

# 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.**

**Physicians and other frontline health care** 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/other-family/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
- Insomnia
- 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 my 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?

# conti....

- 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

Eating

Exercise

Sleep





# 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!**

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