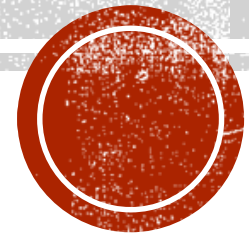


# MITIGATING STRESS IMPACT FOR COVID 19

MAPPING A NEW WAY FORWARD

Laura McGladrey, PMHNP, FPN, MSN, RN, FAWM

[www.responderalliance.com](http://www.responderalliance.com)



Let everything happened to you, beauty AND terror.  
Just keep going.  
No feeling is final.



R.M. Rilke

Photo credit Shane Treat



# PLAN TO ADJUST FOR A WHILE

## Phases of adjustment to COVID 19

1. Security
2. Mental shift
3. Embrace the new normal

## Phases of grief

1. Denial
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance
6. Meaning

Higher Ed Ahmad, A (2020) Why you should ignore all that coronavirus-inspired productivity pressure. The Chronicle of Higher Education

· McGladrey- Responder Alliance 2020

Barinoto, S (2020) The discomfort your feeling is grief. The Harvard Business Review.



# (UN)RULES FOR THE COVID 19 MOMENT

1. Many of the old rules don't apply right now
2. Stock up on self-compassion
3. Deployment rules- Schedule sleep, eat, breathe, meditate- THEN work, school, dishes
4. Create new expectations – and low is good
5. Celebrate the little wins
6. Your oxygen mask first, then your family, then your community/work
7. New rules of connection- Stock up on the good, limit the battery drain
8. Big feelings are best shared
9. Let go of what you can't control
10. Redefine heroics and your mission – there is good here







## Stress Continuum Model

Stressor

READY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Effective communication</li><li>• Socially, spiritually active</li><li>• Calm and confident</li><li>• Strong, cohesive units and families</li><li>• Emotionally and physically healthy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes from normal behaviors</li><li>• Poor focus, loss of interest</li><li>• Irritable and pessimistic</li><li>• Temporary and mild distress</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unresolved loss, trauma, wear and tear, inner conflict</li><li>• Social isolation</li><li>• Sleeplessness and self medicating</li><li>• More severe and lasting effects</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Constant and disabling distress</li><li>• Depression, severe anxiety</li><li>• Symptoms get worse or get better then worse again</li><li>• Relationships and work suffer</li></ul>
TO STAY MISSION READY	TO RECOVER AND BUILD RESILIENCE	TO BEGIN HEALING	TO GET HELP
Keep fit, eat right, relax	Get adequate sleep, talk to someone you trust	Talk to a chaplain, counselor, or medical provider	Seek medical treatment
Unit Leader Responsibility	Individual, Shipmate, Family Responsibility		Caregiver Responsibility

10

## USMC STRESS CONTINUUM

## COMBAT AND OPERATIONAL STRESS FIRST AID



# INDIVIDUAL STRESS CONTINUUM

## READY

Sense of mission  
Spiritually and emotionally  
Healthy  
Physically Healthy  
Emotionally  
Availability

Healthy Sleep  
Enjoying  
Sense of  
Joy/Vitality  
Room for  
complexity

## REACTING

Cynicism  
Work avoidance  
Loss of interest  
Distance from  
others  
Short fuse  
CHANGE

Life feels 'bleh'  
Lack of motivation  
Fatigue/weariness  
Sleep Disturbance

## INJURED

Sleep  
disturbances  
Numbing and  
avoiding  
Burnout  
Nightmares  
Trapped

Distant from life  
Exhausted  
Physical  
Symptoms  
" I usta"

## CRITICAL

Hopelessness  
Anxiety  
Depression  
Intrusive thoughts  
Feeling lost or out  
of control  
Insomnia

Thought of suicide  
Self blame  
Hiding out  
Broken  
relationships  
Careless mistakes  
Panic



