



Mental Health Treatment Approaches in a World With Covid: You Can Do It!

Katy Stratigos, M.D.

Medical Director, Triborough NYSTART
Child, adolescent, and adult psychiatry
Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry,
Columbia University Dept of Psychiatry

SNTI Presentation

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Outline

- Virtual sessions
 - Tips on doing clinical work virtually
 - Crisis sessions right now
- Psychological First Aid
 - Maslow's hierarchy of needs
 - Specifics for children
- Fears
- How to help the people we serve and their families
 - Schedule/routine
 - Activities
 - Answering questions
 - Just being there
- Post-covid
 - Psychopathology
 - Resilience

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Video Technology & Its Pluses

- Technology
 - Set expectations for quality of image/sound
- The frame- lighting, background, clothing, eye contact, gestures, sound, visitors, headphones, resting face
- Pluses- see people at home, meet family, see surroundings (clues), patients like it especially kids
 - Closest we get to home visits

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How to Work Clinically

- The process
 - Your focus, getting used to a screen
 - Forget you are on a screen and do what you normally do in outreaches
 - Structuring the family or support systems a bit
 - You need to talk a bit more, keep it going
 - Make your clinical observations, mental status exam etc.
 - Can have patient show you their tremor, gait, and some physical exam findings

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Psychological First Aid

- Preventative intervention to decrease rates of PTSD in a disaster
 - Goal to prevent later MDD, PTSD, EtOH use disorders
 - Evidence informed
 - Adopted by American Red Cross & Nat'l Center for PTSD
 - Start at base of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and work upwards

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Maslow's hierarchy of needs

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Psychological 1st Aid Components

- Provide for basic needs
- Protect from further harm
- Decrease agitation and arousal
 - Support those most in distress
- Give families social support
- Provide information, foster communication and education
- Orient to available services
- Use effective communication strategies
 - From presentation by Craig Katz, MD (Mt Sinai School of Medicine)

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Who Will You Help? Psychological First Aid

	Survivors	Bereaved	Responders	Economically impacted	Community at large
Safety & Physical Needs					
Medical Needs					
Mental Health Needs					
Psychosocial needs					

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Psychological First Aid for Kids

- Listen, Protect, & Connect
 - Listen- observe for signs, symptoms
 - Protect- prevent overexposure to trauma, protect from too much information
 - Connect- help kids reach out to friends, teachers, neighbors electronically

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Covid & Kids - Chinese Studies

- Increase in clinginess, distraction, irritability, & fear of asking questions about epidemic (2/2020)
- 3-6yo: clinginess, fear family will contract
- 6-18yo: inattention, persistent inquiry
- All ages: clinging, inattention, irritability
- In high epidemic areas, increased fear/anxiety in kids

(Jiao et al, 2020)

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Important Elements in Intervening During Mass Traumatic Events

- Promote a sense of safety
- Promote calming
- Promote a sense of self & collective efficacy
- Promote connectedness
- Promote hope

(Hobfoll 2007)

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Basics

- Have to start with basic needs
- Offering support is most important (oxygen)
 - 1st Fellow human - compassionate
 - 2nd health professional
 - 3rd mental health professional
- No empirical data on use of psychopharm in immediate aftermath
 - Clinically ativan (benzo) short term rec
 - » C Katz (Disaster Psychiatry Outreach)

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Fears

- Fear of illness
- Fear for older family members
- Fear of not seeing family members
- Fear of being alone/lonely
- Fear of going stir crazy
- Fear for their children if parents become ill
- Fear of being stuck in an apartment, a city, inside
- Fear of being in a shutdown city in crisis
- Fear not getting supplies (groceries)
- Fear of hospitals overwhelmed
- Fear about economy, lost jobs, unemployment
- Fear effects of school being closed
- Fear of not seeing friends
- Fear of being stuck at home with family, siblings
- Fear of being stuck in tight quarters, no space to quarantine
- Fear of losing job
- Fear of having work while having children at home
- Fear of future- unemployed, no money
- Fear of falling behind (students)

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Additional Fears- Essential Workers

- Fear for getting exposure/sick at work
- Fear for making own family sick
- Fear of taking public transportation
- Fear/stress about obtaining childcare
- Fear/guilt that cannot do enough
- Fear for losing one's job

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How Can Our Clinical Work Possibly Help Now?

