

Welcome!

**We'll begin shortly,
but first, a few reminders:**

- If you are experiencing audio or video difficulties, refresh your browser or open a new session.
- Use **Google Chrome**, if possible, for a better overall experience.
- Use the **Q&A box** to ask questions anytime during today's webcast (lower left of your console.)



Mental Health in Uncertain Times:

Strategies to manage stress, anxiety, and fear

**Thursday, November 19, 2020
3:00 – 4:00 pm CST**

Webinar

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Today's session qualifies for one professional development credit with SHRM and HRCI

Important:

We will provide you with the SHRM and HRCI codes at the end of today's session.



Our Speakers



Brian L. Mayhugh, PhD
Chief Clinical Officer



**Ellen Contente, DSS, MA, RSCP,
NSA**



Today's Topics

- 1 Emotional Responses
- 2 Overcoming Panic, Defining Stress and Fears
- 3 Healthy Strategies
- 4 Helping Employees, Additional Resources



Emotional Responses

Shock	Feeling Numb
Confusion	Feeling Lost
Anxiety	Feeling Anxious
Fear	Feeling Scared
Anger	Feeling Outrage
Denial	Feeling Helpless
Depression	Feeling Overwhelmed



Overcoming Panic

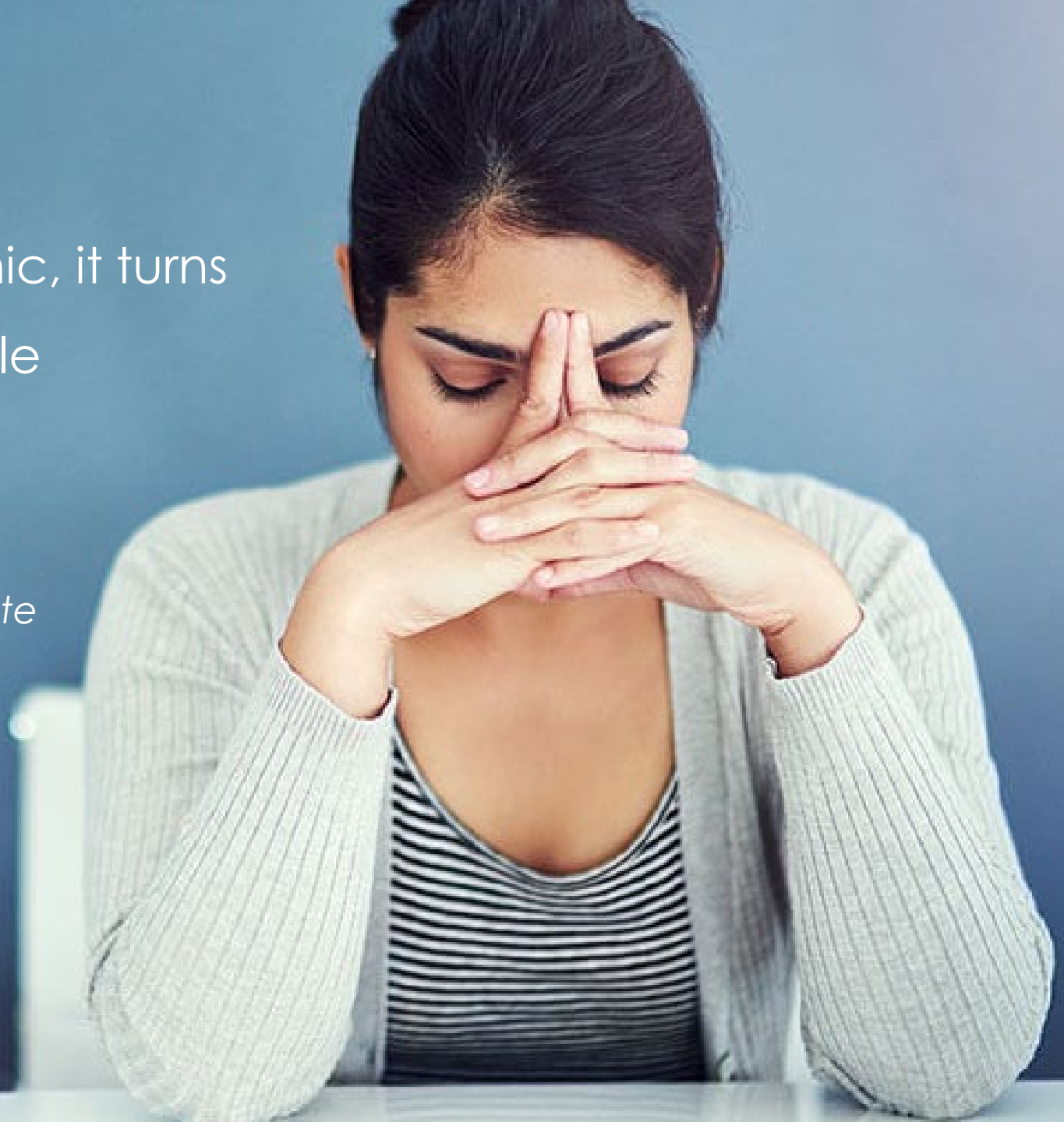
- Focus on facts not fearful communication
- Pay attention to evidence, not hysteria
- Remember supplies are replenished
- Maintain a positive outlook
- Practice social/physical distancing & 'stay at home' orders
- Reach out for support, talk with family and friends
- Utilize your EAP and healthcare resources



