#### FRONT-LINE MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

#### Brief Psychological Interventions During a Time of Crisis



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## Mental health during COVID-19

During a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, it is common for everyone to experience increased levels of distress and anxiety, particularly as a result of social isolation.

<u>Physicians and other frontline health care</u> professionals are particularly vulnerable to negative mental health effects as they **strive to balance the duty of caring for patients with concerns about their own well-being and that of their family and friends**.

## Stressors

- Volumes and acuity
- Possibility of infection
- Long shifts
- Inability to save all patients
- Shortness of supplies
- Under-preparedness
- Separation from partners/children/otherfamily/friends

## Normal Adjustment Issues

□ Fear of infection □ Overwhelmed by volumes and acuity Guilt over inability to save all □ Frustration over lack of supplies □Anger about under preparedness □Miss partner and children Exhausted

Depression Anxiety **Stress** □ Feel lonely □ Miss social activities □ Miss hobbies Bored

## **Common Goals for Intervention**

- Get control
- Resolve ethical concerns: Work vs family
- Reduce Fear: Regarding exposure
- Lower anxiety: Worry less
- Improve mood: More pleasure, competence
- Limit anger: Towards- pandemic, employer, government, self, others
- Healthy lifestyle: Eat, sleep, exercise

## **Crisis Intervention**

#### First Aid:

- Physical needs- Manage Hunger, Thrust, Sleep
- Safety- Taking Necessary Precautions
- Social connections- Video calls/ Chat with Family, Friends etc

**Coping Strategies:** For what I cannot change **Change Efforts:** For what I can control **Challenges:** How do I (colleague)get in the way **Acceptance:** It is what it is.

## Counselling skills

- While conducting session with them, therapist has to:
- 1. Demonstrate Understanding:
  - Listen to their distress or concerns patiently.
  - Empathize with them.
  - 2. Unconditional acceptance: Being Non judgemental
- 3. Focus on one issue at a time.

## **Common Thoughts of Depression**

- Can't do my job
- Can't be in my house
- I miss my family/kids/grandchildren
- Can't be a good partner in relationship
- No end in sight
- The situation is hopeless

## Common Thoughts of Anxiety

- If might become infected
- I could get sick/die
- There are too many cases, I can't handle the work load
- The acuity is too high. I can't give cases the attention they need.
- My patient(s) might die

## **Common Thoughts of Anger**

- This isn't fair, I don't deserve this.
- They knew it was coming
- We don't have enough PPE
- There are no ventilators
- We are running out of meds
- They lie to us

## Brief Psychological Intervention Techniques

#### Advantages and Disadvantages of working as Healthcare Professional If you work and if you don't work

#### Advantages-Disadvantages Analysis

Advantages of	Disadvantages of
Advantages of Not	Disadvantages of Not

# Managing thoughts of depression, anxiety and anger

- What is the evidence that my thoughts are true?
- What is the evidence that may thoughts are not true?
- What is an alternative explanation or viewpoint to look at the current situation?
- What is the worst thing that could happen and how would I cope if it did?
- What is the best that could happen?
- What is the most likely outcome?

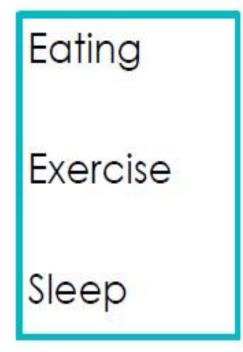
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- What is the effect of telling myself this thought?
- What could be the effect of changing my thinking?
- What would I tell someone else if he / she viewed this situation in this way?
- What should I do now?

## Tips to manage daily stress

- Daily discuss about success stories of the Healthcare workers who have successfully treated many patients who have recovered.
- Compare self to them others the same or less fortunate than you.
- Share your work with others.
- Share your feelings with someone whose approach is positive.
- Engage in some distraction and enjoyable exercise/ activities.

## Healthy Lifestyle





## Sleep Hygiene

To get good sleep:

- 1. Avoid Coffee/ Tea/ Cola at least 4 hours before sleep
- 2. Lighten up the evening Meal
- 3. Keep your bedroom dark and cool
- 4. Dedicate your bed for the Sleep only.
- 5. Limit your daily naps
- 6. Follow time routine for sleep/ waking up

### One Minute Breathing Exercise

- Breathe in deeply through your nose (Four seconds)
- Fill lungs with air—hold for a few seconds (Two seconds)
- Exhale slowly through your mouth (Six seconds)
- Repeat four times

### Hope Box

- Letters or printed emails that mean a lot to you
- Photos of special times you have had or of special times you hope to have
- Photos of loved ones
- Inspirational quotes
- Spiritual or religious verses
- Articles or columns that you find meaningful
- Jokes that make you laugh
- Anything else that reminds you of reasons to stay alive

Thank You You Care for us, We salute you!

> By: Dr Manoj Kumar Bajaj Hony. General Secretary, IACP