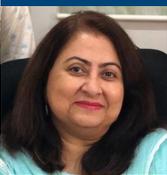




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NIP Webinar Series During COVID-19

Building Emotional Stability : Boost up your Mental Health to deal stressors related to pandemic

By: Dr. Rubina Hanif

This webinar was the first webinar of NIP webinar series. The presenter of webinar was Dr Rubina Hanif, Ph.D, Post-Doc, Fulbright Fellow and currently working as Tenured Associate



Professor at National Institute of Psychology, center of excellence. She began this webinar by highlighting the current scenario of COVID-19. How this global pandemic has globally influenced our livings, relationships, organizations etc etc etc . And , how awareness campaign worked all over the world. A lot has been said about physical health and health care workers and settings. Who reported that the mental health crises is the emerging crises of

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today. The pathways to this crises are economic instability, disconnected social life, isolation, job loss or stop at work, and lots of missing milestones. The major reasons for this mental health crises is uncertainty. That leads to many common reactions e.g., anxiety, overly stressed, irritability, sleeplessness or over sleep, aggression or hostility etc. we all know that Emotional distress is a natural reaction to what is a very abnormal event. But how can we manage our emotional reactions is a big question in these days. To manage or stable our emotional reactions, we need to follow four basic things:

1. We should tend to our self
2. We need to be realistic
3. We should maintain structure our time and activities
4. We need to build & Maintain supportive relationships

We can follow these basic things by just recognizing our potentials of what we can do and what we can not do. The techniques to get emotional stability at your own can be changing thought patterns (reframing and positive thinking), and practicing positive behaviors by practicing gratitude, forgiveness, empathy, and controlling negative reactions. The best way to get emotional stability is to express your emotions at appropriate place, appropriate way and in appropriate amount. In the last, the techniques for how to get prepare after resuming your jobs/workplace/social life was discussed. A four step model comprised of, to get prepare, to get well informed, to prevent vulnerable factors and to recover from current mental states was suggested. Overall, this webinar captured all the issues in all the life settings and techniques to get stability in our emotions .

NIP Webinar Series During COVID-19

Practices and Ethics of Telecommuting Amidst COVID-19

By: Dr. Aisha Zubair

National Institute of Psychology (NIP) has arranged a series of webinars focusing on different psychosocial aspects of COVID-19 that masses are experiencing while staying at home. In this regard



second webinar was held on 4 June, 2020 on Practices and Ethics of Telecommuting Amidst COVID-19. Resource person of the webinar was Dr. Aisha Zubair, Assistant Professor, NIP. Participants join the webinar belonged to diverse backgrounds including university faculty, speech therapists, bank employees, administrative

managers, and students. The speaker deliberated on the basic principles and practices that must be catered while working from home. Major thrust of the webinar was on developing fundamental skills and dexterity in rendering official responsibilities, obligations, and designing the existing jobs that can be fulfilled from home or any distant locations. In addition, elementary functioning of Telework, transit work scenarios, its key requisites, and minimizing the process loss during flexible work schedules was thoroughly explained. The speaker also elaborated basic ethical and moral guidelines which should be exercised while delivering administrative tasks and collaborating with colleagues in quarantine situations. It was further highlighted in the webinar that particular psychological and social cataclysms are faced by employees during Telework. Hence, relevant yet pragmatic solutions were also suggested that could assist in overcoming these emotional and cognitive hurdles. In the end, the resource person meticulously replies to all the queries put up by the participants.

NIP Webinar Series During COVID-19

Bringing Change to Approach in Life for Managing Stress

By: Dr. Humaira Jami

Experiencing stress is part of everyday life. Optimal level of stress is important for keep life going that acts as a drive to perform well; contrarily, experiencing extreme level of stress or no stress in face of adversities as COVID-19 pandemic, effect life negatively. In this context, an individual feels either helpless or overly confident, respectively, to handle the situation. Dr. Humaira Jami (Assistant Professor) in this webinar talked about different approaches like stress coping styles, rigidity/flexibility, intolerance of uncertainty, suggestibility, humour, assertiveness, and unhelpful thought patterns that are currently not helping masses in managing stress in context of COVID-19 specifically and life in general too. She reflected upon the ways and strategies to change these approaches in life to manage stress appropriately. Firstly, she tried to psycho-educate people about how