STRESS

“When stress becomes chronic, it turns into distress. It creates a hostile environment in your body.”

Susan B. Johnson, Ed.D., Cooper Institute



Defining Stress

- Normal psychological and physical reactions to life's demands
- Feeling overloaded or overwhelmed
- Body's natural defense against danger. Flushes the body with hormones to prepare systems to evade or confront danger – “fight or flight or freeze” mechanism
- Stress can be mild to extreme depending on the person and situation
- Stress is cumulative; the more stress we experience, the more stressed we tend to feel
- Stress is personal to the individual
- Adrenaline and Cortisol surge in body causing negative health consequences



Physical Signs of Stress

- Clenching or grinding teeth
- Headaches
- Tight shoulders/neck
- Gastrointestinal difficulties
- Sleep troubles, disturbing dreams
- Aches and pains
- Elevated heart rate
- Sweating
- Frequent colds or sickness
- Change in appetite
- Heartburn or nausea
- Nervous habits, fidgeting, feet tapping
- Difficulty focusing or concentrating
- Difficulty calming down
- Low energy/exhaustion

Steps to Manage Stress

1. Awareness: Recognize signs of stress.

PAY ATTENTION to your body, mind and spirit.

2. Identify: What triggered your stress.

Is it something you can control or is it out of your control?

3. Action: What you're willing to do to alleviate your stress.

What kind of help or action do you need?



Identify Your Pressing Fears

- Thinking about what might happen
- Creating a catastrophic future
- Doubting resilience and ability to cope

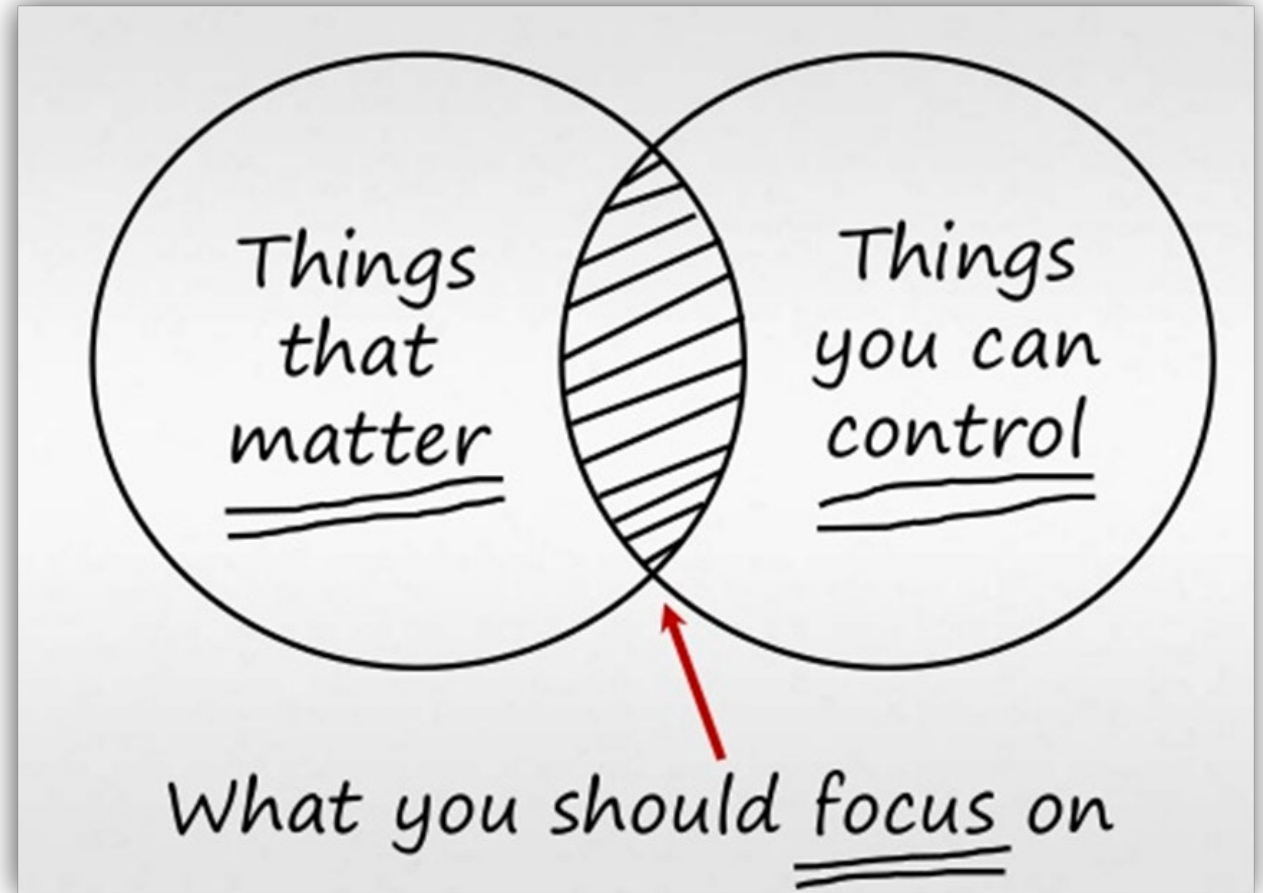
Strategies:

