COVID 19 – The Emotional Impact
Today’s Webinar will

• Discuss the emotional impact of the COVID 19 pandemic.
• Look at stressors TS, HS, and Peers, and all staff may be experiencing.
• Review potential emotional response staff may experience personally and professionally (fear, stress, anxiety, grief, guilt)
• Provide tips for working from home
• Suggest strategies for maintaining emotional wellness
• Suggest strategies for working through grief and loss
• Provide Resources
Emotional Response to Crisis

**Individualized** - Everyone responds differently.

- You may be experiencing a tidal wave of distressing emotions or you may be coping very well with little emotional distress.

- How you respond to any crisis depends on many factors like your personal situation, age, life experience, personal tendencies, how close to home this hits.

- Underlying mental health issues, medical conditions or substance use conditions

- No right or wrong way to feel.
What Makes COVID 19 different

- The COVID-19 global pandemic is a defining moment in our lives
- New York is the epicenter for the world
- Our entire way of life changed overnight.
- Unprecedented – COVID 19, the issues caused by it, and the worldwide response, is new to everyone.
- Uncertainty- There is so much we don’t know. So much the doctors, leaders, experts do not know.
The Current New Normal – Doing it all

- Working from home
- Isolation
- Child care
- Suddenly you’re a teacher
- Home manager
- Financial stress
- Lack of personal space. No time for yourself
- Lack of supplies
- The feeling of fighting for your life every time you go to the grocery store.
- Can’t see or be with those you care about
- Usual coping mechanisms or supports not available
- Everyone, in every part of your life, is also going through similar stressors
Common feelings and reactions

It can help to acknowledge and identify what your feeling:

Sad  Overwhelmed  depressed
Upset  Helpless  Horrified  Anxious
Angry  isolated  ALONE  Irritated
Low energy  exhausted  jumpy
So much grief  panic  Fear
Can’t focus  So stressed out  Numb  Can’t Sleep
Guilty  Crying

You may not experience any of these feelings or reactions
Fear and Uncertainty

• Fear – an emotional response to perceived a danger or threat

• COVID 19 brings so many fears....
  – Catching the virus, or loved ones becoming ill
  – Loosing your job and/or health insurance
  – Financial loss
  – Inability to provide for your family
  – Going to the grocery store
  – Not having necessities
  – Not being able to be there for the people you care about.
  – Fear for your participants, both in nursing homes and in the community

• Overwhelming sense of uncertainty
  – We live with uncertainty every day, but with COVID 19 the immense scale of the problem and the potential consequences can be overwhelming. There is so much we do not know.
Stress and Anxiety

**Positive Stress and anxiety**: both stress and anxiety can be normal and healthy reactions. At times stress and anxiety are our body’s way of protecting us from harm.

**Negative Chronic stress and anxiety** can be problematic and harmful
- Can interfere with everyday life
- Physical health issues
- Mental Health issues – depression, chronic anxiety, and emotional distress.
- Can lead to making poor or unhealthy choices we wouldn’t ordinarily make.

Pandemic = Stress and anxiety

Our “new normal”, the restrictions, our fears, the uncertainty, can lead to very high levels of stress and anxiety.

While it’s perfectly normal to experience feelings of stress and anxiety during a pandemic we should do everything we can to help manage our stress and lower our feeling of anxiety.
Lack of usual coping mechanisms

Compounding factors

– The inability to utilize usual coping mechanisms compounds these feelings
– Our go-to ways of reducing stress may not be available
– Lack of community and social supports may not be available
– Global nature of COVID 19
Grief

The COVID 19 crisis has led to a series of losses impacting us on multiple levels and various ways.

From profound personal loss, to professional loss, to systemic global loss, we are grieving.

