

The Hidden Impact of COVID on Care Givers

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Understanding Trauma

- Universal Trauma
 - Domestic Terrorism
 - Physical, Emotional, Sexual Abuse
 - Rape
 - Domestic Violence
 - Natural Disaster
 - Pandemic
- Trauma is a matter of interpretation
 - What is traumatic for one is not traumatic for another
 - Can manifest in strange ways and at strange times
 - Triggers

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Understanding Trauma

- Repeated Trauma Exposure
 - Police
 - Fire Fighters
 - First Responders
 - ER Nurses
 - COVID Healthcare Partners
- Can desensitize
- Requires someone other than that individual to recognize changes at times

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Understanding Trauma

- Trauma is a physiological response
 - Increased heart rate
 - Increased breathing
 - Results in feelings of anxiety and panic
- Often times seen as an over response to a stimuli
- When not dealt with properly
 - Health suffers
 - Mental health suffers
 - Relationships suffer
 - Self-care suffers

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COVID & Trauma

- Coping skills
- How long to prepare
- How severe the outcome
- Trauma results in feeling out of control
- Differing opinions on how to take control back
- Unknown disease process
- Still learning and changing protocols

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COVID & Trauma

- Initial response is usually panic and shock
- Now we have moved some beyond this
- Recognize the triggers
- Organization explain this to staff – certain things may trigger you to be overwhelmed

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Trauma & Physiology

- Slow Breathing and Heartrate
 - Dragon breathes
 - Count to 10 in and out
 - Drumming
 - Music
- Destress before and after being a Care Partner
 - Sit on front porch
 - Sit in car for 5 minutes before or after
 - Have favorite songs on stand by
 - Exercise
 - Preplan a phone call
 - Laugh

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Trauma & Physiology

- Post a key phrase or mantra
 - Scripture
 - I am enough
 - I did my best with what I could control
- Recognize what can be controlled
 - Focus on what we can control – attitude, prepare as best we can – supplies
 - Avoid overgeneralizing fears and concerns – snowball rolling downhill

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Trauma & Physiology

- Recognize negative coping strategies with trauma
 - Too busy
 - Not talking about what bothers/concerns you
 - Alcohol
 - Viewing caring for others as more important than self-care
 - Oxygen masks
 - Know that there will be times we are overwhelmed so preplan coping strategy
 - Buddy system to recognize when we are overwhelmed or not dealing well
 - Inner conflict over competing demands

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Stanford Study

- Interviewed Direct Healthcare partners
- Long Term Care
- Home Health
- LPNs
- RNs
- Managers
- Sources of Anxiety

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Open Dialogue

- Open dialogue
 - Managers to ask the staff what they need
 - Families to assess what home care givers will need
 - In-service to focus on staff response and their anxieties about COVID
 - Informal daily and or weekly meetings with direct care staff
 - Family members to reach out to each other more consistently

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Respond Meaningfully

- No empty promises
- Start with Basic Needs
 - Food
 - Shelter
 - Clothing
- Employment provides for these
 - Can't stay home
 - Can't leave resident/family without a care partner
 - Can't leave their own family without arrangements for care

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Respond Meaningfully

- Emotional Support, Social Support, Spiritual Support
 - Support System
 - More frequent breaks
 - Cell phone on their person to check in
 - Someone to talk to
 - Therapy
 - Social Service Director/Social Worker on staff available to talk with staff
 - Set appointments
 - Identify Social Support System
 - Chaplain
 - Church
 - Prayer

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Sources of Anxiety – Access to Proper Medical Equipment

- PPE
- Masks
- Facility staff responsible for checking this daily
- Family member responsible for checking this daily
- Identify where the supplies are located in writing
- Staff: In-service this

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Sources of Anxiety – Exposure to Taking it Home or Getting It Themselves

- Inservice staff on how to avoid taking it home
 - Explain process of having a designated area to undress before entering their home
 - Provide gloves when possible for home use to transfer clothes to washer
 - Discuss showering upon arriving home
 - Explain they need to go straight home and not go grocery shopping or to pick up at daycare prior to the above protocols being done

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Sources of Anxiety – Not Having Rapid Access to Testing

- Identify where to go to get tested
- Business – when possible pay for testing and/or have it provided on site

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Sources of Anxiety – Uncertain if the Organization would Support Personal or Family Needs if they were Infected

- Managers to discuss and decide on a plan for support/assistance
- Evaluation of Social Support
- Meal Train
- Childcare
- Transportation
- Paid time off
- Insurance
 - Partner with community for fundraising efforts

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Sources of Anxiety – Access During School Closures to Childcare

- As an organization decide if there is assistance that can be provided
- Vouchers
- Volunteers – retired teachers to tutor for an hour per day at facility
- Meaningful uses of children in activity program
- Providing meals for children at facility or backpack program

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Sources of Anxiety – Lacking Access to Up To Date Information

- As an Organization overcommunicate
- Let staff know each time a change has occurred
- Opinions may vary but ensure they understand the difference between a CDC Guidance and an opinion
- Post these changes in writing in a predictable location
- Small informal in-services left at nurses station daily/weekly

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Overall Needs to Prevent Trauma From Overwhelming

- Hear Me
- Protect Me
- Prepare Me
- Support Me
- Care for Me

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Practical Strategies to Address the Trauma of COVID

- Overcommunicate
- Retrain in basic hand washing and infection prevention
- Virtual check ins at home
- Organization have a plan for when sick time and personal time might be used up
- Talking about it and allowing others to feel free to talk about it – Give permission
- Briefings on new information and how will this be communicated
- Wearing PPE is exhausting and hot – time outs on PPE: where and when appropriate
- Burn Out
- Organizations different cell phone policy

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Practical Strategies to Address the Trauma of COVID

- Organization have each staff identify 3 – 5 supports in the community
 - If less than 3 supports, locate supports for them, educate them on the supports available
- Adequate food
 - Food bank
 - Change policy on staff eating at facility for a time
 - Locate resources

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Practical Strategies to Address the Trauma of COVID

- Cleaning supplies for their car and home
- Homemade masks
- Ask how you can help
- Let them identify what they need assistance with
- Go easy – it's OK to not be OK
- Peer Support
- AHCA/NCAL
 - How States are Handling Childcare