

Dealing with the 'Stress and Strain' of the COVID-19 pandemic for those working with Older Adults

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The *effect* of anything in life that requires an adjustment or that demands energy or use of resources
~ *Stress*



Strain ~ An injury, a displacement, *excessive physical or mental tension*

Under these conditions it is possible to harm ourselves – temporarily and or permanently. At the time of injury, it is the speed of recovery that matters.

Somewhere between the Stress and Strain of working during the COVID-19 pandemic, we feel that we are on the verge of.....



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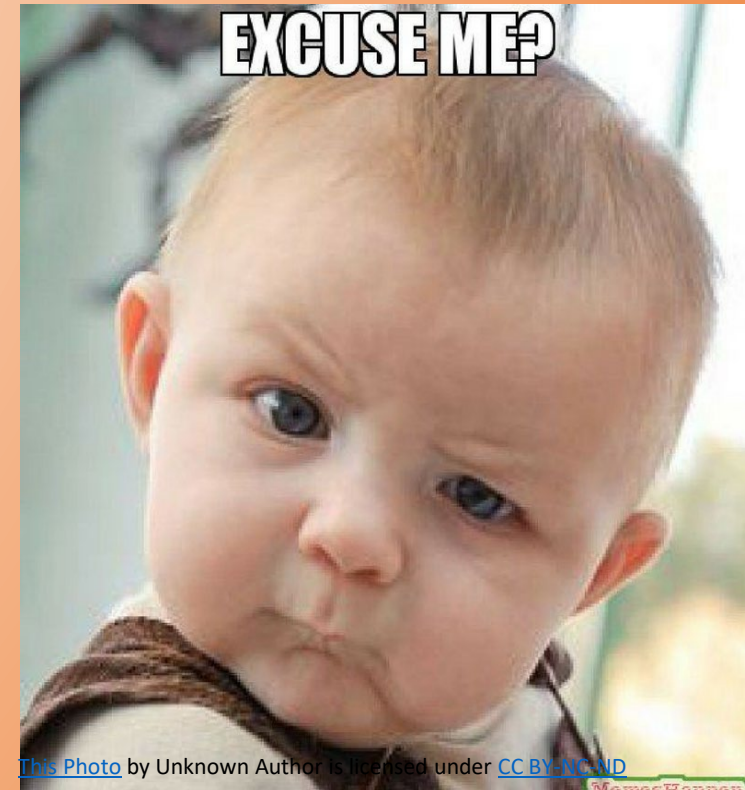
The "I am done"



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"I am trying but getting no where"

"I am so tight, don't mess with me"



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These Stress and Strain Experiences impact us....

- Physiologically – heightened arousal, startle response, heart palpitations, headaches, body pains, digestive concerns, other somatic responses
- Emotionally – fatigue, fear, anxiety, grief, irritability, anger, withdrawal
- Cognitively – poor concentration, tracking, memory disturbances, magical thinking, decline in work and school performance,
- Behaviorally – accidents, aggression, absent, absent mindedness, sleeping and eating changes, misuses and abuses, daydreaming.

A Pandemic Introduces Unique Considerations

- Loss of control & Ambiguity
- Post traumatic stress reactions
- Abrupt shift in relationships - Isolation and abandonment
- Grief and loss of normality
- Worsening of chronic physical health problems
- Worsening of chronic mental health problems
- Increased use of habit forming substances
- Organizational challenges in care provision
- Patients' access to resources and support
- Telehealth challenges

Recommended Strategies

Native

- Use of family and Social Supports
- Personal Hygiene
- Dietary and Sleeping Restoration
- Relaxation and Breathing
- Cry and Sigh – Get Real
- Talk not Silence
- Keep Purpose and Perspective

Acquired

- Avoid Traps in Thinking
- Dissect and Challenge thoughts
- Tap Spiritual and Religious
- Values and World View Reinforcement
- Talk, Talk, Talk – Know Where to Get Help
- Laugh, Laugh, Laugh – Get OUT!!!

Remember Resilience.....

- Life happens in *Shades of Grey*
- We are **Resilient**, that is, we have the ability to positively adapt and thrive no matter what rides and blows into our life.



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We bend and weave
and bow, but still we
rise, grow and thrive!!!



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Thank You!

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