As an approach in life, we utilize different coping strategies to manage stress. In Psychological literature, we come across active vs. avoidant coping strategies, problem-focused vs. emotion-focused coping, assimilative vs. accommodative, etc. To simplify the argument, action-oriented and problem-focused approaches are better ways to handle one's stress that is look into ways in how to protect oneself and family from COVID-19 rather than considering it as a conspiracy or overly exaggerated situation globally. At the same time, some feel so emotionally overwhelmed by the stress because of financial constraints, health related fear, academic problems, etc. that it is becoming difficult for them to get into normal life pattern again. General observation in Pakistan shows that we have reactive approach while handling crisis situation and do not have visionary approach to get prepared before-hand, therefore, we do not use anticipatory and proactive approach to coping stressful conditions. If we change our approach and try to take measures before adversity embraces us and regret, it will help to protect us and our families. Although, reactive coping gradually brings into resilience, but experiencing trauma can be reduced by timely measures like wearing mask, keeping social distance, and maintaining hygienic conditions. This is equally applicable to government institutions to have vision and take up proactive, anticipatory, and preventive approach to guide and protect masses than being reactive.



stress is related to our health and how prolonged exposure to stress leads to health related problems. On exposure to fearful circumstance, brain and body get activated and a person responds as fight, flight, or freeze in the given situation. Avoidance as evident in flight behavior or not knowing what to do at the spur of moment in freezing state, are common reactions but not helpful. To reinstate normal bodily state, breathing exercises and muscle relaxation techniques help to reduce immediate effect of increased level of stress.

During the course of pandemic COVID-19, as a psychologist, we can pinpoint certain characteristics of the people or their approach in life that instigate stress at massive level or becoming cause of COVID-19 spread in Pakistan. First and foremost are impulsivity, rigidity, and suggestibility. *Impulsivity* means inability to delay action. We observe that the moment some people receive posts related to COVID-19 on social media or listen to some news; they do not verify that information is correct or not. In the want to win game of being more informed about current affairs, without any

delay, they share posts/news impulsively. This gives force to spreading rumors, hence becomes source of giving rise to stress and anxiety among recipient of posts on social media. A vicious cycle of spreading rumors is maintained by such impulsive actions. Some individuals are impulsive in their behavior that are evident in damaging property in hospital setting and threatening doctors, nurses, paramedical staff; making videos and sharing impulsively; etc. They indulge in these actions without analyzing situation objectively and without comprehending what will be the repercussions for the society overall. They become source of creating doubt on the system and gradually making people not to access health related services timely and many have met fatal consequences in due course of time.

Rigidity is considering one's approach as the best and not willing to change in changing scenarios. Such individuals who have rigid approach in life also lack objective appraisal of reality. We observe that some people believe that Corona virus is fake and they do not accept or want to make required changes in life. They do not maintain social distance, wear mask, observe restrictions in lock down, etc. While those who are flexible, they change them with changing situations and are more adaptive, hence, able to combat successfully. Contrarily, there are some individuals who are very suggestible. *Suggestibility* is changing one's opinion or getting easily influenced by other's opinion. They quickly believe in hearsay and can easily be persuaded. Such individuals are easily influenced by conspiracy theories, propaganda, rumours, etc. Again like impulsive and rigid individuals, they lack ability to evaluate things objectively and lack ability to see things in perspective. Being suggestible increases their stress level if they come across more negative news/opinions. Or may not be following SOPs, if in their social circle, most of the family and friends propagate the notion that Corona is fake.

Currently, uncertainty prevails in every aspect of life that is existential in context of health, financial stability, job security, academic pursuits, etc. Everybody is engulfed in state of uncertainty. Some people are more *tolerant of uncertain* conditions, while other have less tolerance and get upset quickly. Since all are effected globally, there is need to internalize this fact to reduce anxiety emerging out of uncertain

condition. Beside this, we cannot reduce uncertainty and some of the things are beyond our control. Best approach is to increase tolerance of uncertainty; get active to take actions to achieve goals in whatever ways we can; follow SOPs to reduce health related uncertainty; get onto online system to accomplish occupational and academic goals. Worrying and getting anxious because of uncertain conditions do not serve the purpose; taking action for the things which are under control and stop worrying about the things which are beyond control is better approach.

