

Taking Care of Our Patients, Our Teams, and Ourselves: Trauma-Informed Practices to Address Stress Related to COVID-19

California ACEs Aware Initiative

March 25, 2020

Welcome

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California ACEs Learning and Quality Improvement Collaborative (CALQIC)

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Child and family psychologist
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Development, UCSF Department of Psychiatry and Director, Child Trauma Research
Program Director, Early Trauma Treatment Network

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ACEs Aware Clinical Advisor, Harbage Consulting; Clinical Advisors Committee, CALQIC

Tanya Schwartz, MSW, MPP

Principal & Senior Director, Harbage Consulting

Agenda

- ACEs Aware Efforts to Support Providers Dealing with COVID-19-Related Stress
- Trauma-Informed Practices to Address Stress Related to COVID-19
- Questions/Answers
- Stress Management Tools and Resources for Providers

ACEs Aware Mission

The ACEs Aware mission is to change and save lives by helping providers understand the approach of trauma-informed care and how to take action to mitigate the impacts of toxic stress.

This mission is even more important today.

ACEs Aware is here to support providers, their teams, and their patients on managing COVID-19-related stress and anxiety.

California & COVID-19 Treatment Websites

- For the latest information in California, visit COVID19.ca.gov.
- For the latest clinical information on COVID-19 for health care providers, contact your local Department of Public Health.
- For additional information, including interim guidance and resources on caring for patients with COVID-19, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [COVID-19 Information for Healthcare Professionals](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19/hcp) webpage.

ACEs Aware Efforts

- Monthly webinars
- COVID-19 stress management resources for providers, their teams, and their patients
- General resources providers can share with patients on buffering toxic stress
- Sharing information through the ACEs Aware listserv and social media

Trauma-Informed Practices to Address Stress Related to COVID-19



What we hope to convey

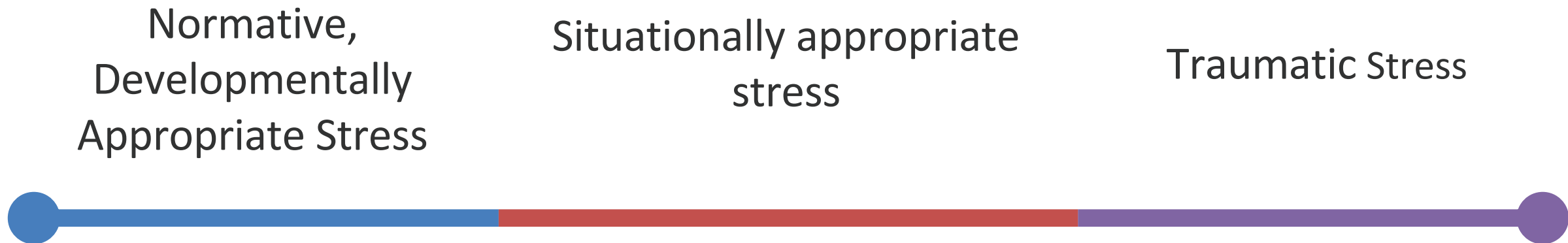
1. **“Social distancing” can become “physical distancing” that includes social and emotional embracing**
2. **It is possible and helpful to talk and listen openly to our patients, each other, and our families, even when what is being expressed is fear**
3. **Tele-medicine can be intimate, connecting and healing, especially if you reach out proactively**



