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

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October 27, 2020
The **effect** of anything in life that requires an adjustment or that demands energy or use of resources

\[\sim \text{Stress}\]

**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....... 

"I am trying but getting nowhere" 

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

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

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• https://mhanational.org/im-feeling-too-much-once-dealing-emotional-overload
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Thank You!

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