In adverse situations, those who have *humorous* approach in life, experience less stress and anxiety. They look for element of joy and laughter not only in their lives, but also in interacting with friends and family. Humor holds self-enhancing effect in difficult times. Nonetheless, there are some who enjoy by making fun of others. It was observed that people made memes on Chinese, government's health related programs, teachers taking online classes, etc. Sometimes their jokes were really targeted to belittle or demean some individual, nations, govt. official and institutes, etc. For a time being it generates laughter, but latently these are judgmental and promote prejudices, doubts, hatred, etc. It's just like jokes about spouse, *sardar ji*, ethnicity based jokes, etc. that are rampantly shared among masses which actually reflects hidden hostility and promotes hostility. Self-enhancing and affiliative jokes promote positivity, while, aggressive and self-defeating jokes generate negativity. *Assertiveness* is a life skill and a protective factor in current scenario. Those who acknowledge significance of health and assertively maintain or follow instructions of government and health practitioners, they are successful in combating current challenges. They do not hesitate to refuse going to social gatherings, assert to maintain social distance and wear mask, insisting upon maintaining hygienic conditions. Pakistan has collectivistic culture where people are socially oriented and generally cannot refuse hanging out with friends and family at any cost. Those who avoid even for having some significant reasons are taken as rude, arrogant, selfish, etc. Being assertive for one's well-being in current scenario is a real task. Assertiveness is talking about one's rights and needs without getting aggressive. Personal integrity, physical and mental well-being is the most

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important right of any person, so keeping an assertive approach for healthy living is need of hour.

Finally, current situation of COVID-19 demands vigilance; active, proactive, anticipatory, and preventive coping strategies; rationality and objective

reality testing; flexibility and assertiveness; tolerance of uncertainty; self-enhancing and affiliative humorous approach; structuring and prioritizing daily activities; and bringing healthy change in life to manage stress.

NIP Webinar Series During COVID-19

Managing Your Anger During COVID-19

By: Dr. Irum Naqvi

Impacts of COVID-19 are broad and general but media has played its role at its best to create awareness and educate the masses about disease and its prevention. Simultaneously media has scared us as well by showing daily the rising figures of diagnosed cases and deaths. It has developed the uncertainty and fears among all of us about the health of our loved ones and created general feeling of anger on being helpless to deal with pandemic effectively. This anger has influenced us and our



relations so it is the need of time to deal with this anger effectively. Anger is normal when negative or unpleasant things happen in surroundings and leads to aggressive behavior. As it influence our interaction with other people and individual is prone to be left alone so we need to focus on anger management. Here are some tips to manage your anger:

- Tip 1 based on exploring what's really behind your anger. Out-of-control anger behavior can stem from what you've learned as a child. Family members, who scream, hit or throw

things, role model for a child that anger is expressed in this manner. Traumatic events and high levels of stress can make one more susceptible to anger as well. Identify aggressive acts as it includes Throw something, Kick someone or something, Get in someone's face, Shoving, grabbing, hitting, Break something, Call someone names, Give someone a dirty look, Silent treatment, Spread rumors and etc.

- Tip 2 based on the awareness of your anger warnings included knots in your stomach, clenching your hands or jaw, feeling clammy or flushed, breathing faster, headaches, pacing or needing to walk around, "Seeing red", Having trouble concentrating, pounding heart, tensing your shoulders. Identify automatic negative thoughts trigger anger like you overgeneralize the situation as I read a story of someone who died of Covid-19, therefore I will die of Covid-19." "I saw a hospital that ran out of resources, therefore our hospital will run out of resources." You take responsibility of everything which is beyond your control. I may be not taking much care of hygiene so my child may get affected by covid-19.
- Tip 3: Avoid people, places, and situations that bring out your worst. Stressful events don't excuse anger so identify stressful events that affect you, take control of your environment, avoid unnecessary aggravation, Look at your regular routine and try to identify activities, times of day, people, places, or situations that trigger irritable or

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angry feelings. You get into a fight every time you discuss family things with your wife while watching news. Hygiene concerns now a days drives you crazy. Consider ways to avoid these triggers or view the situation differently so it doesn't make your blood boil.

