

SUMMARY

GYMHA Free Webinar - Coping with COVID-19 Anxiety and Uncertainty

The webinar “Coping with COVID-19 Anxiety and Uncertainty” was held on 5pm on the 16th April 2020 in Melbourne, Vic Australia.

Objectives:

- understand the basics about the COVID-19 virus, symptoms, and how it is spread.
- describe what you can do to protect yourself and others.
- tell the difference between myths and facts about COVID-19.
- understand that these turbulent times can lend itself to heightened feelings of stress, pressure, uncertainty, and anxiety.
- building resilience in the face of adversities.
- discover tools, coping tips and advice for keeping yourself and your remote employees motivated, supported and equipped
- review risk, media communications, and reading Anxiety.
- reception to government messaging and available support.

Speakers

Speaker 1: Prof Jude Ediae - GYMHA Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Trained Mental Health Practitioner, Business and Education Specialist – Melbourne

Topic: understand the basics about the COVID-19 virus, symptoms, and how it is spread: tell the difference between myths and facts about COVID-19.

Speaker 2: Thomas Keplar - GYMHA Chairperson

Welcoming speech: The COVID-19 outbreak is the most serious thing we have ever seen. Some countries are struggling and finding it tough with the lock down situation. But we're fairly secure in Australia. People will always remember this pandemic. We need a collective wisdom, global

solidarity to fight our worst enemy, COVID-19. Let's always remember that each person matters as human beings. So, let's do the right thing, work together to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speaker 2: Hon Jason Wood MP - Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs

Topic: reception to government messaging and available support

Speaker 3: Niharika Hiremath - Commissioner at the National Mental Health Commission

Topic: describe what you can do to protect yourself and others, review risk, media communications, and reading Anxiety

Speaker 4: Karen Chaston - Beyond Loss Mentor, International Speaker, Author and CPA – NSW

Topic: understand that these turbulent times can lend itself to heightened feelings of stress, pressure, uncertainty, and anxiety

Speaker 5: Elizabeth Etta - GYMHA Public Relation Officer, Author, Counsellor, Youth Leader, Fitness and Wellness Coach

Topic: understand that these turbulent times can lend itself to heightened feelings of stress, pressure, uncertainty, and anxiety

Speaker 6: Dr Madelaine Gomes MSC.D (USA) - Executive Business Coach (UCT), Metaphysician, Leadership Mastery, Mindset Alchemist, Pranic Healer

Topic: discover tools, coping tips and advice for keeping yourself and your remote employees motivated, supported and equipped.

Speaker 7: Margarita Fudim - Barrister, Author, and Motivational speaker – Melbourne

Topic: Building resilience in the face of adversities.

Executive Summary

In these challenging times of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial for us all to take steps to keep ourselves, our loved ones, and our local and global communities safe. This pandemic is now a global crisis and is involved with some physical, economic, social, mental and emotional consequences. Anxiety, stress, and fear are some of the real consequences many of us experience at these periods of times.

While it is reasonable to be concerned, it is also important to ensure you are taking care of your mental health. The purpose of this webinar was to discuss and answer your pressing questions on COVID-19 pandemic impacting your physical and mental health.

The coronavirus disease (popularly known as COVID-19) is an outbreak situation caused by a Coronavirus named as SARS-COV-2. This severe acute respiratory syndrome first appeared in 2002.

According to official figures across the globe, there have been:

- 1 914 916 - Confirmed cases (Last update: 15 April 2020, 10:00 GMT+10)
- 123 010 - Confirmed deaths (Last update: 15 April 2020, 10:00 GMT+10)
- 213 - Countries, areas or territories with cases

Particularly in Australia, there have been:

- 6447 total cases
- 63 total deaths
- 3686 cases recovered (which is the good news, the numbers are drastically going down thanks to the work of front-line workers including the Ministers) - Last update: 15 April 2020, 10:00 GMT+10

Some of the symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, dry cough, sore throat, and difficulty in breathing. If you experience such symptoms, you must immediately call 000 if you are in Australia or contact your state emergency helpline numbers or ministry of health for support.

Key Learnings

How can we protect ourselves and older people from the pandemic with all this going on in the media?

Message from the Hon Jason Wood MP:

Congratulations for hosting the multicultural event. We should note, however, that the multicultural community has done a fantastic job in Australia, making sure to provide food to international students or the homeless – thank you. He reiterates the message of the Prime Minister, health ministers, and National cabinet that we will get through this together. In comparison to other countries, Australia is doing well. However, we need to keep those measures of social distancing, isolation, proper hygiene in place. Let's continue to work together, we will get there.

The best thing to do is to stay home to prevent the spread to other people. In the media, this is referred to as self-isolation and is absolutely necessary under legal requirement, if you're tested positive for COVID-19, you've been in contact with someone who has the virus, or – specifically for Australia – if you've arrived to Australia after the 15th of March, but those things might vary according to the country you're in. The golden rule is leaving your home for food and supplies, when necessary; for going to work or study (and that's only if you can't do it at home); for medical reasons or if you're caring for someone else; for daily exercise, to do local walking or biking and making sure you're not coming in contact with a lot of people while you're doing that. In other words, practice social distancing, which physically means keeping a 1.5 meter-distance – or two arm-length from the person next to you. When you're at home, remember to make sure that visitors are kept to a minimum as well.

The most important thing is good hygiene and hand washing. Throughout these uncertain times, it's important to focus on what we can control. High levels of stress and anxiety can really impact your health – and the worst thing we can do is to cause our immune system to weaken. Practicing self-isolation and social distancing, and maintaining good hygiene means you are really doing what you can. It's also important to build a good routine,

keep your food, sleep, and exercise regular, and also maintain good social connections, and try to limit or avoid unhelpful news or media. Last but not least, we can focus on finding ways we can be of service to our community. Connecting in a virtual space to share your coping mechanism with others, is useful of all. Once you shift your perspective outwards, then all the stress, anxiety, and uncertainty that might come with this situation will drastically reduce.

