

# Thinking Beyond Behavioral Health Screening

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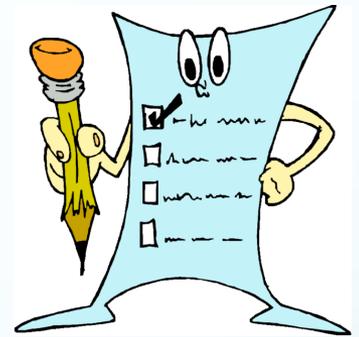
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# Overview

- What can you do beyond screening?
- The role of PN and CHW in assisting patients in monitoring and maintain emotional well-being
- Application to our current times
- Window of opportunity?

# Screening is important but...

- Overlap of medical and somatic symptoms can lead to false positives
- Potential “false-negatives”
  - Gender
  - Age
  - SES and culture
- There must be availability of resources/referrals?
- Not designed to assess engagement in mental health services



How can you help patients  
assess and manage their  
own well-being in-between  
visits?

# Helping Patient's Maintaining Emotional Well-being



- Encourage patients to monitor their emotional well-being on a daily or weekly basis (0-10 subjective ratings)
- Review symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Track key treatment metrics (symptoms response, adherence, side effects) via home-based fashion (telephone, secure website, texting, e-mails)
- Acquire skills in brief therapy techniques (motivational interviewing, behavioral activation, problem-solving therapy)
- Provide guidance on when to seek help and support (next slide)
- Direct patients to self-management resources to complement therapy (e.g., how to manage COVID distress)

*Kroenke & Unutzer, 2017, J Gen Intern Med 32 (4):404-10*

# Symptoms of Anxiety

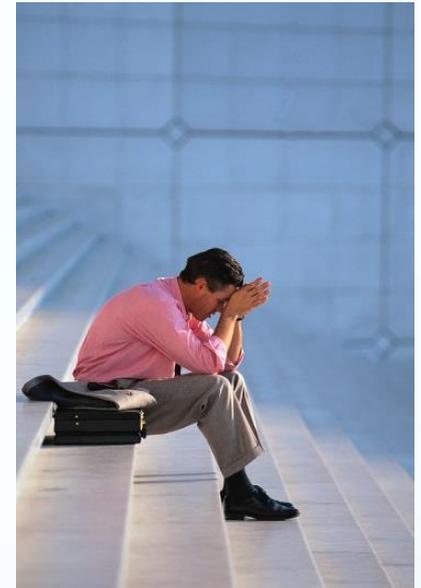
- Excessive worry and anxiety
- Restlessness or feeling on edge
- Easily fatigued
- Concentration and memory problems
- Irritability
- Muscle tension
- Sleep disturbance
- Panic attacks

(racing heart, difficulty breathing, sweaty, chest pain discomfort, feeling detached from self, trembling/shaking, feeling of choking, dizzy, nausea, fear of losing control, going crazy or dying)



# Symptoms of Depression

- Mood symptoms:
  - Sadness
  - Anger/Irritability
  - Hopelessness
- Somatic Symptoms:
  - Problems with sleep
  - Change in appetite
  - Low energy/fatigue
- Cognitive symptoms:
  - Problems with concentration and memory
- Decreased interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Feelings of Worthlessness
- Feeling that life is not worth living/Suicidal thoughts



# Provide Guidance on when to seek help and support?

- Symptoms are interfering with daily life
- Quality of life has decreased because of these symptoms
- Family and friends have noticed that something has changed
- They are not experiencing joy in your life
- They have thoughts that life is not worth living and you would be better off dead



# Current Times

- Unprecedented
- Uncertainty about the future
- Loss of control
- Multiple losses
  - Independence & control
  - Social connections/relationships
  - Financial losses