COVID-19 Stress Continuum			
Minimize exposure – Avoid unnecessary exposure. Schedule exposed check ins.			
Potential – Awareness of stress injury formation [MOI: overwhelmed, emotional connection, helplessness, error/guilt, isolation, near-miss, fatalities]			
Signs & Symptoms – Ready   Reacting   Injured   Critical (See below)			
Follow up – On-site debrief, one-on-one, peers/leadership, incident support			
Plan for exposure – Utilize peer, leadership and provisional help (for you & team members)			
IMPACT → INJURY Signs & Symptoms			
READY	REACTING	INJURED	CRITICAL
COVID-19; This is going to be hard, but we can do this.	COVID-19; and the government isn't doing anything.	COVID-19; I'm going to hide until this is over.	COVID-19; My life is over.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm alarmed (and I'm going to look for resources)</li> <li>• Sense of Mission</li> <li>• Realistic, concerned but moving forward</li> <li>• Appropriate cleaning and social distancing</li> <li>• PBR – Pause, Breath, Repeat</li> <li>• Supporting other team members</li> <li>• Creative connection</li> <li>• Outward focus</li> <li>• Motivated to respond</li> <li>• Awareness and planning</li> <li>• Solution Driven</li> <li>• Kindness to self/others</li> <li>• "We're all in this together"</li> <li>• Practicing Gratitude</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm alarmed (and there's not enough to go around)</li> <li>• I don't like Teleworking</li> <li>• Short Fuse</li> <li>• Fear based cleaning and isolation</li> <li>• Communication breaking down</li> <li>• Feeling there is a lack of communication</li> <li>• Changes in personality</li> <li>• Fatigue/weariness</li> <li>• Teamwork breaking down</li> <li>• Decrease in high performance</li> <li>• No longer sharing ideas or</li> <li>• Temporary sleep issues, eating issues, distress</li> <li>• Spinning at work, not able to complete tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm scared (and I can't stop watching the news)</li> <li>• Lack of motivation to leave the house</li> <li>• Physical symptoms</li> <li>• Exhaustion</li> <li>• Withdrawal</li> <li>• Emotional numbness</li> <li>• Increased use of numbing tools such as alcohol.</li> <li>• Performance degrading</li> <li>• Defeatist attitude</li> <li>• Complaint Driven</li> <li>• AVOIDANT- "this doesn't involve me, so I don't need to engage."</li> <li>• "This is never going to end."</li> <li>• Highly Individualized- every person for themselves."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm terrified (and I can't breathe)</li> <li>• Hopelessness</li> <li>• Can't sleep</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Thoughts of Suicide</li> <li>• Damage to relationships</li> <li>• Feeling lost or out of control</li> <li>• Unable to work</li> <li>• Complete disengagement</li> <li>• Giving up</li> <li>• Paranoia and Isolation</li> <li>• Panic</li> <li>• Can never get enough supplies</li> <li>• Feelings of scarcity</li> <li>• Blaming others</li> <li>• Panic</li> <li>• Beating yourself up</li> </ul>



