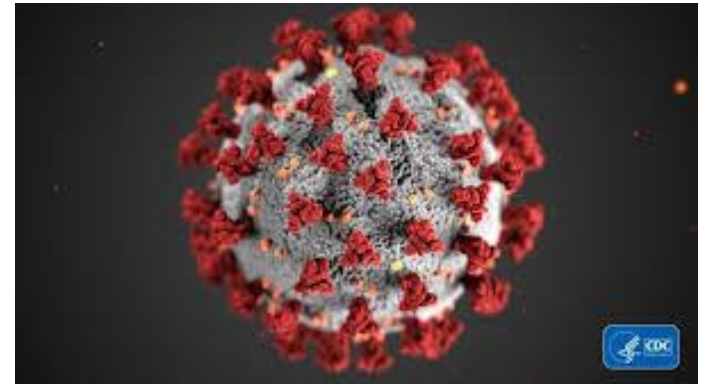
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# Agenda

- Opening Remarks
- Understanding Stress Divers
- Coping with Stress
- Plenary Discussion



# Tips For Managing Stress



# Understanding What is Driving Our Stress

- Social Distancing
- Loss of routine
- Home life being disrupted
- Fear of contamination/contaminating others
- Feelings of Uncertainty and a lack of credible information
- Loss of usual self care activities (gym, going out to eat, spending time with friends)
- Being in a high-risk category
- Having special events cancelled
- Managing and talking to your children about COVID-19



# Coping With Stress Skills

- **Biological Concerns**

- 7-8 hours of sleep each night
- Eating 3 healthy meals per day
- Exercise 3 days per week for 30 minutes, where your heartrate is over 120 BPM



# Coping With Stress Skills

- **Emotional Concerns**

- Expressing yourself and talking with friends and co-workers
- Validating and supporting others
- Monitoring your feelings throughout the day
- Engaging in self compassion and setting limits
- Connecting with those we love each day



# Coping With Stress Skills

- **Cognitive Issues**

- Recognizing when your thinking is being influenced by your emotional state
- Avoiding black and white thinking
- Not giving into “automatic thoughts” that elicit negative emotions
- Recognizing when our behavior is contributing to negative emotional states



# Coping With Stress Skills

- **Environmental Concerns**

- Keep a clean and organized environment
- Identify factors in our environment that are contributing to our stress and eliminate them if possible
- Change your environment if feeling too stressed out





# Coping With Social Distancing

- **Concerns**

- Maintaining social distancing can be a very isolating and difficult situation
- This may raise tensions at home, create loneliness, feeling constrained
- You may feel more isolated from your relatives, friends and co-workers as well due to social distancing rules



# Coping With Social Distancing

- **Coping Skills**

- Find ways to get outdoors/get out of the house that are still safe
- Start a project in your yard or around your apartment
- Connect with friends online as others may feel isolated as well
- Increase virtual communication with relatives, friends and co-workers
- Leave them fun digital notes/memes



# Coping With Loss of Routine

- **Concerns**

- Most people have felt a disruption in their day to day routine as a result of the virus
- Both in terms of their job and home life
- Forced to take extra precautions (cleaning hands and packages)
- Facing limited access to resources



# Coping With Loss of Routine

- **Coping Skills**

- Creating a new routine (creating daily stability is critical)
- Taking initiative to set up routines with family, roommates and co-workers
- Accepting the idea that some things won't get done (plates will drop)
- Talking with boss, spouses and children, roommates about expectations and priorities



# Coping With Home Life Being Disrupted

- **Concerns**

- Home is often our escape from the day to-day stress of work
- Some of us are having to work from home or manage children/partners/dependents at home



# Coping With Home Life Being Disrupted

- **Coping Skills**

- Being mindful that you can only do the best you can
- Accept the idea that you are not going to be a perfect parent, spouse or room mate right now
- People will understand
- Speak with your boss about your specific family needs



# Coping With Our Souses, Children's and Roommates Anxiety

- **Concerns**

- Many of our spouses, children and roommates are sharing their fears of the virus
- In fact, this seems to be the only thing people are talking about
- We too may also have some of the same fears



# Coping With Our Souses, Children's and Roommates Anxiety

- **Coping Skills**

- Recognizing our own catastrophized thoughts (thinking about worst possible outcome)
- Being mindful of how much distress we are absorbing
- It's okay to acknowledge your own fears with our spouse, children (in an age appropriate fashion) and roommates
- Be respectful of their anxieties and be empathic