- Giving structure and support
- Being available to check in
 - They are not alone
 - Most crises people come together, here they have to stay apart
 - Offer to have more frequent shorter sessions
- Assisting as bridge to care manager and medical and psychiatric providers

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Schedule/Routine

- Help individuals, families, and systems work on **schedules and routines**
 - Decreases anxiety
 - Increases predictability
 - Time goes by faster when we are occupied

- Plan for crises when coping overwhelmed
 - lack of structure, people being cooped up, want to go outside

COVID-19 DAILY SCHEDULE

Before 6:00am	Wake up	For treatment, wash your face, get dressed, get PVP-IV, brush teeth
6:00-10:00	Morning walk	Pack, walk with the dog, play in backyard
10:00-11:00	Academic time	NO ELECTRONICS Substn books, flash cards, study guides, journal
11:00-12:00	Creative time	Legos, magazines, coloring, cutting, play music, doodle or make art
12:00	Lunch	
12:30PM	Chore time	A. Take all dishes to sink and clean B. Wipe all floor surfaces, light switches and base coats C. Wash and mop floors, walls and ceiling
1:00-2:00	Quiet time	Reading, puzzles, nap
2:30-4:00	Academic time	ELECTRONICS ON Board games, Pictionary, Educational show
4:00-5:00	Afternoon fresh air	Bikes, Walk the dog, play outside
5:00-6:00	Dinner	
6:00-8:00	Free TV time	Full screen=off
8:00	Bedtime	All kids
9:30PM	Bedtime	All kids who follow the blue schedule & don't light

Crisis Sessions - Work on Schedule/Routine

- Make schedule with patient
 - Healthy habits
 - Exercise
 - What can you do in the apartment?
 - Dance, yoga, stretches
 - Cosmic kids yoga
 - Projects/Activities- long, slow ones
 - Structured around strengths, skills, and interests
 - Puzzles
 - Sensory – play dough, kinetic sand, water trays
 - Facetime sessions with friends/family
 - Help them map out the next month
 - Help them plan for new normal, even once things start to open

Covid Questions

- They will ask you and see you as medical expert, even if you don't feel like it
- What does quarantine actually mean?
 - Adult with recent hepatitis going to grocery store and having helper travel by subway to work for her
- Recommend limiting media exposure- being strategic about it
 - Traumatizing itself
 - Think dosage that is beneficial

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Activities---

- Puzzles
- Board games
- Clean closet
- Redecorate, reorganize- work on project you never have time for
- Play dough, kinetic sand, fidget toys
- Facetime get togethers
- Art projects, cooking
- Look outside
- Sit near a sunny window- some sun everyday if possible
- Youtube (e.g. guitar lessons, yoga lessons)
- Access virtual tours of museums, zoos, places online
- Monterrey Bay Aquarium webcams
- Free Coursera course (Yale course)- [Science of Wellbeing](#)

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How Are We All Doing?

- How can we use each other during this time?
- How can we stay in balance ourselves?
- How can we modulate our own fear and anxiety?
- How can we keep it positive?

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From CA-START

DAILY QUARANTINE QUESTIONS:

1. What am I **GRATEFUL** for today?
2. Who am I **CHECKING IN ON** or **CONNECTING WITH** today?
3. What expectations of "normal" am I **LETTING GO OF** today?
4. How am I **GETTING OUTSIDE** today?
5. How am I **MOVING MY BODY** today?
6. What **BEAUTY** am I either **CREATING**, **CULTIVATING**, or **INVITING** in today?

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Risk Factors for Post-Pandemic Psychopathology

- Dose of trauma, level of exposure to traumatic events
- Prior exposure to trauma
- Prior psychiatric history
- Problems in living prior to pandemic (e.g. poverty, overcrowded living condition, etc)
- Lack of perceived or actual social supports after pandemic
- Presence of "secondary stresses" (e.g. unemployed)
- Female
- Middle age
- Minority ethnic background
 - From presentation by Craig Katz, MD (Disaster Psychiatry Outreach)

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Sequencing

Early On / Now

- Psychological first aid
- Basic psychosocial health
- Our START work

As Time Goes On...

- Monitor for re-emergence of prior psychiatric symptoms
- Triage and referral for formal mental health treatments

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Planning for Post-Covid

- Increase need for mental health
- PTSD, depression, alcohol use disorders
 - In study of health care providers, post-SARS, very high rates of these

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Resilience

- Realistic optimism
- Facing fear
- Moral compass
- Spirituality
- Social support
- Resilient role models
- Physical fitness
- Cognitive/emotional flexibility
- Meaning and purpose
 - Research of Dennis Charney, MD (Mt Sinai School of Med)

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Nurturing Resilience in Kids - Suggestions for Families

- Increase communication with children to address their fears & concerns
- Play collaborative games to decrease loneliness
- Physical activities
- Music/singing to reduce worry/fear/stress
- Sleep hygiene
- Relaxation strategies
- Model positive attitude to decrease stress
- Distract attention toward more productive/positive activities

(Jiao et al., 2020)

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Thank You!

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