

How are current events affecting you? And what can you do about it?

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Resiliency

- Ability to bounce back from adversity
- People who are more resilient are: allow themselves to feel bad in adversity, but believe in their ability to cope and resolve problems, resulting in sense of well-being
- Resilient people allow sorrow and joy to coexist, to celebrate life's blessings while acknowledging their grief.
- Resilient people know when and how to ask for help.

Activity

Identify one impact that recent events have had on:

1. you
2. your work
3. your family

Normal reactions to very abnormal event

- Physical, cognitive, emotional arousal is automatic natural reaction to threat
- Fight, flight, freeze: great short-term response, not so great for long-term. Can exhaust us physically, mentally and emotionally
- Intended outcome is: expend energy!
There has to be opportunity to discharge stress
 - This is why exercise works:
expend energy, releases pent-up tension

Tired, sad, difficulty concentrating? Normal reactions to very abnormal event

Trauma can lead to long-term growth

- What I learned from this that's made my life better
- Also has potential long-term to deplete our coping mechanisms
 - We intentionally increase our resiliency through awareness and acting on that
 - Don't wait 'til you know you need it.

Everyone is experiencing this.

I heard that we are all in the same boat, but it's not like that. We are in the same storm, but not in the same boat.

Your boat could be shipwrecked, and mine might not be.

Or vice versa.

Nicki Peverett

For some, quarantine is time for family, new opportunities or retreat

For others, the isolation increases risk of

- child abuse
- domestic violence
- alcohol abuse
- anxiety and depression

For all of us, it means its time to be more aware of our own feelings and reactions and those of our friends, coworkers, neighbors and family

Feel fear, but you can't see the danger

Stages of Grief

- **Disbelief** - This won't affect us.
- **Anger** - You're making me stay home
- **Bargaining** - If I social distance for 2 weeks, then it'll be alright.
- **Sadness** - So many people died and hurt and we don't know how this will end.
- **Acceptance** - This is happening. I have to figure out how to go on. Here's what I can do.

What can you do to help with these feelings?

1. Turn the losses into a bucket list of things you'll do when conditions change.
2. Turn your distress and anger into action: volunteer, work for change, donate to causes

Your primitive mind feels fear, but you can't see the danger

- Grief
 - lost loved one, lost job or financial security, lost experiences: graduations, weddings, funerals, vacations, sports
 - ambiguous loss: sense of safety, normalcy, social connections, closeness
- Anticipatory Grief: Future uncertain

What about kids?

- Kids pick up on parent's anxiety, sadness or anger much more than you're aware of.
- It's OK for parents to say, "We're sad that...", or "We're upset because..." without giving too much detail about it; they don't need to feel responsible for taking care of you.
- They just need to know that you're protecting them and taking care of them.

Activity: What are three things you fear right now?

Fear tells you what matters to you.
Two sides of the same coin.

What can you do? Live in line with your values.
Justice / Kindness / Fairness / Connections

Activity:
What is one small thing you could do today to demonstrate this value?
(Even though I would prefer bigger ones!)

Flow: Being so completely absorbed in a project that you lose track of time

People in quarantine: Those who tolerated best were NOT those who were the most optimistic or the most introverted or the most mindful. They were those who found the most **flow**.

Flow requires a stretch of uninterrupted time. Hard to get at home with kids, pets, another person working, back to back Zoom meetings, home schooling.

Technology available 24 / 7

- **Upside: Flexibility.** If you are caring for kids or others, being able to respond outside of normal work hours is great. Make clear you don't expect immediate response.
- **Downsides:**
 - Available 24/7 doesn't mean you have an obligation to respond at all times. Interferes with being "off."
 - Can interfere with getting work done. Interrupts flow.

So, what can I control?

Most importantly, you control your own thoughts.

It's not just what happens.

It's what you tell yourself about what happens.

Example: "I was irritable with my kids today because I'm so stressed. I'm a terrible parent."

Or: "I was irritable with my kids today because I'm so stressed. I'm doing the best I can right now."

Example: I can't take this any longer!
Or: This won't last forever.
I can manage right now.

