Child and Family Mental Health during the Pandemic

Mental Stress: A Covid Crisis

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What You Should Know About “Spanish” Influenza

Read very carefully and talk over these matters at home.

KEEP FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE THE DISEASE.

The following signs or symptoms are usually present: fatigue; fever; headache, especially over the eyes; feeling of a cold in the head; in addition there may be uneasiness; chilliness; aching of the joints, back or limbs; the eyes may water or become bloodshot; vomiting or diarrhea.

TREATMENT—SEND FOR A PHYSICIAN AT ONCE

While waiting for the doctor to come observe the following directions:

Take castor oil, citrate of magnesia or some other physic at the start of the symptoms.

Soak the feet in hot mustard water for ten minutes, using one tablespoonful of mustard in two gallons of water.

Drink a large cupful of hot lemonade; then go promptly to bed. Keep well covered and stay there for at least two days after the fever, which usually subsides on the fourth or fifth day, has disappeared.

Keep the sick room well ventilated.

AVOID PATENT MEDICINES.

PRECAUTIONS THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE.

Wash the face and hands before eating.

Gargle the throat with salt and water, using one-quarter of a teaspoonful of salt dissolved in a cup of water.

Use a clean handkerchief each day; each soiled handkerchief should be boiled in hot water and soap. Do not handle the handkerchief belonging to another person.

Do not sleep in the same room with a sick person.

Do not use the same knife, spoon, fork, or dish that has been used by another person unless it has been thoroughly washed in hot water. Avoid restaurants and soda water fountains where glasses and spoons are not washed in boiling water.

HOLD A HANDKERCHIEF OVER THE MOUTH WHILE SNEEZING OR COUGHING.

Do not spit on the sidewalk or floor.

Do not apply the mouth to the mouthpiece of the telephone.

Do not go into a room occupied by a person sick with influenza.

Get plenty of fresh air, but avoid drafts.

Avoid gatherings such as parties, moving picture shows, and similar assemblies.

Parents should avoid kissing children. Influenza may be transmitted by this method.

William L. Ettinger,
Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Royal S. Copeland,
Commissioner of Health.
Children’s responses to other crises

• Many children have no major emotional or behavioral changes
• Having some changes in emotional or behavioral changes is common
  • Most of these are not signs of bigger problems
  • Some (usually a minority) develop mental health problems
• Parents and teachers play an important role in children’s responses to crises.... And adults don’t need to be perfect
Possible silver linings for some families

Decreased academic or social stress
More family time
More unstructured time
Opportunities to be successful at new activities
Mobilization to address impacts of pandemic or injustices

Recipe for Resilience: Exposure to stressor with adequate social support or internal resources
## Developmental responses to crisis

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Infants</th>
<th>Preschoolers</th>
<th>School age children</th>
<th>Adolescent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sleep problems</td>
<td>Magical thinking</td>
<td>Focus on fairness and</td>
<td>Concerns about injustice</td>
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<td>More difficulty soothing</td>
<td>Development regressions</td>
<td>right and wrong</td>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eating changes</td>
<td>More clinginess</td>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>Fatigue</td>
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<td></td>
<td>More tantrums &amp; mood changes</td>
<td>Anger, aggression</td>
<td>Irritability</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Focus on death/dying</td>
<td>Physical symptoms</td>
<td>Suicidal thoughts</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Focus on death or suicide</td>
<td>Health risks including</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>substance use</td>
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### Sleep changes
-梦变化

### Eating changes
-饮食变化

### Mood changes
-情绪变化
What do we know about child mental health long term post-disaster?

Most child mental health needs are unmet after disasters in large part.

Symptoms can persist over years and can interfere with all aspects of development.

Sprang 2013; e.g., Fujiwara 2013
So far, what do we know about 2020-2021?

The protective systems for child mental health are weakening.

**Access to basic needs**
- 1 in 5 families are experiencing food insecurity

**Caregiver wellbeing**
- % of adults in child bearing years reported suicidal thoughts in June 2020
- Increased reports of calls to domestic violence lines

**Schools monitoring children’s safety**
- Schools usually report 20% cases of child abuse

**Powerful disparities in impact**

Czeisler 2020; DHHS 2019; Goyal 2020
What do we know about children’s mental health?