Part 1: Alicia, with Eddy



Risk as a Continuum, from Stress to Trauma



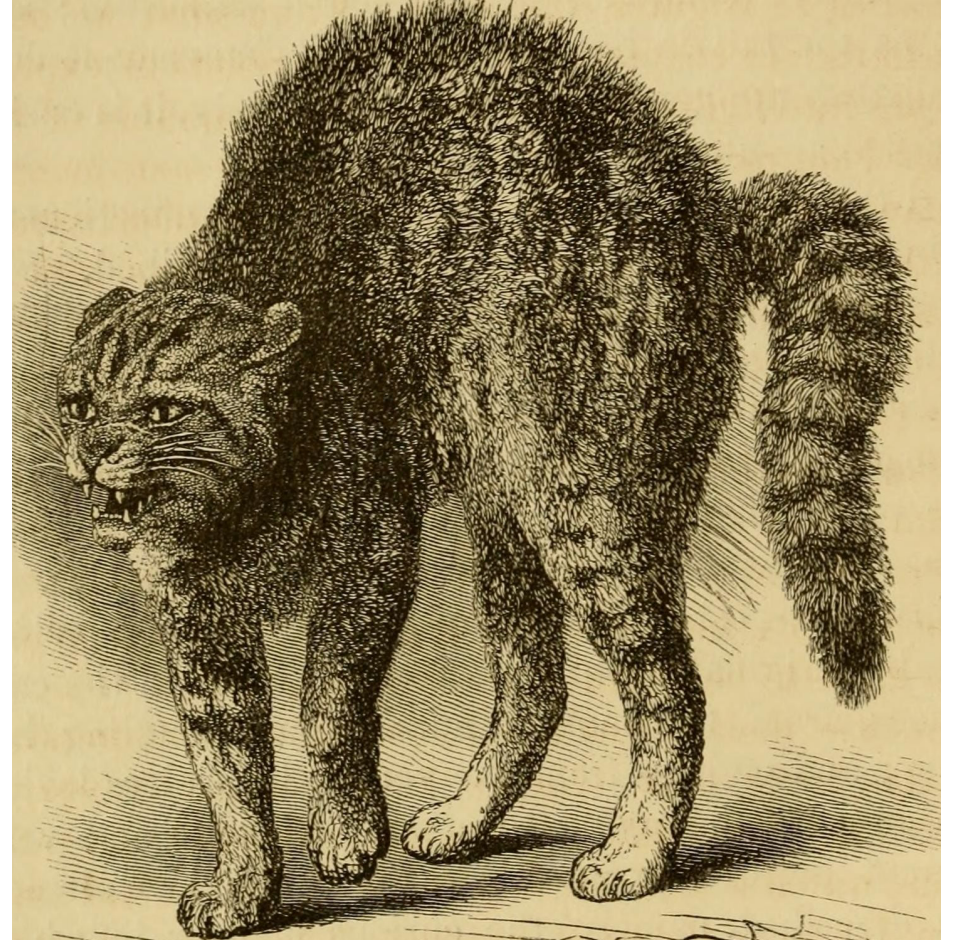
Key Features of Trauma

- **Sudden, unpredictable** event that shatters expectations of safety
- **Fight, flight, freeze** are adaptive survival behaviors to overcome immediate danger
- Chronic endangerment may trigger **aggression, emotional avoidance**, and **numbness** to protect ourselves from feeling overwhelmed
- Outside consciousness means without our control
- We help ourselves and other when we practice self-awareness

Assessing Traumatic Experiences: Objective Danger And Coping Resources



Understanding traumatic triggers



Stress lives in the body:

Understanding and helping our children in the face of fear



“The past is never dead. It's not even past.”

- William Faulkner



How can we talk and listen to each other and our patients

SHAME is a universal response to trauma

We long to be heard, protected, and understood

Giving permission to disclose fear alleviates shame and offers relief

Health providers provide healing when they listen, guide, and support

Self care is Patient care

Stress is contagious and trauma is disorganizing

Burnout and vicarious trauma are real

Self-care is essential to be effective

Loving care is also contagious: Our attitude affects how our patients feel about themselves

Post-Trauma Growth Happens

- The world is dangerous: Trauma is an ever-present risk
- Cultivating perspective: What matters?
- Seeking and offering safety can reconnect us with our core values
- The search for meaning can help us grow emotionally and spiritually

Part 2: Eddy, with Alicia



Core Principles

Trauma and Resilience-informed Health Care

- Being guided by a commitment to **Equity**
- Promoting physical and emotional **safety**
- Helping maintain a sense of **connection**
- Enhancing feelings of **empowerment**
- Fostering **trustworthiness/transparency**

SAMHSA's concept of trauma and guidance for a trauma-informed approach.

