COVID-19: The Mental Health Effects in Aging Care

April 29, 2020
Objectives

— Assess for changes in condition and evaluate ways to monitor for changes in behavioral/mental health

— Identify strategies for assessing and addressing residents’ emotional health and the supports they may need to manage stress and isolation

— Describe practical tips for effectively providing support services provided by health care and community-based organizations (e.g., telemedicine, video chats, etc.) for diagnosing and treating the mental health symptoms

— Incorporate strategies for managing the mental health care needs of residents and staff in this time of social distancing
Impact of COVID-19 on All

**BURNOUT**
A human response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stress at work signaled by exhaustion, cynicism, and work inefficacy.

**GRIEF**
Normal and natural emotional reaction to loss or change of any kind

**COMPASSION FATIGUE**
The resulting exhaustion from constant exposure to the same stressor leading to decreased compassion or empathy for others.
COVI D-19 Vs. Mental Health Symptoms

- Having stomach aches or diarrhea
- Having headaches and other pains
- Loss of appetite or over eating
- Sweating or having chills
- Getting tremors or muscle twitches
DEPRESSION

Self Isolation

Neglecting personal care

Change in appetite

Sleeping pattern changes

Tearful, sad, angry outburst
Screening and Assessment Tools

- PHQ-2: Patient Health Questionnaire
- PHQ-9: Patient Health Questionnaire
- GAD-7: General Anxiety Disorder
- PTSD-5: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Columbia Suicide Severity Scale

Reference Based on Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) Developed by Drs. Robert L. Spitzer, Janet B.W. Williams, Kurt Kroenke, and colleagues, with an educational grant from Pfizer Inc. No permission required to reproduce, translate, display, or distribute.
Poll
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes</th>
<th>Behavioral Changes</th>
<th>Emotional Changes</th>
<th>Thinking Changes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blaming, Difficulty communicating, Inability to feel pleasure or fun, Increase use of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs</td>
<td>Anxiety, depression, guilt, anger, sad, overwhelmed, non caring, insomnia, scared, unsafe</td>
<td>Loss of memory, Confusion, Poor concentration</td>
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Mitigate Suicide Risk

According to 2018 data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and reported by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, adults in the 75-84 and 85+ age groups are among those with the highest rates of suicide.

- Clear care pathways for those who are suicidal
- Staff training to support new ways of working
- Providing easily accessible grief counseling for those who have lost a loved one to the virus
- Dissemination of evidence-based online interventions
- Use of mental health helplines
Support for Diagnosing and Treating Depression

1:1 time with staff everyday just to have residents talk about what they are feeling.

Technology and the availability of, will be key in reducing loneliness and depression.

Provide staff with education on removing risks and making resident environment safe if they are feeling alone.

Reach out to local Senior Services for virtual volunteer visits.

Provide hotline numbers in each resident room for easy access.
Telemedicine Availability for Assessment and Treatment

- Mental Health Hotlines
- Virtual Visits with Family and Other Residents
- Suicide Risk Highest at Night
- Increase Diligence and Awareness
- Remove Environmental Risks

Suicide Risk Highest at Night

Mental Health Hotlines

Virtual Visits with Family and Other Residents

Increase Diligence and Awareness

Remove Environmental Risks
Poll
Tips for Easing Loneliness Through Connection

**Connection to Community**
- Resident to Resident visits
- Virtual Volunteer visit
- Staff visits

**Connection to Outside Community**
- Access museums, nature parks and other entertainment
- Virtual religious services

**Connection to Family and Friends**
- Virtual visits with technology
- Telephone calls
- Letters

**Exercise**
- Physical
- Breathing
- Visualization/Mindfulness
Alterations to New Norm

- Consistent Daily Routine
- Time for Processing and Self Reflection
- Physical and Cognitive Exercises
- Resident Participation in Planning
- Group Activities w/ Physical Distancing
- Mindfulness and Meditation
- Religion and Spirituality

Mindfulness and Meditation

Physical and Cognitive Exercises

Resident Participation in Planning

Group Activities w/ Physical Distancing

Time for Processing and Self Reflection

Consistent Daily Routine

Religion and Spirituality
What are some other creative practices you are using to connect with residents?
Promoting Well-being for Self

— Self-monitoring and pacing
— Regular check-ins with colleagues, family, and friends
— Limiting news outlet contact
— Brief relaxation/stress management breaks
— Regular peer consultation and supervision
— Acceptance of situations they cannot change

— Regularly seeking out accurate information and mentoring to assist in making decisions
— Keeping anxieties conscribed to actual threats
— Practice helpful self-talk and avoid overgeneralizing fears
— Focusing their efforts on what is within their power
— Fostering a spirit of fortitude, patience, tolerance, and hope
Leadership’s Role in Staff Well-Being

— Offer assistance programs (EAP) resources (if available) and community resources that may help staff navigate emotional and financial stressors

— Implement flexible sick leave and support policies and practices

— Any communication should balance optimism and compassion with the real facts and data that helps inform decision making

— Leaders should create 1:1 check-ins with each team member

— Operate with higher levels of compassion, kindness and space for listening

— Include ALL levels of employee status in communication, compassion and safety

— Be available
Questions
Available Resources

— **Psychological First Aid**

— Friendship Line (Institute on Aging): 1-800-971-0016

— **WHO: Depression Older Adults**

— **Museums From Around the World That You Can Visit Virtually | Travel + Leisure | Travel + Leisure**

— **Shelter In Place Resources for Seniors | Comfort Keepers**
More Information on COVID-19 Responses

— ACL Resources for older adults, providers, communities, and states

— SAMHSA Resources to assist individuals, providers, communities, and states

— VA Resources, including What Veterans Need to Know and Maintaining Your Mental Health and Well-Being
References

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