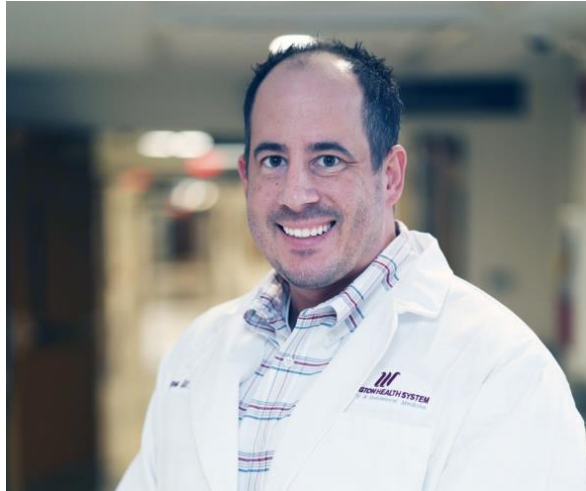




WASHINGTON HEALTH SYSTEM
Center for Mental Health and Wellbeing

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



How to deal with the emotional fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic

It's been a tough year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on every aspect of most people's lives and dealing with the fallout has been emotional, overwhelming and stressful. Even though restrictions on business capacities, social distancing and mask wearing are being lifted, society is still dealing with the emotional and mental repercussions of all that transpired over the past year.

Even getting back to "normal" is giving some people anxiety as they once again get used to being around people and wonder about their safety and well-being.

It's no surprise then that doctors and mental health professionals have seen an uptick in patients this past year with concerns such as stress, anxiety and other mental health issues.

Each May, health care officials from across the medical spectrum join with National Alliance on Mental Illness to spread awareness as part of Mental Health Awareness Month.

To read the full article, please continue through this newsletter or visit: https://observer-reporter.com/living/how-to-deal-with-the-emotional-fallout-of-the-covid-19-pandemic/article_a656f50c-be28-11eb-bc48-a3abd5efa6b5.amp.htm.

June
2021

DID YOU
KNOW



Interesting
Facts About
Mental
Health:

Did you know?
70-90% of people who seek proper treatment from mental health disorders witness a significant reduction in symptoms.

Did you know?
Most people living with mental illness lead productive lives despite their challenges.

To learn more interesting facts about mental health, please visit:
<https://dworakpeck.usc.edu/news/15-mental-health-facts-you-should-know>

Article continued: How to deal with the emotional fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic

Dr. Bryan W Lockmer, practicing psychiatrist for the Washington Health System, said while numbers were not too much of a concern early on, that all changed as the pandemic lingered.

“There was general COVID stress syndrome given the novel nature of the pathogen and general unknown regarding spread and contamination,” Lockmer said. “Many people are now dealing with the stresses of being furloughed from their job and new roles/responsibilities. This may include the conversion of employment to being 100% remote while also now fulfilling that of being a ‘teacher’ of young children that are not able to return to in-classroom instruction given restrictions.”

Lockmer said some people have also experienced stress, fear and isolation from being in quarantine.

“For example, some experts speak of a ‘forced introspection’ where people are forced to think about their careers and decisions they have made throughout their life that they may no longer align with,” he said.

‘Emerging anxiety’

Many people are experiencing fear and anxiety about re-emerging into their social and work lives.

Some say they got so used to being at home alone and isolated that the thought of being around large groups of people again is stressful.

“As many have been fortunate to work from home for the last year, this has also fostered a new norm, so to speak,” Lockmer said. “Hence, with a new change of routine, it’s natural for some hesitation to exist with yet another adjustment.”

Some people are referring to their symptoms as, “Cage Syndrome” or “Emerging Anxiety” citing anxiety, fear and hesitation over leaving their home after such a long time, Lockmer said.

“The media has also amplified messaging of public health with the impression that home is the ‘safest’ environment for people during the pandemic,” he added. “Given such, it’s not unreasonable that many do have fear of an ongoing threat contributing to further anxiety, worry and apprehension.”

