

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF COVID-19



Trends, Workforce Impacts, & Resources

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Agenda



**Defining
key
terms**



**What to expect from
a behavioral health
standpoint over the
next few months**



**Understanding
impacts to you and
your teams**



**Developing healthy
teams and resilience
in the workplace**

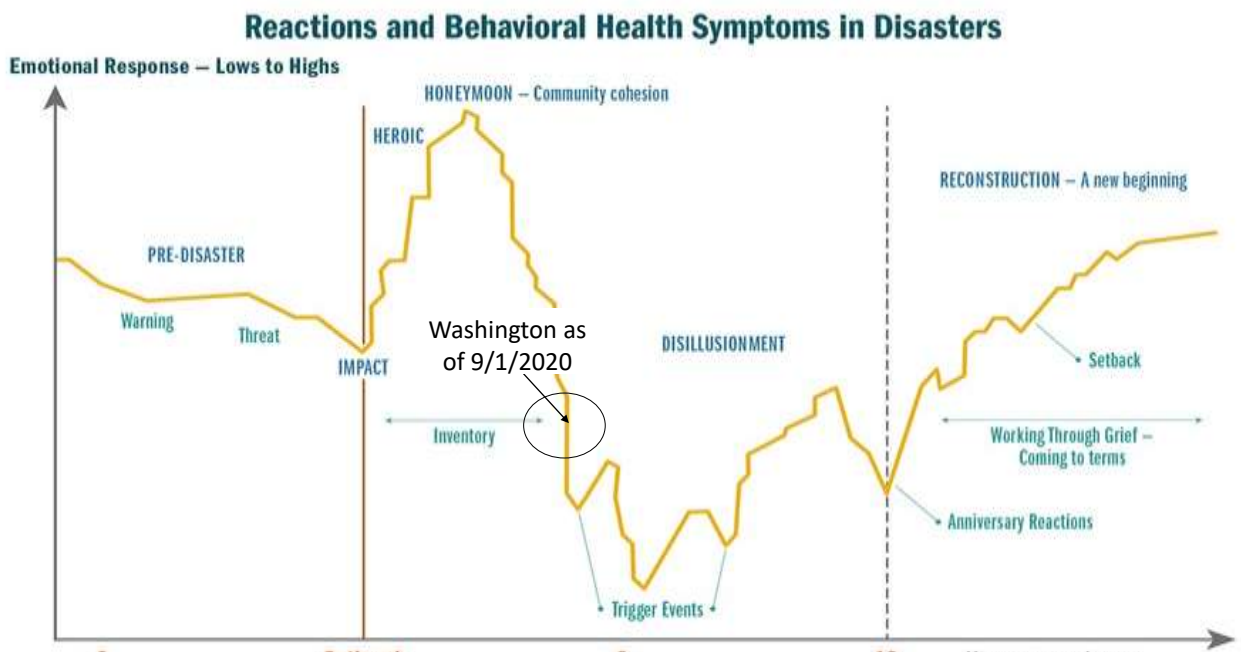
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Definitions

- 1. Burnout:** Exhaustion of body, mind, and motivation due to exposure to prolonged and unresolved work stress or frustration. Burnout is often a consequence of perceived disparity between the demands of the job and the resources that an employee has available to them.
- 2. Compassion fatigue:** Emotional and physical exhaustion leading to a diminished ability to empathize or feel compassion for others, also described as secondary traumatic stress.
- 3. Resilience:** The process - involving behaviors, thoughts, and actions - of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress. Can be developed by focusing on connection, purpose, and flexibility /adaptability.
- 4. Resilience factors:** Conditions that help a person survive during and recover from a crisis or trauma- usually internal strengths and external resources.

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What does this mean?

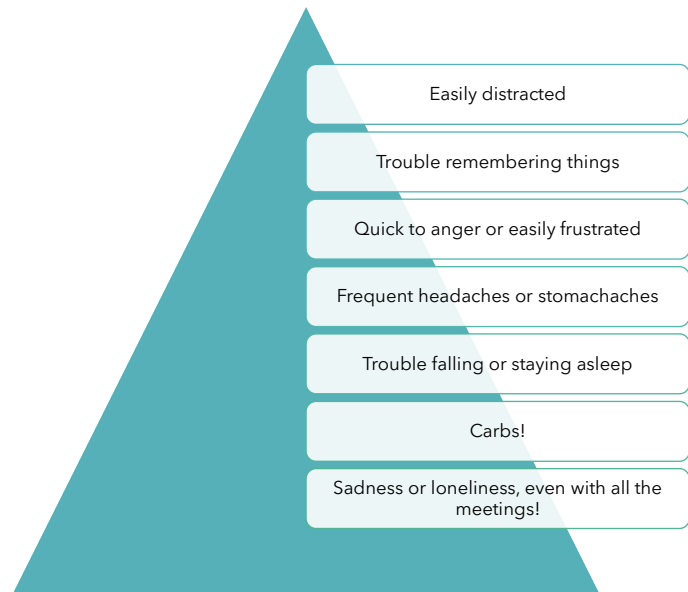
1. We can reasonably expect that approximately three million Washingtonians will experience clinically significant behavioral health symptoms over the next two to five months.
1. Symptoms of depression will likely be the most common, followed by anxiety and acute stress.
1. These symptoms will likely be strong enough to cause significant distress or impairment for most people in this group.
1. Collectively, we can get out in front of this and “flatten the behavioral health curve” through intentional development of resiliency factors.