<https://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content//SMA14-4884/SMA14-4884.pdf>

Hobfoll, S.E., et al.(2007) Five Essential Elements of Immediate and Mid–Term Mass Trauma Intervention: Empirical Evidence, *Psychiatry*, 70:4, 283-315



*Photo by Lynnly Labovitz;
used with artist and patient permission*

In practice with patients

Trauma and Resilience-informed Tele-Health Care

1. Provide accurate information about COVID-19 risk and collaborate with patients to develop prevention techniques that are possible for them
2. Help patients and families recognize and reveal signs of stress to you. Actively seek to identify/treat stress-related conditions
3. Provide resources to access information, testing, care and you
4. Recognize that proactive regular contact can be anxiety reducing and healing, particularly for vulnerable populations



*Photo by Keith Sirchio;
used with artist and patient permission*

Part 3: Eddy and Alicia in conversation with you



Stress Management Tools and Resources for Providers



Resources

- COVID-19 stress management resources
- Resources on buffering and protective factors, including:
 - Supportive relationships
 - Regular physical activity
 - High quality sleep
 - Balanced nutrition
 - Mindfulness and meditation
 - Mental health care (if indicated)
- Coming Soon: Resources on managing health conditions that can be exacerbated by stress

COVID-19 Stress Management Information & Resources

Screen Treat Heal About

GET TRAINED



ACEs Aware Stress Management Resource List

March 25, 2020

This page lists general resources providers can share with patients to increase buffering and protective factors to reduce the impact of toxic stress related to COVID-19.

COVID-19 Stress Management Resources

This section lists resources for providers related to COVID-19. These resources include mental health and psychosocial support considerations, workforce and organization resilience strategies, and resources providers can share with their patients.

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Resources for Providers on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Considerations

[Briefing Note on Addressing Mental Health and Psychosocial Aspects of COVID-19 Outreach – Version 1.1](#)

Summary of key mental health and psychosocial support considerations for COVID-19. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings. Includes specific interventions for special populations:

www.ACEsAware.org/covid19



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Summary of key mental health and psychosocial support considerations for COVID-19. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings. Includes specific interventions for special populations:

- [Helping Older Adults Cope with Stress During the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
- [Supporting the Needs of People with Disabilities During a COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
- [Messages and Activities for Helping Children Deal with Stress During the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
- [Activities for Adults in Isolation/Quarantine](#)
- [Supporting People Working in the COVID-19 Response](#)



Briefing Note on Addressing Mental Health and Psychosocial Aspects of COVID-19 Outreach – Version 1.1

Inter-Agency
Standing
Committee
(IASC)

INTERVENTION 1:

Helping older adults cope with stress during the COVID-19 outbreak

- Older adults, especially in isolation and those with cognitive decline/dementia, may become more anxious, angry, stressed, agitated, withdrawing, overly suspicious during the outbreak/while in quarantine. Provide emotional support through informal networks (families) and mental health professionals. Share simple facts about what is going on and give clear information about how to reduce risk of infection in words older people with/without cognitive impairment can understand. Repeat the information whenever necessary.
- The suggestions below generally apply to community-dwelling older people. For older people in residential care (e.g., assisted living, nursing homes), administrators and staff need to ensure safety measures are in place to prevent mutual infection and the outbreak of excessive worries or panic (the same as in hospitals). Likewise, support needs to be provided to care staff who may be in extended lock-down/quarantine with residents and not able to be with their families.
- Older adults are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 given their limited information sources, weaker immune systems, and the higher COVID-19 mortality rate found in the older population. Pay specific attention to high-risk groups, i.e. older people who live alone/without close relatives; who have low socioeconomic status and/or comorbid health conditions such as cognitive decline/dementia or other mental health conditions. Older people with mild cognitive impairment or early stages of dementia need to be informed of what is happening within their capacity and provided support to ease their anxiety and stress. For people at moderate and late stages of dementia, their medical and daily living needs need to be met during the quarantine time.
 - Medical needs of older adults with/without COVID-19 need to be met during the outbreak. This includes uninterrupted access to essential medicines (for diabetes, cancer, kidney disease, HIV). Tele medicine and online medical services can be used to provide medical services.
 - Isolated or infected older people shall be presented with truthful information on risk factors and chances of recovery.
 - During quarantine, adjust respite or home care services to use technology (WeChat, WhatsApp) to provide trainings/counselling for family caregivers at home, also include psychological first aid training for family caregivers.
- Older people may have limited access to messaging apps, like WeChat.
 - Provide older adults with accurate accessible information and facts about the COVID-19 outbreak, the progression, treatment, and effective strategies to prevent an infection.
 - Information needs to be easily accessible (i.e. clear, simple language, large font) and come from multiple trusted (media) sources (public media, social media and trustworthy health care providers) to prevent irrational behaviour such as stocking of non-effective medical herbs.
 - The best way to contact older people is via their landline phones or through regular personal visits (if possible). Encourage family or friends to call their older relatives regularly and teach older people how to use video (chat).
- Older people might not be familiar with the use of protective devices or prevention methods or refuse to use them.
 - Instructions on how to use protective devices need to be communicated in a clear, concise, respectful and patient way.
- Older people may not know how to use online services such as online shopping for daily supplies, consultation/helplines, or health care.
 - Provide older people with details and how to get practical help if needed, like calling a Taxi, or dropping off supplies.
 - Distribution of goods and services such as preventive materials (e.g., facial masks, disinfectants), sufficient grocery supplies, and emergency transportation access can reduce anxiety in everyday life.
- Provide older people with simple physical exercises to perform at their home/in quarantine to maintain mobility and reduce boredom.
- Encouraging older adults with expertise, experiences and strengths to volunteer in community efforts to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. Elders can provide peer support, neighbour checking, and childcare for medical personnel restricted in hospitals fighting against COVID-19.

