



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMOTIONAL CONTAGION: REAL-TIME COPING SKILLS

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Learning Objectives

- Normalize common responses to stress
- Consider the helpful and unhelpful functions of emotions during the COVID19 pandemic
- Apply mindfulness techniques to promote a sense of calm
- Clarify personal values
- Increase flexible coping and adjustment

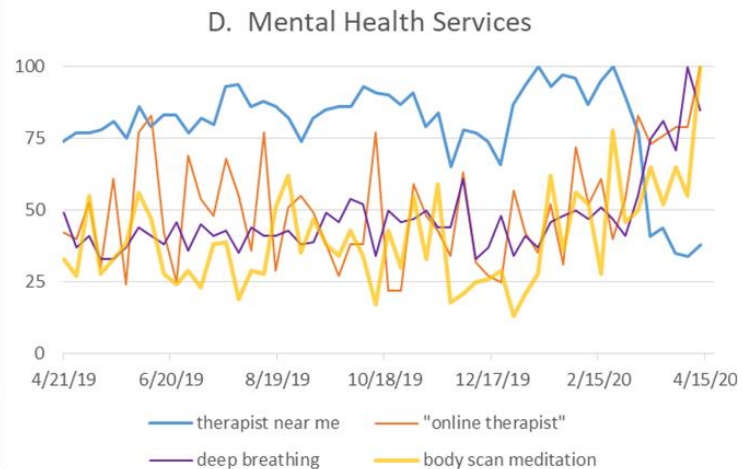
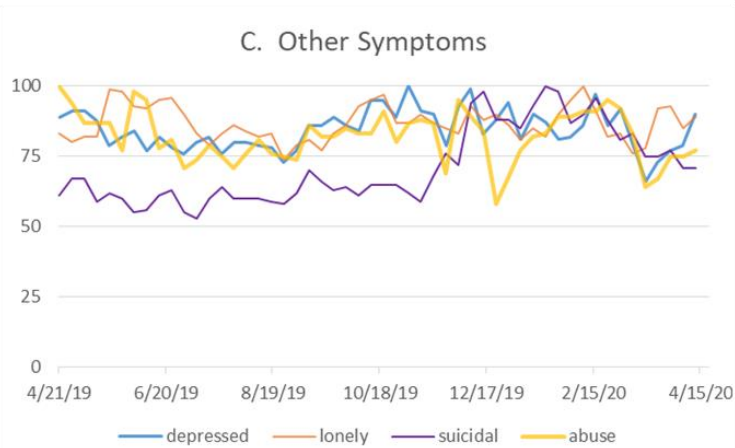
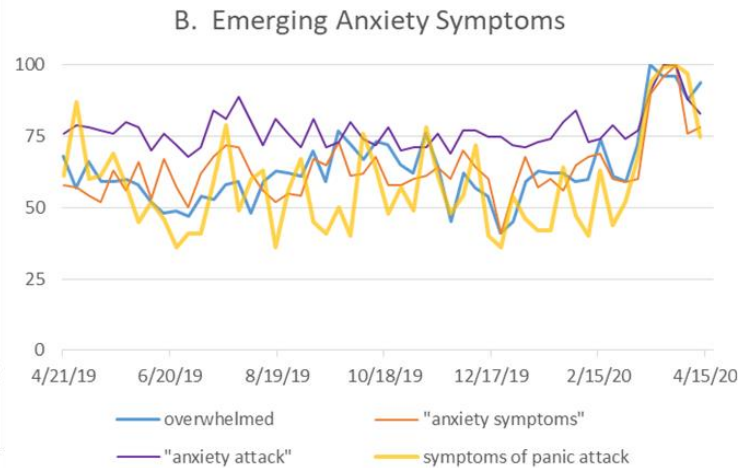
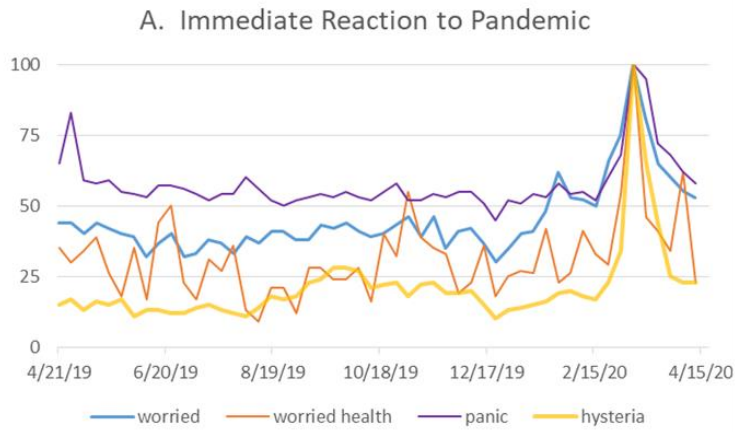
IS THE SCIENCE READY?