- Personal loss - death of a family, friend or loved one, due to or during COVID 19
  - Lack of usual supports and rituals due to social distancing
    - No funerals, wakes or memorial gathering, hugs, or visits
    - Unable to say goodbye or be with a loved one at the time of their death
    - Not being able to be there for others
    - Others not being able to be there for you
Grief For Our Participants

• COVID 19: Nursing homes have been hit particularly hard
• Grief for participants who have died
• Participants who are now struggling with increased health issues due to the virus.
  – Grief for your participants who waited years for an apt in a certain building, only to get the call that they finally have the apt but can no longer move because of the situation and not knowing if the building will hold the apt.
• Grief over how this virus has changed your life
  – Graduations, birthday parties, showers, weddings, celebrations you’ve looked forward to for years are now being canceled, changed, or interrupted.
• Loss of Normalcy – loss of the world as we knew it. Loss of your lifestyle, routines, sense of peace and wellbeing.
Different Types of Grief

• Normal grief – the individual process of moving toward the acceptance of the loss.
• Collective Grief- felt by the whole country/world due to a shared experience of loss (9/11 terrorist attack, tsunami, death of princess Dianna) and now COVID 19.
• Delayed grief-when emotions related the death or the situation are postponed, or not experienced until a later time.
• Anticipatory Grief- grief you’re feeling before the actual loss.
• Disenfranchised grief- when someone experiences a loss but others do not acknowledge the importance of the loss in the person’s life.
• Cumulative grief – Multiple losses over a short period of time
• Masked Grief- Grief that comes out in the form of physical symptoms or behaviors that are out of character.
• Complicated grief- when grief becomes severe in length and significantly impairs the ability to function. Possible warning signs include self-destructive behavior, deep and persistent feels of guilt, low self-esteem, suicidal thought, violent outbursts, radical lifestyle changes.
• Others
Guilt

- Personal: Guilt over not doing it good enough. Parenting, home schooling, relationships, providing.
- As professionally, guilt over what was or was not done
  - Not being able to get participants out of the nursing home soon enough
  - Getting them out and then not being able to find or maintain reliable services or having services fall through
  - The “if onlys”.
- False sense of responsibility
  - False guilt can have a profound impact on our wellbeing.
- Survivors guilt - why them and not me?
- Guilt over possibly exposing others
- Guilt that you’re not feeling any of this. I am healthy, I have a job, I’m doing fine, why am I so upset???
Multilayered mixed and complicated barrage of feelings
Look out for these common signs of distress

- Some signs and symptoms that indicate emotional distress
  - Constant worry
  - Anger or short-temper.
  - Frequent bouts of crying
  - Feelings of restlessness, being on edge, jumpy, nervous, tense
  - 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.
  - Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Intensity and duration

- Signs we need to do something to address what we are feeling.
Mental Health, Substance Use Disorder, Physical Health Conditions

This is an especially difficult time for those with
• Preexisting physical health conditions
• Mental health conditions
• Substance use disorders or issues.

Make sure to
• Continue with your treatment plan
• Monitor for any new symptoms.
• Contact your providers as needed
• Additional information can be found at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration website.  
  https://www.samhsa.gov/coronavirus
Steps to emotional wellness

With so much uncertainty and lack of control it’s important to find, develop, and practice positive ways of coping.

Recognize and acknowledge the stressors you’re dealing with.

Don’t beat yourself up. There’s no right or wrong way to feel.

Coping mechanisms work differently for everyone. You need to try different possibilities and find out what works for you.

Identify your stressors, acknowledge the emotions you are experiencing, and work towards finding a healthy way to cope with those feelings.
Coping Techniques
Tips for Working Remoting

• Physical Space- Set up a defined work space
  – Make your workspace worker friendly
• Set boundaries.
  – Set the hours you’ll be working.
  – Only work during your work hours.
  – Make sure to take breaks and lunch
  – Write down what you want to get accomplished that day or keep a schedule
• Be flexible in needed (check your supervisor)
• Stay connected to your coworkers, email, call, video chat, weekly program calls
• Reach out to us here at NYAIL
Maintaining emotional wellness - Taking care of Yourself

- Take care of your body— Eat healthy well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep, take a shower and get dressed.
- Stay active. Walk, dance, move around the house, yard or neighborhood.
- **Connect with others**— Phone, Video Chat, Skype. Find ways to connect and support each other.
- **Distract yourself**— Not only from work but also from your responsibilities. Make time to unwind, relax, and rejuvenate. Find something you get lost in.
- **Come up with a happy plan**, something to take your mind off things, dance around the room, go for a walk, garden, grow a potted plant, something that rejuvenates you. Funny TV show, Music, art, gardening, plants, whatever lights you up.
- **Do something for yourself each and every day.** Something that is healthy, something you enjoy, and something that helps you to find peace.
More on Taking Care of Yourself