INTERVENTION 3:

Messages & activities for helping children deal with stress during the COVID-19 outbreak

Encourage active listening and an understanding attitude with the children. Children may respond to a difficult/unsettling situation in different ways: clinging to caregivers, feeling anxious, withdrawing, feeling angry or agitated, having nightmares, bedwetting, frequent mood-changes, etc.

- Children usually feel relieved if they are able to express and communicate their disturbing feelings in a safe and supportive environment. Every child has his/her own way to express emotions. Sometimes engaging in a creative activity, such as playing and drawing can facilitate this process. Help children find positive ways to express disturbing feelings such as anger, fear and sadness.
- Encourage an increased sensitive and caring environment around the child. Children need adults' love and often more dedicated attention during difficult times.
- Remember that children often take their emotional cues from the important adults in their lives, so how adults respond to the crisis is very important. It's important that adults manage their own emotions well and remain calm, listen to children's concerns and speak kindly to them and reassure them. If appropriate and depending on the age, encourage parents/caregivers to hug their children and repeat that they love them and are proud of them. This will make them feel better and safer.
- If possible, make opportunities for children to play and relax.
- Keep children close to their parents and family, if considered safe for the child, and avoid separating children and their caregivers as much as possible. If a child needs to be separated from his/her primary caregiver, ensure that appropriate alternative care is provided and that a social worker, or equivalent, will regularly follow up on the child.
- If children are separated from their caregivers, ensure regular and frequent contact (e.g. via phone, video calls) and re-assurance. Ensure all child protection and safeguarding measures are addressed.
- Keep regular routines and schedules as much as possible or help create new ones in a new environment, including learning, playing and relaxing. If possible, maintain schoolwork, study or other routine activities that do not endanger children or go against health authorities. Children should continue

to attend school if it is not a risk to their health.

- Provide facts about what is going on and give clear child-friendly information about how to reduce risk of infection and stay safe in words they can understand. Demonstrate to children how they can keep themselves safe (e.g., show them effective handwashing)
- Avoid speculating about rumours or unverified information in front of children.
- Provide information about what has happened or could happen in a reassuring, honest and age-appropriate way.
- Support adults/caregivers with activities for children during home isolation/quarantine. Activities should explain the virus but also keep children active when they are not at school, for example:
 - hand washing games with rhymes
 - imaginary stories about the virus exploring the body
 - make cleaning and disinfecting the house into a fun game
 - draw pictures of virus/microbes that to be coloured by children
 - explain person protective equipment (PPE) to children so that they are not scared

Source: WHO. *Helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak (Handout)*. WHO: Geneva, 2020.