“I do feel it is important to emphasize that many have anticipatory anxiety for various reasons and it is completely normal,” he said. “This will diminish and those that experience emerging anxiety just need to be patient with themselves.”

2021 Mental Health Awareness Calendar

Month

LGBTQ Pride Month

Men’s Mental Health Month

PTSD Awareness Month

Week

National Men’s Health Week

(June 14-20)

Day

World Blood Donor Day (Jun. 14)

International Day of Yoga (Jun. 21)

PTSD Awareness Day (Jun. 27)

To learn more visit: <https://sacwellness.com/mental-health-awareness-calendar/>

Article continued: How to deal with the emotional fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic

Lockmer said one area where this could pose some difficulty is with returning to in-person work.

“Employers should also be mindful of a stepwise approach with the integration of those in the workplace once again,” said Lockmer, who recommends providing mental health days, creating flexibility in scheduling and offering continued manager support. “It is also important to stress the benefits of returning to a communal environment mainly for the benefits of social interaction and regaining a sense of camaraderie that may have been missing in the remote setting.”

Where to turn for help

Whether it’s grieving the loss of a loved one, worrying about finances and loss of employment or feeling alone, stressed or overwhelmed, it’s critical for anyone to talk with someone about their feelings. Friends and family can be the first step or a family doctor.

Family physicians are trained to handle most basic mental health concerns and can help find resources.

“It’s important to identify someone you regularly confide in and express your concerns, mainly as a form of support,” Lockmer said. “Typically, a workplace will have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that can facilitate referral to a psychiatrist or therapist. Also, your primary care physician is a great first step for discussing your challenges.”

Technology is also playing an interesting role in helping patients connect with mental health providers and many offer virtual appointments via smartphone or your computer rather than requiring an in-person appointment.

Self-care can help

Lockmer provided a few tips that can help anyone start to recover from everything they have experienced during the pandemic. Part of that starts with our daily routine.

“Continue to keep a good work/life balance and maintain a good daily routine,” he said. “Practice mindfulness and live in the present moment. This may include regularly scheduled exercise or other hobbies you may enjoy. It’s important to continue to participate regularly and have some semblance of a schedule.”

Lockmer also recommended people should stay connected and interact with those who are important in their lives whether it’s in person or – if they are still uncomfortable with that – virtually via phone, social media or video chats.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Facts:

*Approximately 40,000 military members who have returned from Iraq or Afghanistan have been officially diagnosed with PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder) since 2003, according to the U.S. Department of Defense. PTSD by the numbers.

*67 percent of people exposed to mass violence have been shown to develop PTSD, at a higher rate than those exposed to natural disasters or other types of traumatic events. 7.7 million Americans age 18 and older have PTSD.

*Traumatic events that can trigger PTSD include violent personal assaults such as rape or mugging, natural or human-caused disasters, accidents, or military combat. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal in which grave physical harm occurred or was threatened.

To learn more interesting facts about mental health, please visit:

<https://www.mentalhelp.net/ptsd/facts/>



Dear Valued Referral Source,

We would like to say THANK YOU for your continued referrals and ongoing recommendations for our Washington Health System Center for Mental Health and Wellbeing. Your referrals and recommendations are taken sincerely. Thank you for trusting us with your patients, family and friends.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Campbell, MSW, LSW

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WHS Center for Mental Health & Wellbeing



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Outpatient Behavioral Health	Washington P: 724-579-1075	95 Leonard Ave Building #1, Suite 301 Washington, PA 15301

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Jennifer Campbell, MSW, LSW – Program Manager Inpatient & Outpatient Services	P: 724-627-2526
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Greene County Crisis Line: 1-800-417-9460
Washington County 24-Hour Crisis Hotline: 1-877-225-3567
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
Greenbriar Treatment Facility: 1-800-637-4673
STTARS Sexual Assault Hotline (Greene & Washington): 1-888-480-7283