# Coping With Fear of Contaminating

- **Concerns**

- Many of us are thinking about everything we touch and do, in an unprecedented way
- We all should all have greater empathy for OCD - Germaphobia
- This can make us hypervigilant, and we may look for soothing behaviors such as washing hands or showers as means of feeling better
- We may feel guilty about going out or doing things, like we are contributing to the problem



# Coping With Fear of Contaminating

- **Coping Skills**

- Recognizing that going out is a necessity at times, and that this okay
- Being mindful of when we are overanalyzing our own behavior
- Everything does not have Corona Virus on it
- We are not in complete control of our ability to control contamination, no matter what we do
- If your hands are turning red or developing sores you may be over washing



# Coping With Misinformation and Information Overload

- **Concerns**

- The media is invested in making profit through viewership and clicks
- Information is being sensationalized at times
- Some information is simply false
- This can be frustrating



# Coping With Misinformation and Information Overload

- **Coping Skills**

- Be aware of your own media consumption – this impacts your mood
- Disengage from social media
- Read beyond headlines
- Take breaks from the news
- Do not spread information until it is confirmed



# Coping With Communication Disruption

- **Concerns**

- My Mail is disrupted
- I'm getting tons of emails
- I'm getting a barrage of telephone calls
- My newspaper didn't arrive today



# Coping With Communication Disruption

- **Coping Skills**

- Take breaks from emails
- Assume positive intent by others, most people are trying their best
- Recognize other people's lives are also being disrupted and their communication style may have changed as a result
- Over time things will normalize again
- Accepting the reality that that less control is okay



# Coping With Loss of Self Care Activities

- **Concerns**

- Normally we do all kinds of things to take care of ourselves
- Unfortunately, many of these activities involve being around others and have been cancelled



# Coping With Loss of Self Care Activities

- **Coping Skills**

- Get CREATIVE!
- Use YouTube to do exercise, meditation, and mindfulness at home
- Get a video game that involves exercise
- Read those books you have wanted to read
- Go for a walk
- Talk to friends online and connect
- Start a project!
- Make productive use of your time





# Coping With Having Special Events Cancelled

- **Concerns**

- In the wake of social distancing many events have been cancelled or postponed
- This includes sports, conferences, vacations, and even weddings
- This can produce a sense of grief or loss that feels unfair



# Coping With Having Special Events Cancelled

- **Coping Skills**

- You are not alone in feeling this way!
- Don't fall into the trap of not allowing yourself to grieve
- It's okay to be disappointed
- The process of making changes can bring people together
- More time can make some events even better



# Talking to Your Children About Coronavirus

- **Concerns**

- Recognize how your own anxiety may be effecting our children
- Children may be struggling to understand what is happening (just like we are), except they have less ability and experience to manage their lives
- Being out of school and out of their routine can be difficult for many kids



# Talking to Your Children About Coronavirus

- **Coping Skills**

- Talk with your children about the topic
- Focus on things that are going to stay the same (being together, being loved, supporting each other)
- Come up with daily routines and rituals for our children



# The Truth About Stress

- It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during and after a disaster such as Coronavirus
- Everyone reacts differently, and your own feelings will change over time
- Notice and accept how you feel
- Taking care of your emotional health during an emergency will help you think clearly and react to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your family
- Self-care during an emergency will help your long-term healing
- People with pre-existing mental health conditions should continue with their treatment plans during an emergency and monitor for any new symptoms



# Look Out For These Common Signs of Stress

- Feelings of numbness, disbelief, anxiety or fear
- Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares and upsetting thoughts and images
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Anger or short-temper
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

**SOURCE: Center for Disease Control**



# What to Do If Signs of Stress Persist

- If you experience these feelings or behaviors for several days in a row and
- You are unable to carry out normal responsibilities because of them
- Seek professional help!

**SOURCE: Center for Disease Control**



# Tips on Managing Your Anxiety

- **Keep things in perspective**

- Take a deep breath and remind yourself that most people who contract COVID-19 will only experience mild symptoms
- Work is being done to help people who may be more vulnerable to the coronavirus, such as senior citizens and those with underlying health conditions





# Tips on Managing Your Anxiety

- **Get the facts.**
  - It is helpful to adopt a more analytical approach as you follow news reports about the coronavirus
  - You will also want to verify information that you receive from family, friends or social media
  - The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a [webpage dedicated to information on the coronavirus outbreak](#)