# STRESS INJURY VS. STRESS IMPACT

**TARGET FOR MITIGATION**

**Stress injuries occur in a state of stress;**

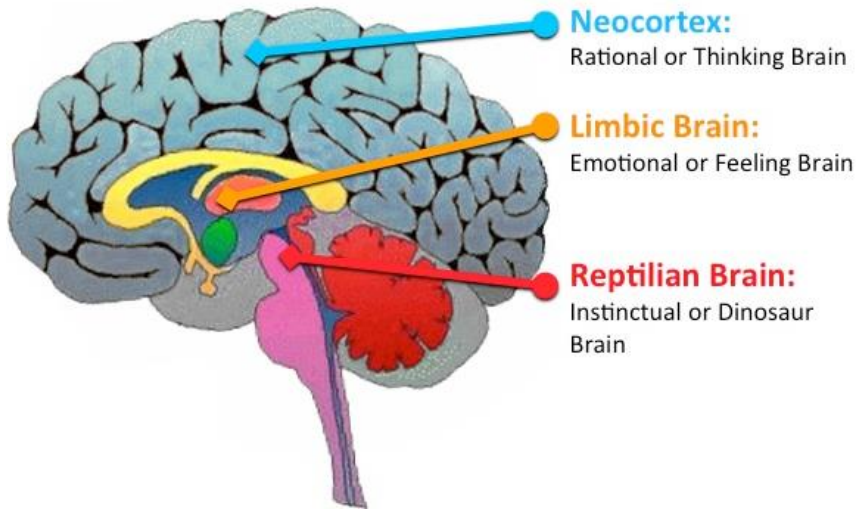
Forward moving on planning, structure and mitigating stress will support stress impact to guides, educators and responders in the coming months.





# STRESS INJURY FORMATION

**TRAUMA: “ A STIMULUS THAT OVERWHELMS ONE’S CAPACITY TO INTEGRATE IT.”**



Response system  
overwhelmed

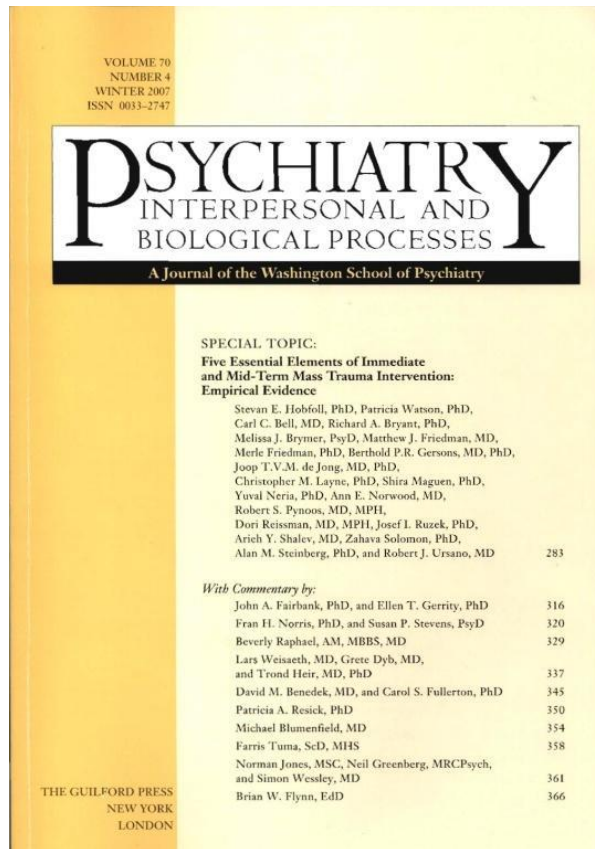
Emotional **Connection**

**Isolation**

Helplessness



# EVIDENCE BASE FOR COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL DISASTER



Hobfoll et al Psychiatry 70:2007



**PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID**

**SAFETY**

**CALM**

**CONNECTION**

**SELF-EFFICACY**

**HOPE**



# PLAN YOUR GO KIT

PACK AND PLAN FOR YOUR EXPEDITION



## Stress Impact Mitigation (PPE)

### SAFETY

- Address identified safety concerns proactively- Encourage planning for personal life
- Encourage teams to be creative and make decisions to increase their safety
- Protect people from additional stress exposure when possible
- Establish a clear plan and communicate it often, through many channels
- Protect from rumors, continuous news updates by scheduling updates

### CALM

- Safe zones: Create windows of time when folks can work uninterrupted by news, and allow for creativity, effective work, calm and connection during these times.
- Demonstrate and model calm & empathy
- Adjust priorities as needed to reduce conflicting demands
- Prioritize importance of teamwork and building morale
- PBR - Pause Breath Repeat

