Psychological First Aid

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Professor and Chair, Department of Psychiatry
Rutgers New Jersey Medical School

Project ECHO
Rutgers New Jersey Medical School

Newark, New Jersey
Friday, May 15, 2020
# THE PANDEMIC AND MENTAL HEALTH
ECHO Via Zoom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1: Friday May 15 12 noon to 1 pm</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Petros Levounis, MD, MA</td>
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<td>THE PANDEMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID</td>
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<td>✓ What are the essential skills for psychological and physical well-being that all of us could use in a crisis?</td>
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<td>✓ How do we motivate our patients—and ourselves—when everyone is feeling “blah”?</td>
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<td>✓ How do we keep people engaged in virtual treatments?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 2: Friday May 22 12 noon to 1 pm</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rashi Aggarwal, MD</td>
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<td>THE PANDEMIC AND LIFE IN THE FRONT LINES</td>
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<td>✓ What was it like fighting the pandemic in emergency rooms, intensive care units, inpatient psychiatric units, and nursing homes?</td>
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<td>✓ What are the “lessons learned” for our own wellness?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 3: Friday May 29 12 noon to 1 pm</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl Kennedy, MD</td>
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<td>THE PANDEMIC, CHILDREN, AND FAMILIES</td>
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<td>✓ Students seems particularly anxious, lonely, bored, and impulsive these days. What do we help them?</td>
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<td>✓ How can we best prepare as a family for school “re-entry”?</td>
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<th>Session 4: Friday June 5 12 noon to 1 pm</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Petros Levounis, MD, MA &amp; Guest Speaker</td>
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<td>AFTER THE PANDEMIC: REBUILDING AND RECOVERY</td>
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<td>✓ From excessive online shopping to overeating, we’ll all need a serious reboot after the pandemic. How do we go about it?</td>
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<td>✓ Do you have any advice for recent graduates entering the workforce? How about for people who lost their jobs due to COVID-19?</td>
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<td>✓ What are some resources for ongoing community rebuilding and people’s recovery from the crisis?</td>
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Register at: NJMS.Rutgers.edu/Psychiatry
Outline for Today

1. Psychological First Aid
2. Leadership

APPENDIX: Resources
1
Psychological First Aid
Responses to Disasters

- Change in sleep
- Irritability, distraction
- Isolation, avoidance
- Decreased sense of safety

- Smoking
- Alcohol
- Over dedication
- Change in travel
- Separation anxiety

- Depression
- PTSD
- Anxiety
- Complex Grief

Resilience

Distress Reactions

Psychiatric Disorders

Health Risk Behaviors
Coping with COVID-19

Take breaks from the news
Take care of your body
Make time to unwind
Connect with others
Set goals and priorities
Focus on the facts
The Five Major Principles

❖ Safety
❖ Calmness
❖ Self-Efficacy
❖ Connectedness
❖ Hope and Optimism

Psychological First Aid

Safety

✓ Establish safe areas and behaviors.
✓ Get accurate and updated information.
✓ Be safe, feel safe.

Adapted from: Uniformed Services University, Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, CSTSonline.org, 2020.
Psychological First Aid

Calmness

✓ Acknowledge/normalize distress reactions.
✓ Practice diaphragmatic breathing and muscle relaxation techniques.
✓ Limit exposure to traditional and social media as increased use enhances distress.

Adapted from: Uniformed Services University, Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, CSTSonline.org, 2020.
Psychological First Aid

Self-efficacy

✓ Safeguard and develop routines.
✓ Maximize physical health:
  - Nutrition
  - Sleep and rest
  - Sex
  - Exercise

Adapted from: Uniformed Services University, Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, CSTSonline.org, 2020.
Sleep Hygiene

1. **Schedule**: Stick to sleep time, even on weekends.
2. **Ritual**: Practice a relaxing bedtime ritual.
3. **Exercise**: Exercise daily.
4. **Substances**: Avoid sleep stealers (alcohol/caffeine).
5. **Environment**: Check temperature, sound, and light.
6. **Bedding**: Sleep on comfortable mattress & pillows.
7. **Electronics**: Turn off electronics before bed.
Psychological First Aid

Connectedness

✓ Promote collective self-efficacy.
✓ Use electronic media thoughtfully (and I fully recognize how unsatisfying and frustrating this recommendation is).

Adapted from: Uniformed Services University, Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, CSTSonline.org, 2020.
Psychological First Aid

Hope and Optimism

✓ While not denying risk.

Adapted from: Uniformed Services University, Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, CSTSonline.org, 2020.
COVID-19 & MENTAL HEALTH
DAILY STRATEGIES

- Work Space
- Routine
- Activity
- Time & Energy Management
- Accessibility
- Connectivity
- Resources
- Support
Leadership
The Yerkes-Dodson Law

Yerkes RM and Dodson JD, *Journal of Comparative Neurology and Psychology*, 1908.
The Five Major Requests

❖ Hear me
❖ Protect me
❖ Prepare me
❖ Support me
❖ Care for me
Qualities to Strive For

❖ Benign
❖ Kind
❖ Present
APPENDIX: Resources
Primary Resource

Psychiatry.org

ASAM.org
COVID-19
Psychological Support

for NJMS-UH-UPA faculty & staff who are experiencing stress, worry, or anxiety.

Rutgers NJMS Psychiatry has launched a telephone support service during these times of health crisis. If you need a call back to get support and guidance, please contact us at:

Stress.Anxiety@NJMS.Rutgers.edu
and leave your name, telephone number, and best time to call.

Also, all of us should continue working on minimizing viral transmission by hand washing, limiting human contact, and using gloves to care for those who are sick. For more resources, please visit our website:

NJMS.Rutgers.edu/Psychiatry
# COVID-19 MENTAL HEALTH ECHO
Via Zoom

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1: Friday April 17 12 noon to 1 pm</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Petros Levounis, MD, MA</td>
<td>COVID-19 AND MENTAL HEALTH</td>
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<td>✓ How do major psychiatric disorders present during the pandemic?</td>
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<td>✓ How do we reassure the “worried well”?</td>
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<td>✓ What are some guidelines for virtual evaluation and management of mental health?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clement Chen, PharmD, BCPS</td>
<td>COVID-19 AND ADDICTION TREATMENT</td>
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<td>✓ How do we deliver Medication Addiction Treatment (MAT) during the pandemic?</td>
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<td>✓ What are the regulatory changes that affect MAT?</td>
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<td>✓ Do we treat alcohol use disorder and other addictions differently during the pandemic?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rashi Aggarwal, MD</td>
<td>COVID-19 AND HEALTH CARE WORKERS</td>
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<td>✓ How do we address our own anxiety and grief?</td>
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<td>✓ What are some resources for community building and psychological support?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frank Ghinassi, PhD &amp; Petros Levounis, MD, MA</td>
<td>AFTER COVID-19: REBUILDING IN THE POST-PANDEMIC WORLD</td>
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<td>✓ What may be some of the long-lasting psychiatric effects of the pandemic?</td>
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<td>✓ What will be the role of telehealth?</td>
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<td>✓ What can we do now to prepare for the second half of 2020 and beyond?</td>
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Register at: NJMS.Rutgers.edu/Psychiatry
References

3. Dobkin J, Diaz C: Coronavirus statistics: tracking the epidemic in New York. Gothamist. Published online on April 19, 2020
5. Geller JL, Abi Zeid Daou M: Patients with serious mental illness in the age of COVID-19: what psychiatrists need to know. Psychiatric News. Published online on April 7, 2020
References (continued)


Thank you

NJMS.Rutgers.edu/Psychiatry