IJzerman, H., Lewis, N. A., Jr., Weinstein, N., DeBruine, L. M., Ritchie, S. J., Vazire, S., ... Przybylski, A. K. (2020, April 27). Psychological Science is Not Yet a Crisis-Ready Discipline. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/whds4>

Bavel, J.J.V., Baicker, K., Boggio, P.S. et al. Using social and behavioural science to support COVID-19 pandemic response. *Nat Hum Behav* 4, 460–471 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-0884-z>

Learning as we go

- COVID-19 is new territory for most of us
- The flu pandemic of 1918 occurred well before many of the founders of modern psychology were alive
- Mental health clinicians have made mistakes in mass trauma situations
- Try to focus on basic theory and similar situations and consider how they apply today
- Urge caution and humility



Hoerger, M., Alonzi, S., Perry, L. M., Voss, H. M., Easwar, S., & Gerhart, J. I. (in press). Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health: Real-time surveillance using Google Trends. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*.

Making a Change: Lewin's Change Theory

Systems spend time in equilibrium. Nothing's really changing.

Pressures to change are counteracted by pressures and barriers. The status quo works. Kinda.

This can be a frustrating time. You might be stuck!
People/habits with power keep winning.

Big events can shock the system and unfreeze routines, attitudes

COVID-19 is doing that for some.

Now may or may not be a good time to change. If you have the chance take it.

What's changed since COVID-19?

- A lot.
- **What** we do, feel, think.
- **How** and **why** probably haven't because human nature evolves slowly.
- We're still using old hardware.



Continual Needs for

Achievement

Connectedness

Hope

Purpose

Safety

Emotional Contagion

- Emotional expression -> powerful mode of communication
 - Facial expressions, postures, and other nonverbal cues
- Negative emotion directs us to seek negative information
- Framing threat – death rate versus recovery rate
- Bavel, J.J.V., Baicker, K., Boggio, P.S. et al. Using social and behavioural science to support COVID-19 pandemic response. *Nat Hum Behav* 4, 460–471 (2020).
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-0884-z>

Emotional Intelligence

- Mayer & Salovey (1993)
 - Ability to identify emotions
 - Self
 - Others
 - Distinguish emotions
 - Use emotions to inform decision-making
- Popular topic, but controversial in psychology
 - What is the best way to measure EQ?
 - Is EQ really that different from other labels?
 - Is EQ more important than IQ?

MAYER, J. D., & SALOVEY, P. (1993). The Intelligence of Emotional. INTELLIGENCE, 17, 433-442.

Difficulties with Emotion Regulation

- Gratz & Roemer (2004)
 - Awareness of emotions
 - Clarity of emotions
 - Impulse Control
 - Goal Tracking
 - Acceptance of emotions
 - Strategies for managing emotions

Gratz, K. L., & Roemer, L. (2004). Multidimensional assessment of emotion regulation and dysregulation: Development, factor structure, and initial validation of the difficulties in emotion regulation scale. *Journal of psychopathology and behavioral assessment*, 26(1), 41-54.

Stress

(Hobfoll, 1989; Gerhart, Canetti, Hobfoll, 2015).



Physiological and psychological responses

What you value is threatened

Fight or flight responses
motivate to defend what matters

We try to fix our minds, not the actual problem.

(Hayes, 2019; Hobfoll, 1989; Gerhart, Canetti, Hobfoll, 2015)