INTERVENTION 5:

Supporting people working in the COVID-19 response

MESSAGES FOR FRONTLINE WORKERS:

- Feeling stressed is an experience that you and many of your colleagues are likely going through; in fact, it is quite normal to be feeling this way in the current situation. Workers may feel that they are not doing a good enough job, that there is a high demand on them, and additional new pressures including following strict OSH procedures.
- Stress and the feelings associated with it are by no means a reflection that you cannot do your job or that you are weak, even if you feel that way. In fact, stress can be useful. Right now, the feeling of stress may be keeping you going at your job and providing a sense of purpose. Managing your stress and psychosocial wellbeing during this time is as important as managing your physical health.
- Take care of your basic needs and employ helpful coping strategies- ensure rest and respite during work or between shifts, eat sufficient and healthy food, engage in physical activity, and stay in contact with family and friends. Avoid using unhelpful coping strategies such as tobacco, alcohol or other drugs. In the long term, these can worsen your mental and physical wellbeing.
- Some workers may unfortunately experience ostracization by their family or community due to stigma. This can make an already challenging situation far more difficult. If possible, staying connected with your loved ones through digital methods is one way to maintain contact. Turn to your colleagues, your manager or other trusted persons for social support- your colleagues may be having similar experiences to you.
- This is likely a unique and unprecedented scenario for many workers, particularly if they have not been involved in similar responses. Even so, using the strategies that you have used in the past to manage times of stress can benefit you now. The strategies to benefit feelings of stress are the same, even if the scenario is different.
- If your stress worsens and you feel overwhelmed, you are not to blame. Everyone experiences stress and copes with it differently. Ongoing and old pressures from your personal life can affect your mental wellbeing in your day

to day job. You may notice changes in how you are working, your mood may change such as increased irritability, feeling low or more anxious, you may feel chronically exhausted or it may feel harder to relax during respite periods, or you may have unexplained physical complaints such as body pain or stomach aches.

- Chronic stress can affect your mental wellbeing and your work and can affect you even after the situation improves. If the stress becomes overwhelming, please approach your lead or the appropriate person to ensure you are provided with appropriate support.

MESSAGES FOR TEAM LEADERS OR MANAGERS:

If you are a team leader or manager, keeping all staff protected from chronic stress and poor mental health during this response means that they will have a better capacity to fulfil their roles- whether health workers or in allied supporting roles.

- Regularly and supportively monitor your staff for their wellbeing and foster an environment which promotes staff speaking with you if their mental wellbeing worsens.
- Ensure good quality communication and accurate information updates are provided to all staff. This can help to mitigate any worry about uncertainty that workers have and helps workers to feel a sense of control.
- Consider if there is any capacity to ensure your staff get the rest and recuperation they need. Rest is important for physical and mental wellbeing and this time will allow workers to implement their necessary self-care activities.
- Provide a brief and regular forum to allow workers to express their concerns and ask questions and encourage peer-support amongst colleagues. Without breaking confidentiality, pay particular attention to any staff who you may be aware are experiencing difficulties in their personal life, previously experiencing poor mental health or who are lacking in social support (possibly due to community ostracization).

[Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress Website – Coronavirus and Emerging Infectious Disease Outbreak Response](#). Uniformed Services University. Includes the following resources:

- [Sustaining the Well-Being of Healthcare Personnel during Coronavirus and other Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#)
List of strategies for healthcare professionals to employ in support of self- and team-care. Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, Uniformed Services University.
- [Psychosocial Effects of Quarantine or Isolation During the Coronavirus Outbreak: What Healthcare Providers Need to Know](#)
The psychological effects of quarantine or isolation, as well as strategies for how healthcare providers can care for their patients' and their own mental well-being during periods of quarantine.

Resources for Workforce and Organization Resilience

[COVID-19 Considerations for a Trauma Informed Response for Work Settings](#)

(Organizations/Schools/Clinics)

Trauma-informed considerations for work settings where services are provided, in light of COVID-19. Trauma Informed Oregon, Portland State University, Oregon Health Authority.

[Building Organizational Resilience in the Face of a Ubiquitous Challenge](#)

How organizational leaders can use trauma-informed care approaches to support their workforce in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. Karen Johnson, Trauma-Informed Lens Consulting.

Resources for Providers to Share with Patients

[Helping Children Cope with Stress During the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)

One-page tip sheet for parents on how to help children cope with stress during the outbreak. Can be posted in exam rooms. World Health Organization.

Helping Children Cope with Stress during the nCOV Outbreak



Helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak



Children may respond to stress in different ways such as being more clingy, anxious, withdrawing, angry or agitated, bedwetting etc.

