



COLORADO

State Employee Assistance
Program

CSEAP

Managing the Stress of Politics & Social Discontent

Speaker:

Janeen Haller-Abernethy, LCSW
Director

Call 800-821-8154 . 303-866-4314 or

[Send Us a Message!](#)



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Before we start with content,

- How are you doing?
- What's on your mind?

Use the Jamboard ([link](#) in chat) or chat a response.



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What is Collective Trauma?

“Psychological reactions to a traumatic event that affect an entire society.”

Hirschberger, 2018

Hirschberger, G. (2018). [Collective trauma and the social construction of meaning](#). Frontiers in Psychology.



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Collective Trauma & Compounding Stressors

- Pandemic
- Racial injustice, race-related violence, [racial trauma](#)
- [Political](#) stress, [mass violence](#), differing values



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Emotional Impact

- Grief
 - Loss of normalcy
 - Anticipatory grief
- Anxiety & Fear
- Exhaustion; Burnout
 - Numbness
 - Hopelessness
 - Cynicism



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Let's talk about you.

What impacts are you experiencing?

Use the Jamboard ([link](#) in chat) or chat a response.



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Factors Contributing to our Stress

- Media exposure & traumatic images
- Constant conversation/dialogue - *chronic re-exposure*
- Talk with limited solutions or agreement
- Solutions that require long-term systemic change
- Inability to predict or know the future
- Fractured personal & other relationships
- Differing perspectives at work



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Groupthink and Impact

- Our social nature encourages positive or negative behavior.
 - Social distancing contributes to social homogeneity.
 - Lack of consistent, reliable info is a contributing factor.
 - Leadership response can have an influencing effect.
- Impacts:
 - Population blaming
 - COVID shaming
 - Lack of focus on shared values
 - Seeking out shared perspectives vs. debiasing with [counterarguments](#) (questioning own beliefs)
 - Stress and unrest can lead to vitriol behavior
 - SOCIAL and OTHER MEDIA contribute to our rigid beliefs



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Strategies for Coping



Practical Solutions

Limit news and social media exposure

- Choose reading vs. watching
- Stop doom scrolling
- Give yourself a news allowance
- Even shared opinions cause stress - avoid posts

Avoid value-based or political debates

- Focus on things you have in common
- Focus on the shared goal or mission



Practical Solutions

Focus on productive actions

- Get involved
- Volunteer
- Learn about the experiences of others

Choose to be around calming people

- Who manage their frustration
- Who have healthy coping strategies
- Who check-in on topics other than politics



Top Wellbeing Strategies

- Just **breathe!** Reduce respiration to turn off **F-F-F.**
- Focus on what you CAN **control.**
- Check yourself** - assumption vs. current reality
- Get moving, get outside, modify your fun!
- Reduce exposure to social & other media.

Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation During an Infectious Outbreak. [SAMHSA, 2014.](#)

Understanding the stress response. [Harvard Health Publishing, 2011.](#)



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What can you control?

See chat for [link](#) to Jamboard

Within Your Control:

**Outside of your
control:**

The Wellness Society (2020). [Coronavirus Anxiety Workbook](#).



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Focus on Resilience:

Our Attitude about Trauma & Challenges

Self-supported resilience:

- **Communicate needs; Focus on problem-solving**
- **Manage strong emotions; Practice self-care**
- **Strong informal support can decrease residual impact**

Workplace-supported coping:

- **Compassion at work can increase motivation to continue normal routines.**
- **Recognition that all have different responses; assume good intent.**
- **Connect based upon commonalities but not to the exclusion of others.**
- **Practice openness and respect toward all.**
 - ***Enforce workplace behavioral expectations to ensure safety.***



Top Ten Strategies for Coping

10	Identify - each day - <u>at least one thing</u> for which you are <u>grateful</u> .
9	<u>Help someone else</u> and/or get involved in something that is productive.
8	Phone a <u>friend or a family member</u> - someone who is calm, not inflammatory.
7	Instead of “this is awful; this sucks,” try “this is hard but <u>it’s possible to get through it.</u> ”
6	Try <u>intentional meditation</u> on something that’s gnawing at you.
5	Engage in <u>calming practices</u> - breathing, yoga, stretching, meditation, prayer - whatever works for you.
4	Spend time outside, in <u>nature</u> (your neighborhood will work). Identify things that are <u>awe-inspiring</u> .
3	Make your <u>sleep routine a priority</u> and support it with good habits.
2	<u>Move every day</u> & make it predictable; break <u>cardiovascular exercise</u> into increments as needed.
1	<u>Reduce social media & other media</u> - do a puzzle, take a walk, cook something, <u>get help if needed</u> .



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How are you coping?

Even if for a few minutes, what are some things you've done to help you cope?

Use the Jamboard ([link](#) in chat) or chat a response.



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Articles for Additional Reading

- Stress and [political change](#)
- Coping after [mass violence](#)
- Coping with [work-related COVID stress](#)
- [Sleep](#) hygiene
- Understanding [burnout](#) and [reduced coping](#) capacity
- Mitigating [family burnout](#)
- Group think and [rigid thinking](#)
- Understanding collective trauma and [societal burnout](#)
- How managers and workplaces can [support employees](#)
- [Management response](#) during political turmoil



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Employee Resources: Mental Health Support

- **Colorado State Employee Assistance Program (CSEAP)**
 - **6 sessions - free of charge**
 - **800-821-8154**

- **Colorado Crisis Services**
 - **24-hour response**
 - **Phone or text services are free-of-charge**
 - **1-844-493-8255**

- **Health Insurance benefits**
 - **Mental health # on health insurance card**

- **SAMHSA Referrals and Support**
 - **Treatment referral**



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General CSEAP Information

Counseling Services

- Free benefit of employment
- All State employees are eligible for our services
- Access to 6 counseling sessions per rolling year
- Family members *may be* eligible for counseling services
- Administrative leave may be granted for attendance



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CSEAP Services

- **Confidential Counseling**
- **Emergency Financial Assistance**
- **Crisis Response**
- **Supervisor/Manager Consultation**
- **Professional Coaching**
 - **EI Managerial Coaching***
- **Mediation** for employees in conflict
- **Presentations & Workgroup Facilitation**
- **Psychological Fitness for Duty (PFFD)***

**Costs are associated with these particular services.*



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Got Stress?

Contact CSEAP

303-866-4314

800-821-8154

Office Locations

CSEAP is currently providing telehealth services during the pandemic.

Visit us at www.colorado.gov/cseap