1. Face your 'Worst Case Scenario'
2. Look for 'Silver Linings'
3. Turn Fear into H.O.P.E.- Having Only Positive Expectations
4. Focus on what's in your control



Within Your Control

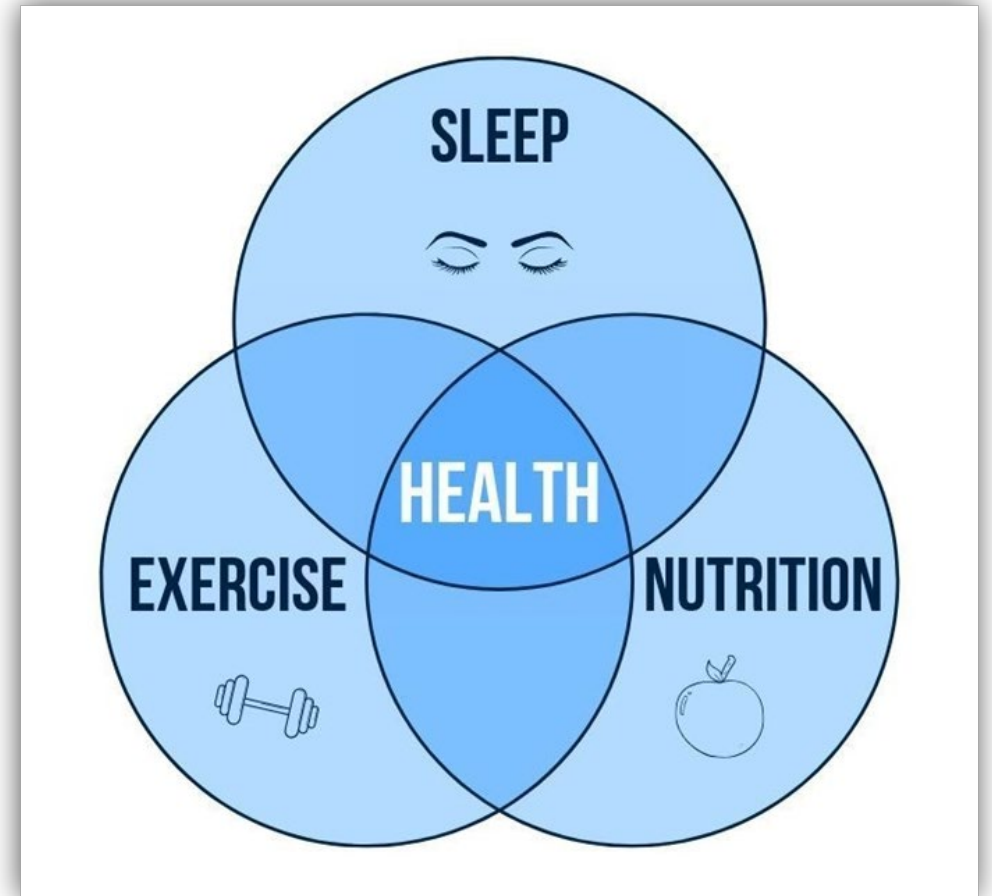
- Effort and work ethic
- Honesty and integrity
- Your attitude
- Mindset
- What you say, do, and think
- Offering and receiving help



Pillars of Self-Care

These pillars of life are often where our stress shows up – e.g. eating too much, not sleeping enough, not exercising. They are also your *first line of defense*. Focus on these most basic elements of self-care when stressed:

- **Food**
- **Exercise**
- **Sleep**



Self-Care Strategies

- Acknowledge your situation
- Keep things in perspective
- Set realistic expectations
- Focus on '3 Pillars of Health'
- Use stress-management techniques
 - Deep breathing
 - Progressive relaxation
 - Guided imagery
 - Gratitude