Outcomes are associated with timing, status of pandemic, mental health access

- Increases in emergency room visits for mental health, substance use, child abuse
- Some children are doing better
- Return to school is not a panacea

Delayed effects are likely

Hill 2020; Zhou 2020; Liang 2020; Ogiles 2020; Holland 2021; Patrick 2020; Thompson 2020; Cercer 2020; Holland 202
What else do we know about children’s mental health during COVID-19?

Resilience factors

- Maintaining family routines
- Receiving mental health treatment
- (Less caregiver stress)

Zhang 2020; Penner 2020; Prakash 2020; Glynn 2021
It takes a village
For all of us

Accept help!
Take care of physical & emotional needs
Stay connected
Be gentle to yourself and others

Professionals:
  ◦ Monitor for burn out
## Examples of Apps for Adolescents and Adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>App</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Elements of Evidence-based approaches</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mindshift</td>
<td>Anxiety and depression app; free</td>
<td>- Practice relaxation strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breath2</td>
<td>Breathing exercises; free</td>
<td>- Pay attention to feeling state and stress (sometimes measuring it)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relax</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Noticing unhelpful thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBT-I</td>
<td>Evidence-based insomnia app; free</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Teaching Relaxation

- Blowing bubbles
- “Smell the Flowers”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3HjqIg25Mc
Parents and Educators: Keep Life Predictable and Safe

- COVID precautions
- Maintain realistic and consistent expectations
- Maintain (family) routines
- Support connectedness
- Monitor screen time esp news & social media
Parents and Educators: Acknowledge Life Is Different

Share developmentally manageable information

Talk about feelings

Break up the monotony

Create opportunities to have control over life

Praise the efforts and accomplishments
Everyone

Relationships are the key to mental health
Protecting the Ingredients For Child Mental Health

Safety
Basic needs being met
Caregiver well-being
Child and parent access to health services
Integrating coping strategies into education
Justice
When there might be concerns

**WHAT TO LOOK FOR?**

- Not participating in family, school, social activities or responsibilities
- Significant changes in eating, sleeping, concentration
- Persistent mood changes (irritable, sadness)
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide
- Drinking, using drugs
- Self-injurious behaviors

**WHAT TO DO?**

- Talk about it!
- Expand the team
- Ask for help
- Minimize risk (firearms, lethal medications)
Crisis Resources

**Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
- Teléfono: 1-800-273-TALK
- Sitio web: www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- HealthyPlace.com

**Red Nacional de Prevención del Suicidio**
- Teléfono: 1-888-628-9454
- Sitio web: prevenciondelsuicidio.org

**Trevor Project**
- Teléfono: 1-866-488-7386

**Crisis Text Line**
- Mensaje: HELLO
- Teléfono: 741741
- Libre, 24/7, Confidencial
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<th>Resources for teachers and parents</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nctsn.org</strong></td>
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<td>◦ Specific handouts related to COVID and trauma-informed schools</td>
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<td><strong>SAMHSA.gov</strong></td>
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<td>◦ “Tips for talking to children....” after disasters</td>
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<td><strong>AAP- healthychildren.org</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>◦ Audio, English, and Spanish</td>
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<td>◦ 2019 Summary of health effects of racism on children</td>
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<td><strong>PBSkids.org</strong></td>
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<td>◦ When something scary happens” resources</td>
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<td>◦ Belly breathing with Cookie Monster</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sesame Street</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>◦ Episodes</td>
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<td>◦ Emergency kit</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wide Open School</strong></td>
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<td>Activities to support emotional wellness in the classroom</td>
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Community Service Boards
  ◦ Specific for each county

Emergency Services
  ◦ Children’s Hospital of the King’s Daughters

Sarah Michelle Peterson Foundation
  ◦ https://www.sarahmpetersonfoundation.org/index.php/virtual-programs/

Chas Foundation
  ◦ https://thechasfoundation.org/mental-health-resources/
Summary

No one is immune from the life changing events of 2020-21

The events of 2020-2021 put some children at higher risk for mental health problems

Parents, educators, and the greater community can all play a role in protecting children’s mental health