1. What's one recent activity where you've been able to find **flow**?

2. What are some things that have been getting in the way of flow for you lately?

3. What is one small thing you might do this week that would allow for more flow?

Humans HATE being out of control

- Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation.

Victor Frankl

Recommended reading: **Man's Search for Meaning**

How to know when it's a problem?

Anxiety and sadness are different from an anxiety disorder or depression.

- **Everybody** has times when they're worried or anxious. That's normal and not a disorder.
- **Everybody** has times when they're sad or upset. That's normal and not depression.

When you see a **change** in a person, that lasts more than a short period:

- Affecting their thinking, emotions, behavior
- Severe enough to interfere with their ability to:
 - work or learn
 - carry out daily activities
 - engage in satisfying relationships with others

How do you do that? Seize the Awkward Commercial by Mental Health Ad Council available on youtube

Listen for comments that worry you:

- I just wish I wouldn't wake up tomorrow.
- Sometimes I don't feel like going on.
- I can't take it any longer.
- I think everyone would just be better off without me.
- Sometimes I wish I were dead.

It's a **myth** that asking someone if they're suicidal will put the idea in their head.

Taking Care of Each Other

- Recognize stress in your co-workers or friends and respond: "I know you said you're OK, but you sound..." or "but I've noticed"
- Listen, **without trying to problem-solve**
- Where appropriate, **offer help or resources**. Start with, "If you'd like, I could..."

Not your job to diagnose...
Notice, listen, and encourage professional help

- "I've noticed... and I'm concerned about you."
- Do you have a doctor or therapist that you could talk to about your symptoms?
(Many illnesses have symptoms that mimic those of anxiety and depression)
- Encourage self-help
- Offer resources for treatment and support, (if it's a friend, including yourself!)

What would you say?

- Ask the question directly:
 - Are you having thoughts of suicide?
 - Are you thinking of killing yourself?
- If yes, then:
 - Tell me more about that.
 - What have you thought about doing? Do you have a plan?
 - Have you started to collect the things you'd need to act on that?

National Crisis Line: (1-800-273-TALK) Next year: 988

Don't:

- Have the same standards or expectations for people as you would pre-pandemic.

"You are not 'working from home'.
You are 'at your home' during a crisis,
trying to work."

Canadian federal government

That is a big distinction!

Do: Discuss openly with others

- There's a wide range of normal human reactions. Respect where people are as they cope with this.
- Remember how the person usually is - not how they are in this moment. Snippy or irritable? You don't have to show up to every argument you get invited to! Instead, try:
"That's not like you. How are you doing, really?"
- Decrease stigma. "All of us will have good days and bad days." It's not about who's strong.

Do:**Model taking care of yourself for your staff/coworkers**

- ✓ "I'm taking time off this afternoon, so I won't be answering email."
- ✓ "As soon as we're done, I'm going out for some exercise."
- ✓ "I'm having a hard time some days, too."

Helpful Tips:

- Share your feelings with others. Be honest about irritation, sadness, guilt, anger, anxiety you feel. You are **not alone** in it.
- **Not sure how it's affecting you?** Ask someone you really trust to tell you the truth. How am I doing? What have you noticed that's different about me?
- It's a sign of strength to ask for help when you need it.
- Self-soothing: Activities that have a repetitive, left-right action: knit, run, drum, swim, crochet

In agencies, don't:

- Say things like, "While most of us are doing fine, we know that some people are not..."
- Dismiss or negate feelings (yours or others!)
"I shouldn't feel like that."
"Others have it worse."
- Show irritation when people are struggling: you may not know all the things they are facing. Give people some grace right now.

Helpful Tips:

- Express **gratitude** for what you do have.
"Grief and gratitude can sit at the same table."
- Be mindful: Find the beauty, peace and comfort in things around you (flowers, art, good food, kindness of others, great music)
- Focus on what you **CAN** control.
Here's what I can do.
- Chunk your quarantine - week, day, hour, 5 minutes

Activity: Find the lesson in it for you!

What is something I have learned, experienced, started doing (or picked back up) during this time that I want to keep in my life?

This is one small thing I commit to do that will improve my resilience!