# Tips on Managing Your Anxiety

- **Communicate with your children.**
  - Discuss the news coverage of the coronavirus with honest and age-appropriate information
  - Parents can also help allay distress by focusing children on routines and schedules
  - Remember that children will observe your behaviors and emotions for cues on how to manage their own feelings during this time
  - You may want to limit how much media they consume to help keep their anxiety in check



# Tips on Managing Your Anxiety

- **Keep connected**

- Maintaining social networks can foster a sense of normality and provide valuable outlets for sharing feelings and relieving stress
- You can maintain these connections without increasing your risk of getting the virus by talking on the phone, texting or chatting with people on social media platforms
- Feel free to share useful information you find on government websites with your friends and family. It will help them deal with their own anxiety



# Tips on Managing Your Anxiety

- **When Necessary, Seek additional help**
  - Individuals who feel an overwhelming nervousness, a lingering sadness, or other prolonged reactions that adversely affect their job performance or interpersonal relationships should consult with a trained and experienced mental health professional
  - Psychologists and other appropriate mental health providers can help people deal with extreme stress
  - These professionals work with individuals to help them find constructive ways to manage adversity



# Appreciate That There Are Good things Going On

- No traffic! (less commuting stress)
- Short lines at most take out restaurants
- Lightened/simplified workload in some ways
- We are reconnecting with friends
- A break in routine can be invigorating
- Systems are becoming more flexible
- We have access to Telemedicine
- We are developing valuable skillsets and competencies to deal with future crises



# Resources

- Here are some Web sites on psychological recovery:

- National Mental Health Association. Available at

<http://www.nmha.org/finding-help>

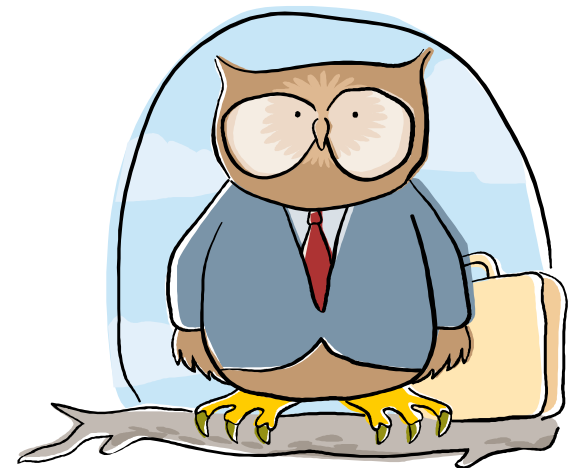
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Mental

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/index.asp>

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fmanaging-stress-anxiety.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fmanaging-stress-anxiety.html)

Parting Thoughts

Questions????



## Workshop Leader

**Professor Joshua E. Bienstock** teaches business law, arbitration, labor-management law, employment law, alternative dispute resolution, and human resources policies and practices, in the Department of Human Resources and Law at NYIT's School of Management. He specializes in employment and labor law in his practice. He directs the conflict resolution management think tank Dispute Resolution Institute of New York, Inc. and serves on the Board of Directors of the many organizations including Queens Chamber of Commerce and Long Island Library Resource Council. He is a graduate of Queens College, holds a J.D. from the Hofstra Law School and an LLM in Labor Law from NYU Law School. He has been an invited guest lecturer at many universities including Cornell School of Industrial Labor Relations, City University of New York, Sun Yat-Sen University, (Guangzhou, China), South West University of Political Science and Law, (Chongqing, China) and human resource management organizations in China, the United States and various chambers of commerce and businesses in the metropolitan area on topics related to human resource management, and conflict resolution.



## Workshop Leader

**Professor Stacey M. Baez** holds a Master Degree in Human Resources and Labor Relations as well as SHRM-CP certification. Stacey has over ten years of experience in human resource management. Currently she is an Adjunct Professor with the New York Institute of Technology School of Management concentrating on human resource management and at the Stonybrook University School for Professional Development. She is Co-Director with the Dispute Resolution Institute of New York a educational think tank focusing on managing and resolving conflict in the workplace where she develops and presents customized training programs for organizations. She is also a consultant for talent management, compensation, benefits, and mediation.

## **Contact Information:**

Joshua E. Bienstock, J.D., L.L.M.  
[jbiensto@nyit.edu](mailto:jbiensto@nyit.edu)

Stacey M. Baez, M.S.  
[sbaez@nyit.edu](mailto:sbaez@nyit.edu)

# NYIT Center for HR Studies *Advancing HR*

Contact:

Dr. Maya Kroumova

516-686-7722

[shrm@nyit.edu](mailto:shrm@nyit.edu)

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