Managing the Stress of Politics & Social Discontent

**Speaker:**
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Director

Call 800-821-8154 . 303-866-4314 or [Send Us a Message!](#)
Before we start with content,

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

Use the Jamboard (link in chat) or chat a response.
What is Collective Trauma?

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

Collective Trauma & Compounding Stressors

- Pandemic
- Racial injustice, race-related violence, **racial trauma**
- Political stress, **mass violence**, differing values
Emotional Impact

● **Grief**
  ○ Loss of normalcy
  ○ Anticipatory grief

● **Anxiety & Fear**

● **Exhaustion; Burnout**
  ○ Numbness
  ○ Hopelessness
  ○ Cynicism
Let’s talk about you.

What impacts are you experiencing?

Use the Jamboard (link in chat) or chat a response.
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
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
Strategies for Coping
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

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](https://www.samhsa.gov).*

*Understanding the stress response. [Harvard Health Publishing, 2011](https://www.health.harvard.edu).*
What can you control?
See chat for link to Jamboard

Within Your Control:

Outside of your control:

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.

FYI: Building Your Resiliency; The Road to Resilience, American Psychological Association, 2016.
# Top Ten Strategies for Coping

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