### EMPOWERMENT

- Provide sideboards and resources for decision making and encourage/foster creative solutions
- Seek ideas and input from the team
- Permission to be creative with work assignments and flexibility
- Create structure: Including sleep and mealtimes, new work routines, plan for work from home or established practices, planned connection via meetings and check ins
- Encourage self-advocacy

### CONNECTION

- Check in with individuals regularly
- Acknowledge the impacts to family and communities. Plan for sustaining connection.
- Encourage new and creative means of connections with peers, family, others.
- Practice “social distancing” without creating “social isolation”

### HOPE

- Lay out the path ahead, even if just short-term steps
- Model and encourage individual and shared gratitude practice.
- Sustain a resourced view that this will end
- “Lend” hope/if when someone runs out

## RESOURCES

[www.responderalliance.com](http://www.responderalliance.com)

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

[www.ptsd.va.gov](http://www.ptsd.va.gov)

<https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/nmh05-0210.pdf>

*\*based on COSFA stress continuum, adapted by Laura McGladrey*

*With contribution from National Parks Service*





# SAFETY

Strive for *relative safety*; create **safe zones** where you can work, connect, play, love, and move without COVID 19.

Reflect current safety when applicable. What's working right now- ie, healthy, enough food, community- **Invest in your immune system**

Protect from rumors, misinformation, bad news from folks you don't know

Schedule times for information updates vs. trickling in all day

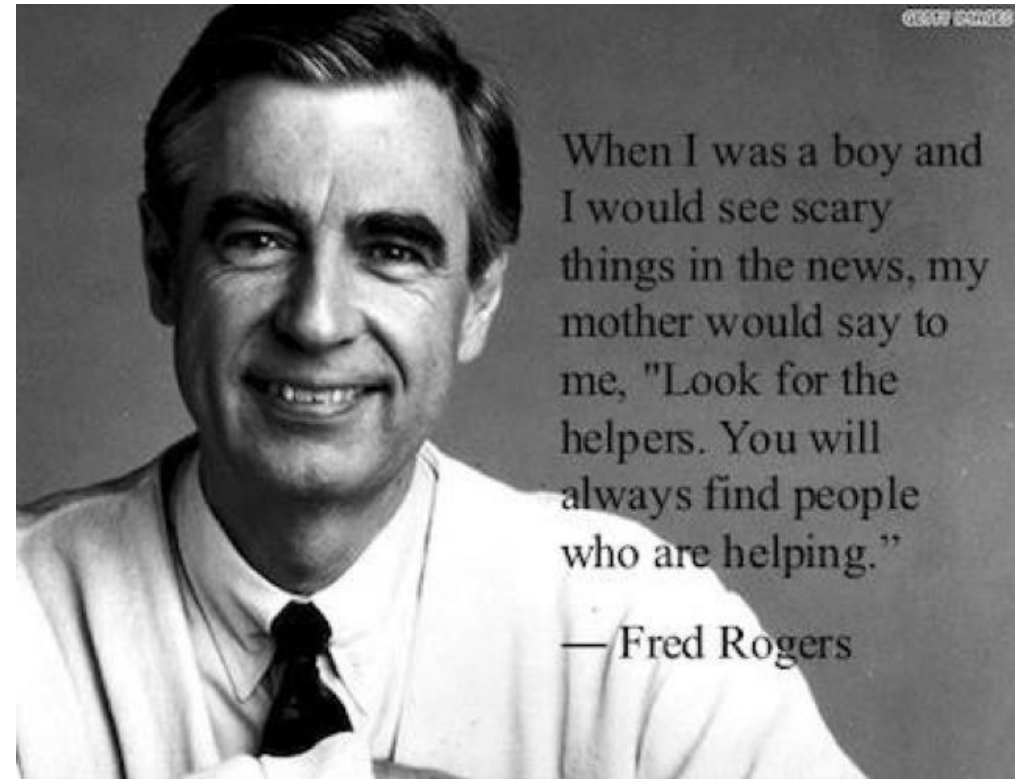
Honor anticipatory grief and anxiety as real but not the only reality



# CALM;

THIS IS A NORMAL RESPONSE TO AN ABNORMAL SITUATION.