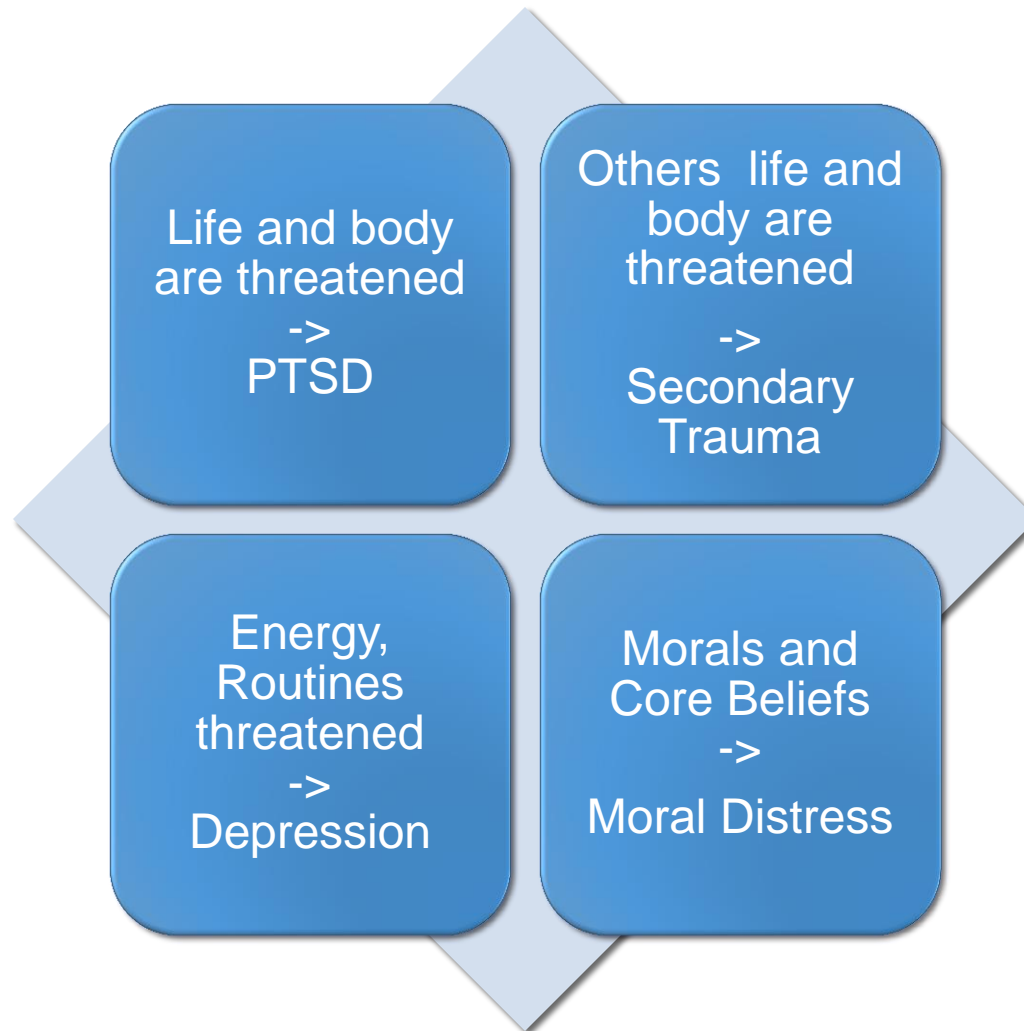
NEED TO GROW RESOURCES TO RECUPERATE.

GAINS WILL SEEM SMALLER THAN LOSSES.

PEOPLE TEND TO BE MORE DEFENSIVE. MOTIVATED TO AVOID FURTHER LOSSES.

OFTEN WE BECOME SELF-FOCUSED, RUMINATE, AND FEAR STIGMA AND REJECTION.

Stress- related syndromes (Ludick & Figley, 2017; Rushton, 2006)



End Game



Continual threat,
loss or an inability
make gains



Continual focus
on monitoring and
escaping distress



Disconnection
from outside
world



Disrupted
physiological
function

Resilience and Psychological Flexibility

- Threatening situations call for flexibility and rapid change or pivots.
- Tilt your energy in a new direction (Hayes, 2019).

- Resilience is often defined as the ability to bend without breaking.
 - It is not the absence of discomfort worry or distress.
- If you have different skills, attitudes and perspectives you can thrive by changing with situations.

- Donald Michenbaum's (1985) Stress Inoculation Training -> Practice the psychological skills you'll need to adjust to severe stress.
 - Special Forces
 - Police
 - Nurses

- Don't worry. **Train**



Lesson 1: The *Here and Now* isn't so bad.

ITS LITERALLY ALL YOU HAVE RIGHT NOW. ALSO YOUR BEST CHANCE TO ACT.

JUST LIKE THE MOVIES, TIME TRAVELING WITH OUR MINDS TENDS TO BACKFIRE

Be like a puppy when the wind blows. Feel it, smell it, run into it, be confused by it, study it. Pay attention.