- Tip 4: Learn ways to cool down. Once you know how to recognize the warning signs that your temper is rising and anticipate your triggers, you can act quickly to deal with your anger before it spins out of control. Focus on the physical sensations of anger, tune into the way your body feels when you're angry this can lessen the emotional intensity of your anger. Take some deep breaths. Deep, slow breathing helps counteract increasing tension.

Breathe deeply from the abdomen, getting as much fresh air as possible into your lungs. Exercise, walk around the block releases pent-up energy so you can approach the situation with a cooler head. Take advantage of the relaxing power of your sense of sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste. Listening to music, visualize a favorite place, learn to express hostile feelings in a polite way, it is encouraged to tell hurt feeling not the aggressive.

Conclusively remember anger is not a solution so identify your effective role, focus on effective communication, healthy thoughts and healthy diet to deal with it effectively.

NIP Webinar Series During COVID-19

Effective use of 'Me' Time During Pandemic: A Time of Self-Improvement

By: Ms. Arooj Mujeeb

The 5th webinar titled "Effective use of 'Me' Time During Pandemic: A Time of Self-Improvement" was held on 18th June, 2020. Resource Person of the Webinar was Ms. Arooj Mujeeb, Research



Associate cum Lecturer at NIP. Webinar encompassed the ways through which the quarantine time period could be made effective. Webinar

highlighted the need of five strategies including acknowledging turbulence, providing right Fuel for body, moving (exercising), organizing sleep pattern, and remaining connected with friends and

community. Resource person emphasized the value of following a schedule, adopting any hobby, maintaining journal, as well as entertaining only that information which is received through health experts in order to protect mental health. It was discussed that quarantine is a feasible time period to develop strengths and learning skills and that SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-based) goals should be developed to learn skills. Lastly debate was generated on necessity of being efficient and productive during quarantine where it was concluded that remaining physically and mentally healthy should be the goal for everyone and people who cannot thrive under stressful pandemic should be valued and respected equally.

Hamartia – A Literary Device

By: Sadaf Rehman

In literature, hamartia refers to a character's tragic flaw which ultimately leads to their downfall. Another example is from *Frankenstein*, a novel by Mary Shelley. The character Victor also experiences comes to a tragic end due to an error. His excessive pride and ego lead to his downfall in the novel. He wants to become a scientist who is unmatched in his talent and skills. His pride leads him to creating a monster which becomes the reason of his tragedy.

Hamartia is a literary device. A literary device is a structure that writers use to easily deliver or express their message to the readers. In Greek, the word literally means to miss the mark.



This term was first used by Aristotle in *Poetics*, which is the first known treatise on literary theory. Aristotle described hamartia as a characteristic of the main character that sparks a series of inevitable event. These series of events then change the character's luck from good to bad. This reversal of fate that the main character experiences is called *peripeteia*.

What makes this a complex concept is that this literary device links both negative and positive traits to tragic outcomes. It can be any error made due to plain ignorance, error in judgement, a character flaw, or even a sin. Hamartia may even seem like a great trait at first, but the excess of it leads to tragedy.

A very common example of hamartia is seen in the Shakespeare play *Romeo and Juliet*, a play about young lovers whose families are bitter rivals. They believe that their love can overpower the rivalry and everything will be resolve. This belief is what leads

to their eventual fall. The young couple die because of loving too much; that is, hamartia.

Another example is from *Frankenstein*, a novel by Mary Shelley. The character Victor also experiences comes to a tragic end due to an error. His excessive pride and ego lead to his downfall in the novel. He wants to become a scientist who is unmatched in his talent and skills. His pride leads him to creating a monster which becomes the reason of his tragedy.

One example is Frodo from the *Lord of the Rings* series by J.R.R Tolkien. In the series, the ring is Frodo's fatal flaw. Even though Frodo himself is generally a good person, the ring threatens and portents to cause his downfall like the way it did for Gollum, that is, by driving him crazy with the power and control that having the ring grants him.