Respond to your child's reactions in a supportive way, listen to their concerns and give them extra love and attention.

Children need adults' love and attention during difficult times. Give them extra time and attention.

Remember to listen to your children, speak kindly and reassure them.

If possible, make opportunities for the child to play and relax.



Try and keep children close to their parents and family and avoid separating children and their caregivers to the extent possible. If separation occurs (e.g. hospitalization) ensure regular contact (e.g. via phone) and re-assurance.

Keep to regular routines and schedules as much as possible, or help create new ones in a new environment, including school/learning as well as time for safely playing and relaxing.



Provide facts about what has happened, explain what is going on now and give them clear information about how to reduce their risk of being infected by the disease in words that they can understand depending on their age.

This also includes providing information about what could happen in a re-assuring way (e.g. a family member and/or the child may start not feeling well and may have to go to the hospital for some time so doctors can help them feel better).

NAMI COVID-19 Information and Resources



NAMI HelpLine
Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., EST
(800) 950-6264

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Information and Resources

I'm having a lot of anxiety because of the Coronavirus. Please help.

We get it. It's hard to sift through the messages and information coming at us. Worse, the "unknown unknown" (not knowing what you don't even know) can cause even greater anxiety for those of us who are panic-prone.

What can you do?

1. Remember that knowledge is power. Understanding the factors that affect a person's immune response to COVID-19 will matter as much as, or more than, understanding the virus! Poor lung health caused by smoking, lack of adequate health care, suppressed immune systems, and/or populations particularly susceptible to infectious diseases, such as the elderly, have been particularly affected by COVID-19. Yes, there is risk, but for the vast majority the risk is not commensurate with the degree of obsession and panic that media and social media coverage of the virus has bred.

Information for Survivors, Communities, and Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Programs



OUR WORK ABOUT US RESOURCES & EVENTS TAKE ACTION GET HELP NEWS

INFORMATION ON COVID-19 FOR SURVIVORS, COMMUNITIES, AND DV/SA PROGRAMS

People who are surviving violence in their relationships and families may be experiencing increased isolation and danger caused by social distancing measures during the Coronavirus pandemic. Survivors often have specific needs around safety, health and confidentiality. We also realize that people who are already more vulnerable to economic and health insecurity are facing additional challenges during this unprecedented time. We have compiled resources and tools for more vulnerable members of our communities and care providers, who are working tirelessly to respond in ways that are safe and supportive for all.

We are updating these resources continuously. If you have information to share, please contact the National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence at health@futureswithouviolence.org, with the subject line "COVID19 Resource."

Resources for Survivors:

- Remember that you are not alone and supports remain available to you

Crisis Hotlines

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** (24/7) – Call 800-273-TALK (8255); Online chat support
- **NAMI Crisis Text Line** (24/7) – Text NAMI to 741-741
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline** (24/7) – Call 800-799-SAFE (7233)
- **National Sexual Assault Hotline** (24/7) – Call 800-656-HOPE (4673); Online Hotline
- **National Parent Helpline** (Monday through Friday 10 am – 7 pm PDT) – Call 1-855-2736 for emotional support and advocacy for parents

General Resources Providers Can Share with Patients on Buffering Toxic Stress

For Adults

[ACEs Aware Self-Care Tool for Adults](#)

[Carpinteria Children's Project – Handout for Adults on How to Lower Toxic Stress – Spanish version](#)

For Families/Children

[ACEs Aware Self-Care Tool for Pediatrics](#)

[The Benefit of Supportive Relationships](#) – [Spanish version](#) – [Portuguese version](#)

[Using Mindfulness](#) – [Spanish version](#) – [Portuguese version](#)

[Good Sleep Habits](#) – [Spanish version](#) – [Portuguese version](#)

Upcoming Webinars

The Last Wednesday of Each Month from 12-1 p.m. PT

Topics To be Announced

- April 29th: 12 – 1 p.m. PDT
- May 27th: 12 – 1 p.m. PDT
- June 24th: 12 – 1 p.m. PDT

Register for Webinars and Find Webinar Recordings at:

<https://www.acesaware.org/heal/educational-events/>

For information, resources, and to follow
ACEs Aware on social media, visit

www.ACEsAware.org



Contact

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