(Hayes, 2019)

When are you mindful?

- Accepting, present, just being.
 - Watching a puppy run, holding babies, skiing, sports, listening to a good story from a patient, pushing a toddler on a bike, meditating, making music, dancing.
- Being around someone else/something who is present seems to help.



Skill 1: 5 Mindful Minutes

But I didn't meditate right. I'm still thinking stuff.

- Welcome to club.
- It seems that organs keep doing what they do.
- Stomachs digest.
- Brains think, feel, urge,

- In our pilots, Mindfulness has helped with clinician depression, and just skimmed a few points off PTSD symptoms.
- We think some other skills can be added in.
- So, here goes nothing.

Lesson 2:
Don't
believe
everything
you think.

Please
don't act on
all your
thoughts.

We hold onto preconceived notions, stereotypes, etc.

If we act on everything our minds tell us to do, the world is going to be hilarious for about 10 seconds. Then people will start calling the police.

Cognitive Fusion refers to becoming fixated on your thoughts, as if they are real factual things. Trauma memories and life threatening events are not the same, but trigger the same emotions.

(Hayes, 2019)

Lesson 3: Emotions and thoughts are painful. They can't harm you.

Avoidance, Denial, Repression, Rigidity
have places in our lives.

You have permission to “zone-out”

Experiential avoidance occurs when we try
to not feel bad.

End up denying who we really are

It works over the short-term. Eventually we
have to deal with the problem. Probably
because its connected to our values.

(Hayes, 2019)



Lesson 4: You are not your thoughts.

SO DON'T FEEL THE NEED TO TRY TO
GET RID OF THEM.

“YOU” IS SOMETHING MUCH MORE
TRANSCENDENT AND COMPLICATED.

SOME OF IT YOU KNOW. SOME OF IT
YOU DON'T KNOW.

(Hayes, 2019)

Skill 2: Leaning In with Defusion and Exposure

- Exposure -> repeated contact with a conditioned stimulus tends to decrease the emotional impact of that stimulus.
- Defusion-> unlinking the urges, and emotions from words
- Try not to think about “pain”
- Now repeat “pain” once a second for 30 seconds.
- Picking up the pen: 1. Say “I will not pick up this pen”2. Pick up the pen.
- How does this apply to depressive thinking?

Lesson 5: Live for what *you* want

Pliance: Like compliance.
Behaving in ways to win the acceptance of others.

Sometimes our values are not as freely chosen as we'd think.

If your life is a vessel, what do you want fill it up with?

Values as ways or qualities of being

(Hayes, 2019)

Activity 3: Flipping the Coins of Avoidance

(Follette & Pistorello, 2007)

Flipping the Coins of Pain and Avoidance

- If pain is a reaction to threatened values.
- Our pain can be our ally.
- What are you unwilling to experience?
- What values might they speak to?



UNWANTED EXPERIENCE

AVOIDANCE

UNDERLYING VALUE

COMMITTED ACTION

Embarrassment

Take easy tasks, rigid boundaries

Competence

Role-playing
challenging skills

Rejection

Shyness, lack of assertiveness

Acceptance

Safety

Physical Pain

Criticism hostility toward patient

Procrastination

Anger

Uncertainty

Self-efficacy

Giving patient false hope

Love

**Make some
commitments**

Self-Assessment

ACT Life Compass

- Life domains and directions
- Write out what some of these might look like if you head toward them
- Rate 1-10 how important (i), and how much commitment (c) you've shown recently

Are any barriers present?

- Internal: thoughts, emotions
- External: relationships, resources

Take 20 minutes. Get up walk. Stretch.

<http://www.icctc.org/August2013/PMM%20Handouts/Values.pdf>

Take a few a few more minutes to breathe

- Set a timer and do a sitting meditation.
- Or follow this link.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BwbJ5CamlyjYUnRGNk55M1JhcDg>

Other Self Assessments

1. What brings you joy?
2. What kinds of discomfort are the hardest for you to carry? Thoughts, emotions, experiences.
3. Are there emotions you could be harnessing more of?
4. If you were to make any change what would it be?

Keep Flipping the Coins

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hNx9xWarb9f2htK7JWB7kNUmKPpnmBQA/view?usp=sharing>

Discussion

- Working from the inside out.
- Avoid Ronald E. Purser's *McMindfulness*. Not a productivity tool.

- Advocate. Educate. Excite.

References and Further Reading

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