The last example is of Achilles of Greek mythology. He was an invincible warrior, but not quiet. He was famous for his fatal flaw: his heel. When he was young, his mother dipped him into the river of Styx, holding him by his heel, to make him strong. He did become strong, except for his heel that was held by his mother. The heel eventually caused his destruction. In modern day, the phrase *Achilles' heel* is used to refer to a person's fatal flaw, that is, hamartia.

Hamartia is a powerful literary device. It inspires a sense of fear and pity in the audience as they can relate to the character. The character has a combination of good and bad traits, just like the audience. The feelings of sympathy are surface due to this exact reason. The audience feels bad for the reversal of fortune the character goes through. The audience may also feel like the same could happen to them as well if they were to also delve into those actions. Hamartia, then, works to create a as a sense of moral purpose. That is, to inspire the audience to improve themselves by eluding their flaws that may bring tragedy to their lives.

Featured Alumni

NIDA FATIMA ZAIDI

TELEVISION DIRECTOR, PRODUCER, WRITER

Nida Fatima Zaidi, is an award winning TV producer and director skilled in directing multiple television genera. Associated with Pakistan Television for past 14 years, she is best known for her drama series “Kuch Sach kuch Kahani” based on true stories, aired on PTV HOME, PTV Global UK/USA in 2019-2020.



Her talent in directing documentary & docu-drama has also been acclaimed by National Television in Pakistan (PTV) with four nominations as Best Producer for the years 2006- 2010 and the Awards for Best Producer for the years 2007-2008. In 2012, her short film New Way to Peace a story of a nine year old child received Exemplary Contribution Award for Peace Promotion, by Jang Group & Nutshell Forum. Famous career counseling series Apna Maqam Paida Ker (Carve Your Destiny) directed by her, aired for over a year on Pakistan Television in 2012-13. In 2014, International Labor Organization recognized one of her short documentary films Bey Samar (Unrewarded) with an Award for Excellence in Journalism, presented by the Govt. of Canada. The film features unrewarded economic contribution of working women in societies. From 2016 on, she has concentrated her focus towards writing and directing fiction. In 2018, she finished directing her first drama series “Kuch Sach Kuch Kahani” inspired by real stories of urban Pakistani youth, which is currently airing on PTV HOME/Global. At the moment she is working on a Tele-film and a series of short films both as a writer and director.

An activist at heart, Zaidi believes in using visual storytelling for the cause of social justice and equality. She focuses on addressing social issues with the intent to give voice to the voiceless, break stereotypes and build bridges. Connecting people across the bounds of class, culture, race and religion and creating narratives for the under-privileged is the real cursor behind her work. Major reasons she wants to make films is to help validate the lives of those sections of society that are denied of privilege. While the groups she advocates for are children, women, gender minorities, victims of terrorism & labor class ; major themes that underpin her work are gender discrimination, peace, counter terrorism, interfaith harmony and respect for diversity. Her commitment to raising voice for the cause of women got her recognized as a women rights vocalist.

An International Visitor Leadership fellow, Zaidi has also been associated with renowned universities in Pakistan as a lecturer volunteering to teach film and TV. Her academic background is a Masters in Psychology and a Masters in Communication. Her Alma meter is National Institute of Psychology, Quaid I Azam University which she finds herself privileged to be a part of and start her learning journey from. Because of her initial training and interest in psychology she always used principles of human behavior and her understanding of human nature while writing her screenplays and designing content for media.

She also possesses extensive national and international training both on media content and technical aspects of television production and filmmaking. Her online engagement with one of the best film schools in the world National Film and Television School, in UK and University of Birmingham, got her recognized with Certifications in Filmmaking from Script to Screen and film business.

In 2020, Nida Fatima Zaidi formed a virtual circle of friends: artists, intellectuals and activists, by the name of ART-LECT-IVISM. The community aims to generate online discourse on artistic expression intellectual engagement and cultural activism through discussion and dialogues using social media. Her personal interests also involve physical training, yoga and meditative practices.