How can these turbulent times lend itself to heightened feelings of stress, pressure, uncertainty, and anxiety?

This pandemic has brought a loss on normality, a loss of freedom, and a loss of choice. Because we have all stopped, we get to evaluate what this situation is all about and what it means for us in every single area of our life. More importantly, it allows us to actually assess our life and say “what can I release from my life?” “what is no longer serving me?” and “where would I like to be?” when we come into the new world. This five-step process is summarized below:

1. Stop
2. Accept: take responsibility for what has happened, what didn't happen, and what the changed circumstances are. A lot of people at the moment are finding it hard to accept the new world that they are in for the time being.
3. Identify: identify things that happened, that didn't happen, that you wish had happened, so that you can easily move forward.
4. Complete: Complete anything that has happened, that you have lost at the moment. That's a beautiful process, because you're coming to love and your bringing all these steps together. More importantly, what you end up doing is apologize, forgive, and acknowledge.
5. Pivot: This time is about learning where you are and where you want to be, and then understanding the skills and every action step required so that you're able to pivot. We are all pivoting to a new world, and the sooner you accept and understand all of these processes the easier it is to move into who you want to be.

How can we discover tools, coping tips and advice for keeping ourselves and our remote employees motivated, supported and equipped?

Leadership as we know it hasn't been working for a while, so now we are forced to learn and rethink where we're going with our businesses. You cannot be successful without a collective success, so leaders and managers should really look at their current for their company and the outcomes and forget the three- or five-year plans. It's literally what can you achieve within the next six months.

Most leaders and managers micromanage people. They need to start trusting people; how do they do that? Self-actualization during this time is the most important part for every employee. All employees should try to see who they are as a person and what they are bringing to the table that can collectively create a success for everybody in our group. Listening skills are also important. The most important thing is to see the goal and align everybody's mindset with that goal. Then you create this funnel where all their energy and their minds go towards the success of this goal.

The more you can master yourself the better you can master others. You need to understand your blocks and your own fears, and work with them so you can lead people from a place at peace. If you give into fear, you are not going to achieve success because fear and success do not play in the same playground. Faith and success go together, but you need to lead them through that, and you can only do that as a leader when that's within you. The most important part of being a leader is focusing on yourself.

Can we tell the difference between myths and facts about COVID-19?

Will the situation get better in the summer? Will the heat aid eliminate the virus? This is definitely not the case. The information going on around at the moment isn't particularly accurate, so remember to be aware about the news sources.

Will a hot bath kill the virus? Absolutely not, the virus is within you.

Will eating raw garlic protect you? No, it will not. However, it will succeed in making people run away from you.

Will getting the pneumonia vaccine protect you against the virus? It won't.

Can you get COVID-19 through mosquito bites? No, it can be spread only when infected people sneeze or cough on you.

Will spraying alcohol over your body prevent you from getting infected? No.

Questions from the Audience

What can I do to get over my fear of getting infected with COVID-19 if I touch anything? We need to be careful to not drive ourselves into a mental health condition. You can only do what you can control, which means taking care of your personal hygiene.

How can we deal with all the information about COVID-19 circulating in social media? Some people have reading anxiety and once they see too much information, their anxiety increases. When seeing things on social media, let's try to think before we digest it. Before sharing anything, we have to streamline it very carefully because we are responsible for anything we share. People with reading anxiety need to make sure they limit the amount of time they spend on consuming the news. Also, they can try to ask people they trust about the current news.

Emotions is what ingrains the anxiety and the fear in us. We live a situation which leaves us with an emotion, and then every time we think about this situation, we will have the same emotion; we're recreating our past into our present. By watching the news continuously and by going through this over and over again, we create more anxiety. We need to be aware of what is going to work for us.

Does wearing a mask help? It seems to help in terms of cutting down the spread of the pandemic, it protects from getting infected from an infected person. Psychologically, it would help as well for a lot of people. But remember to don't reuse it.

Words of Advice from the Panel to the Audience

Even though there is so much uncertainty, we have been able to recognize the incidents and look after the community and vulnerable people. A lot of us have the privilege to have a home and food and shelter, and to be able to actually socially distance and isolate. A lot of us are going to survive and our life is going to be about what we can learn from this. How can we make the most of this situation? And from there, just be mindful and present.

This situation calls for us to do the internal work. We've been disconnected from who we are. The fact that we've all been asked to stop is a time for us to reflect on who we are and who we want to be. There is a gift at every loss. Now it's the time for us to unwrap that gift.

This is the first time in history that the whole world came to a standstill. We are made to stay on the inside, so we can work on the inside because we never do that. We don't know who we are, other people do not know who you are, so this is the time to get rid of the past, discover who we are and share it with the world.

Useful Links

WHO – <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Australian Government portal - <https://www.australia.gov.au/>

SBS has recently launched a new multilingual online portal on COVID-19 in 63 languages at <https://www.sbs.com.au/language/coronavirus>.

Symptoms checker - <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker/tool/basic-details>

Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Services on 1800 512 348 or <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

Authoritative source of mental health supports during the COVID-19 crisis: <https://headtohealth.gov.au/>

New Jobs Hub website which is a one-stop-shop for all the Australian jobs listed online
<https://www.dese.gov.au/covid-19/jobs-hub>

Hand sanitisers and PPE - www.chaserswineandsupply.com.au

Interested? Follow this link to learn more. <https://www.karenchaston.com/webinar>