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Common experiences during transition from Honeymoon to Disillusionment phase

Information that normalizes the shared experience helps people develop resilience.



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Stressed brains in the workplace

- Potential for more emotional responding (anger, fear, frustration), less higher-level thinking capacity.
- When people don't (or aren't able) to process the emotional rewards from their work, burnout is likely.
- Other workplace factors that contribute to burnout include:
 - Challenging work environments particularly those involving disasters, human tragedy, or suffering.
 - Work where there may be few "compassion rewards" (it feels regularly more challenging or draining than rewarding).

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Compassion Fatigue and Job Burnout

- Burnout can lead to many harmful consequences, including changes in the way people view themselves, their world, their meaning or purpose, and the future.
- Even the most resilient and well-balanced people can suffer emotionally and physically when they fail to take care of their own needs.

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Virtual work, and context of COVID-19

PROS

- Opportunities for employees to try new roles or stretch to meet new opportunities.
- Forces outdated processes to be re-worked or examined (adaptation is necessary).
- Provides some employees with work-related environmental challenges with autonomy to be able to make their own adaptations at home more successfully than in an office (lights/ seating/ breaks etc.)

CONS

- No one is immune to the effects of the pandemic.
- Less social connection- loss of work related "water cooler" discussion time.
- Sense of additional burden to perform or "help" the public particularly as part of the IMT even when emotionally or physically compromised.

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Needs and potential solutions

Identified Needs

- Connection
 - Within teams
 - Between work groups / teams
- Workload reduction or management of priorities / expectations.
- Help with Managing the Home / Work balance in the current environmental context.

Process-based solutions

- Establish regular processes to prioritize social connections during team meetings.
- Leadership at every level should 'model' healthy boundaries and wellness as a priority.
 - Calls, emails, and breaks
- Active Listening skills development

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Opportunities for Supervisors

1. WALK THE WALK: What is DONE is what matters, not what people are told to do.
2. Be honest and open in the communication process
 - a. If you don't know, tell your team that you don't know.
3. Active listening is something that all team members can benefit from learning and practicing.
 - a. Listen for the purpose of understanding and caring, NOT to problem solve.

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Key indicators for workplace stress, compassion fatigue and burnout leading into September:

Public school
plan(s); workload
on parents

Economic fears,
additional
unemployment,
businesses closing

Reversal of phased
openings

More social and
political
restrictions due to
rising infections

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Challenging conditions still to come in Q4 2020

1. Peak of "Disillusionment" phase of disaster, when behavioral health symptoms are likely going to be at their worst collectively for all.
2. Need for professional and community supports reach highest levels
3. Political division and discontent
4. Seasonal affective conditions apply (weather / hours of darkness)
5. Lack of financial resources for many combined with pressure for holiday spending
6. Concerns about a second, potentially larger wave of illness

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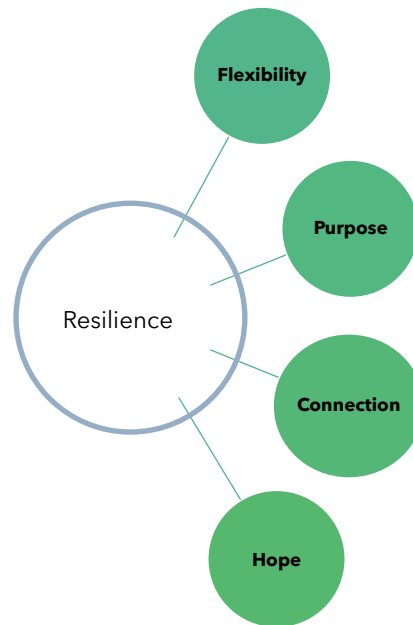
What can we do to reduce burnout generally?

- Develop Resilience: Connection, Purpose, Flexibility / Adaptability and Hope.
- Reminding yourself of things that motivate you to increase your sense of purpose, and redefine that as you need to when things change.
- Connect with people outside of work or socially within work.
- Maintaining and enhancing interpersonal boundaries: Know your limits. Say no to tasks that will take away from your work-life balance. Ask others to help when reaching limits.

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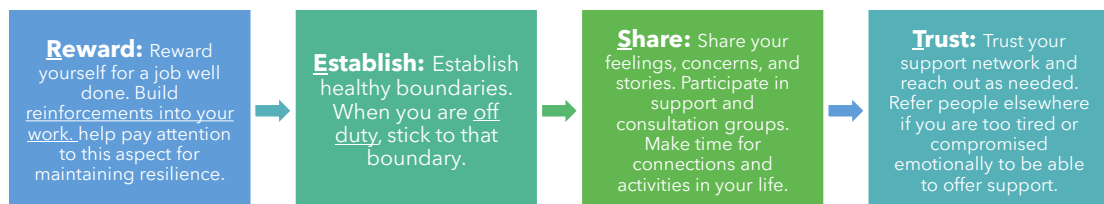
Ingredients for Resilience

Each can be developed and practiced.



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Develop personal resilience: **REST** model



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How and When to reach out for professional support

1. What does this process include?
 - a. Referrals from PCP, EAP, on-line research
 - b. Initial email or phone call
2. Personal red-flags
 - a. Dramatic changes in behavior
 - b. Substance use (increasing or binges)
 - c. Interpersonal issues (no longer communicating or getting along well with people you used to)

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Taking care
of yourself
takes care
of the
team.



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