- **Normalize** anxiety and fear as a reaction to this global event, and nearly universal grief response to overwhelming and unsettling change.
- This is a moment to re-calibrate expectations and give space for what is rising



# CALM

- **Schedule grounding-** build it in (Yoga with Adrienne, Mindfulness app, daily walk)
- Create **COVID free zones-** Turn off the ping, connect, play sleep
- Leverage your **immune system** by downshifting practices
- Schedule engagement with calm humans/animals
- Back to the basics- Breathe (oxygen), movement, food, sleep



# EFFICACY

Create a **new definition** of productive – adjust to not getting much done for a while

Look for small wins and achievable goals-

Schedule priority activities – connection, sleep, meditation, structure like you're guiding an expedition

Wash your hands, create a plan, **do the next right thing**

**Service to others-** when bandwidth allows; Invest in rest and adjustment as service to others



# HOPE

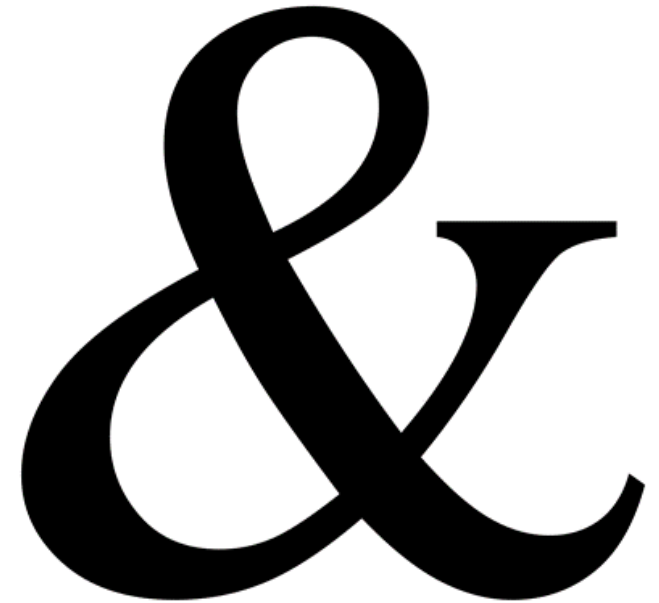
Stock up on self-compassion – New norms are the norm

Take one day at a time AND keep **planning for future**

Practice gratitude AND create new wiring

Digest what you can AND only what you can

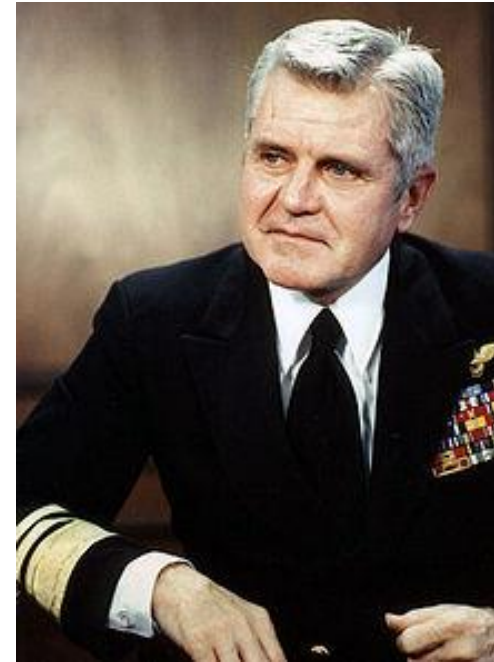
Plan for the long haul, AND keep your goals at the daily level





# HOPE AND THE STOCKDALE PARADOX

You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end—which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be



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# SAFETY; LEADERSHIP IN COVID-19

- Strive for *relative safety*; Reflect current safety when applicable, create safe zones
- Accurate, organized voice
- Establish a clear plan and communicate it often, through many channels
- Offer accurate information sources in the media for information, rely on human contact for reassurance (Those struggling with severe anxiety can find a trusted friend to deliver important updates without images or media feeds)
- Consider daily roundup or update, vs. trickling information all day long.