- Creativity: Adult coloring books, painting, collage, home projects,
- Give yourself a time out. If possible give yourself permission to take 30 minutes (or even 10 minutes) to step outside, go for a walk, checkout the daffodils, read a chapter in your book, listen to some music etc.
- Get accurate health information from reputable sources. For health information about COVID-19, please contact the Centers for Disease Control at cdc.gov, your local healthcare provider
- Unplug- limit media info, briefing, news, etc. Each person needs to find out how much information is optimal for them. No one should be glued to the news. Avoid too much exposure to news– Set a limit on media consumption, including social media, local or national news.
- Remember to have tolerance with yourself and others. People are often not their best selves during times of fear and chaos.
- Focus on what you can control.
Mindfulness-Relaxation

It’s harder for people to manage emotions during times of stress. Mindfulness techniques like deep breathing and relaxation really helps. You are regulating your breath and focusing your thoughts. Try it.

• guided imagery
• Meditation
• Guided Relaxation
• Journaling

Google these to find free resources to try
Allowing yourself to grieve

• Grief is a process, Grief is a journey not a road race.
• Grief is individualized and unique to you. No two people grieve exactly the same.
• Grief can trigger many different emotions. Grief is often compared to rollercoaster ride
• Kubler Ross and Kessler – 5 Stages of grief- Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance,
  – Additional stages –Hope, Reconstruction, Meaning,
  – Stages are not necessarily in order or definitive
• Seek out face to face or phone to phone support from people who care about you.
• Take care of yourself physically
• Utilize the techniques and suggestions previously discussed.
• Seek help if needed, counseling, support groups, physician, faith
Thank You For Your Contribution!!!

- Calling participants to make sure they’re okay
- Listening to people who are angry, upset, or scared
- Figuring out a way to get people what they need
- Agreeing to work from home and finding a way to make it work
- For staying safe
- For being there for your colleagues
- For reaching out when you need help and being there when others need help
- For all the care, understanding, and love you’ve shown to the people we serve and those we work with.
FREE Self-Care Activities

Free Self-Care Activities
• Below are just a few examples of free activities that can bring some beauty and joy into your day as part of your self-care practice.

• Yoga Practice: https://www.youtube.com/user/yogawithadriene/videos
• Fitness Workouts: https://www.fitnessblender.com/
• Insight Timer meditation app: https://insighttimer.com/meditation-app
• Stay Home, Take Care: https://www.stayhometakecare.com/
• Quarantine Chat: https://quarantinechat.com/
• NPR Tiny Desk concert series: https://www.npr.org/series/tiny-desk-concerts/
• Monterey Bay Aquarium Live Cam: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gHKDHmgVlU
• Nightly Livestreams from the Metropolitan Opera:
  – https://www.metopera.org/user-information/nightly-met-opera-streams/
• **NYS COVID-19 Emotional Support Hotline** at 1-844-863-9314 for mental health counseling. 8am – 10pm 7 days a week

• The national Disaster Distress Helpline is available to anyone experiencing emotional distress related to COVID-19. Call 1-800-985-5990 or text Talk With Us to 66746 to speak to a caring counselor.

• If you’re thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one, or would like emotional support, the Lifeline network is available 24/7 across the United States. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255

• National Domestic Violence Hotline: For anyone affected by abuse and needing support call 1800-799-7233. You are not alone.

• National Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline 1800-662-HELP (4357) [https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline)

• Local Hospice- In addition to end of life and palliative care services, Hospice is usually able to provide information about bereavement counseling and support groups in your area. DOH Local Hospice locator – [https://profiles.health.ny.gov/hospice/counties_served/](https://profiles.health.ny.gov/hospice/counties_served/)
Resources continued

• Check with your EAP- Employee assistance Program (if you have one). They can help to connect you to available resources.
• Reach out to your medical provider
• Check with your health plan. most plans offer mental health services like counseling.
• Laurie Carter Open Doors Social Work Coordinator lcarter@ilny.org
Questions?
Resources utilized for this presentation

- Hospice
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- American Psychiatric Association Foundation: Center for Workplace Mental Health
- National Association of Social Workers
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- American Psychological Association
- Harvard Review
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- World Health Organization: WHO
  [https://www.who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/COVID-19](https://www.who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/COVID-19)