Relaxation Techniques

Harvard Medical School published a list of six relaxation techniques that can help reduce stress:

1. **Breath focus:** Take long, slow, deep breaths and gently disengage your mind from distracting thoughts and sensations. Focus on the sensation of air going in and out of your nose.
2. **Body scan:** Breath focus combined with progressive muscle relaxation. Focus on one part of the body at a time, releasing physical tension. Improves awareness of mind-body connection.
3. **Guided imagery:** Conjure up soothing scenes, places or experiences to help you relax and focus.
4. **Mindfulness Meditation:** Sit comfortably, focusing on breathing and bring your attention to the present moment, without drifting into the past or future. This technique has become increasingly popular in recent years. Research suggests it may be helpful for people with anxiety, depression and pain.
5. **Yoga, tai chi and qigong:** Three ancient practices combine breathing with physical movement. Physical postures can distract from mental clutter.
6. **Repetitive prayer/mantra:** Silently repeat a short prayer or phrase while practicing breath focus.

Helping Others Cope

- Talk openly and honestly
- Acknowledge their concerns
- Give them reassurance
- Model good coping skills within yourself
- Moderate and monitor TV and social media
- Maintain normal schedules and routines within your home
- Encourage positive activities, games and play
- Give children some control (games, clothes, food)
- Be of service to others



Employees Resources

Helping maintain work-life balance,
today and through this next phase.



Keeping Employees Engaged

No more than ever, company leaders need to demonstrate a strong presence

We are in this together

- Reinforce concern for well-being
- Address immediate concerns
- Value contributions of all employees
- Implement new ways to stay connected



What You Can Do for Employees

- **Help lessen anxiety**

Provide only credible sources of information to employees such as WHO and CDC.

- **Reduce feelings of uncertainty**

Make sure all employees are aware of sick leave and work from home policies, and your organizations disaster preparedness plan.

- **Take time to offer encouragement and support**

With so many people suddenly isolated and working remotely, it is important for managers to acknowledge stress, listen to anxieties and concerns, and empathize with employees' challenges.

- **Create a sense of community**

Provide a few minutes at the beginning of team meetings for remote social interaction.



Company Culture

Vision and Mission – Past and Present

Tough Times = Opportunities

Messaging from the Top of the House



Ethos: We Care About You

Reinforce a set of beliefs that everyone can live by

- Values and vision of the company/organization
- Employee role in achieving the company's vision
- Employee good health and welfare = company success
- Align company success with employee aspirations
- Frequent communications help offset anxiety, fear, confusion
- Emphasize safety/health of employees and their families
- **Sincere caring about employees = commitment and**



Help employees be their best

A positive focus on mental health and wellbeing

Remember that asking the question does **not** mean solving their problem. It means getting someone to the right resources.



Promote a community so employees take care of themselves

- It's ok to “clock out” at the end of workday
- Take a PTO day if needed to recharge
- Create conversations on topics that have a stigma
- Use phone calls and video to stay connected
- Increase ‘permission’ to manage their priorities
- Don't micro-mange -- have confidence in your team
- Remind employee again that it's ok to speak up



Helpful resources

- Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)
- Professional development network
- Learning systems
- Executive coaches
- Professional memberships
- Community resources



Nationwide Resources at No Cost

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- Support through an online chat called Lifeline Chat
- Call 800-273-8255

The Crisis Text Line

- Connect to a crisis counselor by text message
- Text “Home” to 741741

Veterans Crisis Line

- Service available to all veterans
- Call 800-273-8255, press 1
- Text to 838255

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)

- Supports and educates those affected by mental illness
- <https://www.nami.org/contact-us>
- Call 800-950-6264

Phone Apps

- Calm
- Headspace
- The Mindfulness App
- 10% Happier
- & Many More!



Workplace-Specific Resources

Medical Insurance Carrier Resources

(Depends on Carrier)

Mindfulness Programs

Stress Management Apps

Behavioral Health Telemedicine

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Either through Ancillary Benefit Coverage (at no cost to ER) or Stand Alone EAP Partner (Per Eligible Per Month Pricing)

Unlimited 24/7 Telephonic Accessibility Potentially with Face-to-Face Visits (Plans Vary)

Work/Life Referrals, Financial, Legal and Emotional Support Services

Available to household family members



Remember an EAP can help

For employees

- Health, diet, wellness
- Self-assessments
- Emotions/behaviors
- Relationships
- Childcare/Eldercare services

For employers/HR managers

- Mental health workplace consultations
- Problem employees
- Workforce productivity
- Crisis management



Summary

- Help employees be their best
- Take time to listen
- Offer support and resources
- Create a positive culture





Questions?



Thank you