# LEADERSHIP TOOLS AND EXPEDITION PLANNING FOR COVID 19





# CALM

## LEADERSHIP IN COVID 19

- Avoid large group sharing where folks share what they heard, and are feeling. Encourage this in small groups, buddy systems or pairs to leverage connection and resource. Ask to hear from folks aren't doing well.
- Safe Zones; Create windows of time when folks can work uninterrupted by news, and allow for creativity, effective work, calm and connection during these times.
- Leverage grounding, calm. Yes, yoga, walks, bike rides, breathing, but also consider games, goals and direction together.
- Mindfulness apps. Headspace and 10 percent happier are offering free subscriptions to first responders. Consider doing a mindfulness practice to ground following announcements of closures, hard news, and times of anxiety. Consider incorporating into virtual meetings as well.
- Mitigate losses in real time if possible- real and secondary resource losses predict how well people will fair following ongoing disaster. Listening and mitigating financial and household needs- MASLOWs hierarchy, and allowing staff to attend will reduce or mitigate long term distress and panic.



# EFFICACY

**“GENERAL SENSE THAT ONE’S BELIEFS AND ACTIONS WILL LEAD TO A MORE POSITIVE OUTCOME” (*BANDURA*)**

- **Problem-focused coping** – Provide small wins, increases sense of control and aids the situation at hand. Assist staff in breaking down tasks into manageable units.
- **Cope Ahead**
- **Create structure-** including sleep and meal times, new work routines, plan for work from home or established practices, planned connection via meetings and check in's
- Consider Individual Resiliency Plans for staff and their families in two week intervals
- Allow time for staff to create plan for supplies, child and pet care and establish a two week plan in the case of quarantine or self-quarantine.
- **Lead Self- and Collective Efficacy**
- Efficacy requires leadership support- Self-efficacy + Belief in leadership = Injury protection
- Empowerment without resources is counterproductive and demoralizing- Offer resources to take action whenever possible



# CONNECTION

**LEADING AND ENCOURAGING CONNECTION IS CENTRAL TO INJURY MITIGATION DURING COVID 19**

- Plan for sustaining connection. Anticipate high degree of connection will initially with deterioration over time. Plan for the long haul
- Consider systems approach, buddy system, or peer support planning for individual responders and team. Schedule meetings and check in's.
- Designate high priority connection with resourced peers – leaders tend to fall into the trap of supporting others without support. Create networks of peer support with like-minded peers who support you
- Measure bandwidth for connection with those who draw energy. Limit or avoid when possible



# HOPE

**“HERE’S WHAT WE FACE. HERE’S WHAT WE HAVE GOING FOR US.”**

- Acknowledge the very difficult reality, reflect reasons for hope
- Lay out the path ahead, even if just short-term steps
- Prepare people for the long-term
- “Lend” hope if/when it runs out
- Model and encouraged individual and shared gratitude practice
- Sustain a resourced view that this will end. Set achievable goals.
- Remain future oriented
- Access spiritual and community resources for hope and future and meaning



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# QUESTIONS?

[Support@responderalliance.com](mailto:Support@responderalliance.com)

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# REFERENCES

Barinoto, S (2020) The discomfort your feeling is grief. The Harvard Business Review, available at <https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief>

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Hobfoll, W. P. (2007). Five essential elements of imme. *Five essential elements of immediate and mid-term mass trauma intervention: empirical evidence.*, Winter;70(4):283-315.

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Available at; <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Why-You-Should-Ignore-All-That/248366>

