

Last but not Least: Coping and Resilience during Covid-19: Various Mental Health Approaches and Implications for Formators

People's ability to cope with stressful events has been and will continue to be tested by the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time when Formators are moving to the forefront of training and accompaniment, they are in a prime position to help Formees to cope with uncertainty and loss, build resilience, adjust their coping strategies and self-care routines, and identify their individual and community strengths. For the last thought, the readers are brought into understanding the importance of training formees in better and efficient coping and resilience.

COVID-19 and Mental Health

There are a lot of mental health issues that are associated with the start of the pandemic COVID-19. Emotional difficulties like anxiety, depression, biological effects like sleep, appetite disturbances as well as severe mental illness. The issues that people face during these times are widespread- some are coping with the loss of a job; some are risking their lives caring for those who are sick; and others find themselves deeply contemplating existential questions of mortality and the meaning of life (ACA,2020).

What Happened Mentally due to COVID. Several factors went astray due to COVID. In the aspect of mental and psychological health, the following factors can be considered as the gist of issues of the pandemic brought: protective factors were reduced, existential isolation occurred, and there were chances of a less social network.

The world came across the pandemic when there was still a lot of progress expected in the psychological aspect of life. Stress and Warning Symptoms given by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (2021) gave a list of warning signs that healthcare workers and people need to keep in mind: feelings of fear, anger,

sadness, worry, numbness, frustration; changes in appetite, energy, desires, and interests; difficulty concentrating and making decisions; and difficulty sleeping or nightmares. When families are taken into consideration, there were also additional topics of concern like couple conflict and violence, divorce rates, disciplinary issues at home with children, elderly parents, boundary violation and domestic abuse, and relationship issues.

People can become more distressed if they see repeated images of a disaster in the media (Chao, Chen, Liu, Yang, & Hall, 2020). The psychological consequences of the COVID-19 review revealed numerous emotional outcomes, including stress, depression, irritability, insomnia, fear, confusion, anger, frustration, boredom, and stigma associated with quarantine, some of which persisted after the quarantine was lifted (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). The psychological reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic may vary from a panic behavior or collective hysteria (Koenig, 2015) to pervasive feelings of hopelessness and desperation which are associated with negative outcomes including suicidal behavior (Serafini, Parmigiani, Amerio, Aguglia, Sher, & Amore, 2020). Although specific and uncontrolled fears related to infection, pervasive anxiety, frustration and boredom, loneliness have been hypothesized to impair subjective wellbeing and quality of life, resilience and enhanced social support are protective factors that may help with regard to lifestyle changes and re-adaptation mechanism (Wang, Wang, & Yang, 2020; Khan, Siddique, Li, Ali, Shereen, Bashir, & Xue, 2020; Serafini, Parmigiani, Amerio, Aguglia, Sher, & Amore, 2020). Coping with a loss is a huge issue since not all loss is obvious. The death of a loved one is not the only form of grief that people experience. It is essential that whatever form of a psychological and mental issue is present, acquiring knowledge about it and how to deal with it are an essential skill for a formee as they are training to face new challenges ahead of them.

Coping and Resilience

Learning to cope with stress healthily will make us the people that can provide the care and support for someone who seeks strength and comfort during these times. During this pandemic, formators must recognize what stress looks like, take steps to build resilience and manage stress, and know where to go if help is required. There are several implications for practicing professional counselors and academic institutions that can learn from building coping and resilience among them. Below are

some pointers for Formators that can help them in the process with their formees.

First of all, “Focusing on what we can control might help us to feel more grounded,” says Muratori (Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore). Formators can help their formee set small, achievable goals and take time to reflect on what they have accomplished each day. For example, they can ask themselves, “What is one thing I can do today to move toward accomplishing my goals?” Secondly, listening to their anxieties, and ensuring adequate protection is required. Protection from the virus by taking adequate measures and providing essential resources ensures that the formees know that they are protected and cared for. It is also essential for everyone to go through the process of grief healthily. Don’t block people in their death and bereavement process.

Thirdly, in the book *Coping Skills for a Stressful World*, Haynes and Muratori share an exercise for strengthening resilience. It involves formee tracking their reactions to stressful events for two weeks and asking themselves some questions: What did they feel and think about the situation? What actions did they take to resolve the crisis? How effective were those actions? What did they learn? The exercise encourages them to consider their strengths and the ways they already cope with stressors. They realize that they can use these same tools that they already possess when facing future crises. Fourthly, enhancing spiritual or religious practices also provides an enormous amount of strength for all of us. “Communities and individuals are innately resilient,” says Dailey, co-author of the 2014 article “Shelter-in-place and mental health: An analogue study of well-being and distress” for the *Journal of Emergency Management*. “Everyone has strengths, and this crisis can be an opportunity to find those strengths.”

Adapting to Changing Knowledge and Adopting Newer Approaches

Formators need to constantly update themselves, as mental health/spiritual health specialists on the changing information concerning risk prevention, signs and symptoms, providing psychological support to persons affected in a myriad of ways in the present situation. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is essential for everyone including the Formators. Institutions can provide facilities to the individual to remain physically active, continue or develop hobbies to be mentally active and ensure a balanced diet to keep them fit and calm.

Suggestions

Before -Talk to your formee so that they know you are prepared to keep them safe, Review safety plans before a disaster or emergency happens. Having a plan will increase your children's confidence and help give them a sense of control.

During- Stay calm and reassure your Formee. Talk to them about what is happening in a way that they can understand. Keep it simple and appropriate.

After- Provide Formees with opportunities to talk about what they went through or what they think about it. Encourage them to share concerns and ask questions. You can help them feel a sense of control and manage their feelings by encouraging them to take action directly related to the disaster. For example, they can help others after a disaster, including volunteering to help the community or family members in a safe environment. They need to work together to share information about how each one is coping after a traumatic event.

Crisis Management

COVID-19 pandemic exemplifies communal shared trauma — a traumatic event that affects an entire community directly, indirectly, or vicariously. The good news is that community members are finding ways to support one another. Proactively addressing this crisis and not waiting for others to do what is right, helps handle the crisis before it blows up into epic proportions. The essential element that the church can provide for its congregation is the message of hope. This form of hope can be ensured by helping the people strive to have goals in life, feel empowered to shape daily life towards some purpose and identify ways to make goals happen. The formators can also follow up with the formees and help them through the process of achieving such goals. Hope in action requires motion. Hope in action is an essential way of entrusting that coping and resilience among the public has a spiritual dimension to it.

It is a long and essential journey between Formators and Formees to mold a relationship that provides nurturance to build a Formee that is capable of facing the challenges of the pandemic as well as providing strength for the congregation that looks up to them. The two essential skills that any man, for that matter, can have in the decades ahead are coping and resilience.