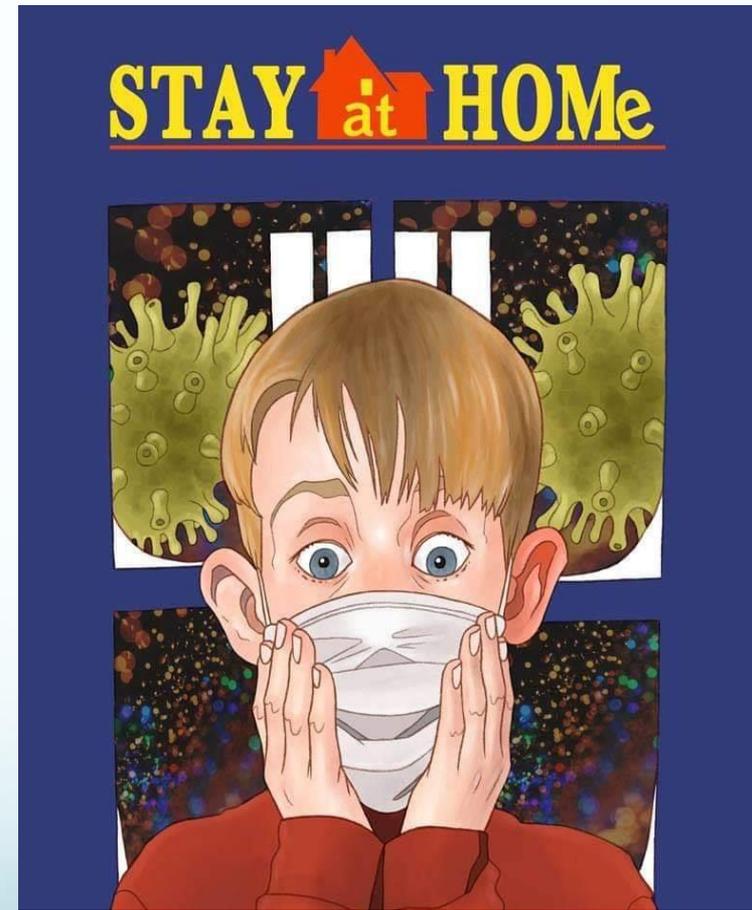


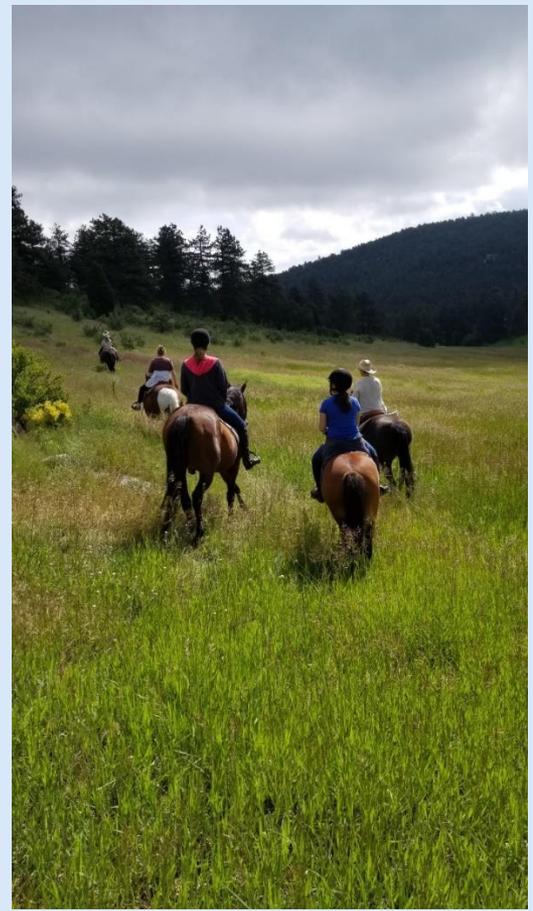
# Expect and Accept (some) Distress

- Your emotions are a result of your thoughts
- Anxiety and fear are normal and have a purpose
- Rumination and constant worry are not helpful
- Accept that you will experience fluctuations in your mood, motivation, efficiency etc.
- Be gentle and patient with yourself and others
- Set reasonable expectations

# Managing COVID Distress

- Practice good self-care (sleep, diet, exercise etc.)
- Maintain a routine
- Participate in distraction activities
- Limit exposure to media
- Make a list of personal strengths
- Engage in pleasurable activities
  - Start new projects/hobbies etc.
- Mind-Body Activities
  - Grounding and mindfulness
  - Yoga, Tai Chi, meditation, prayer etc.
- Focus on the positive things that bring meaning and value to your life
  - Express gratitude and practice compassion
  - Identify and savor positive experiences





# Potential Impact of COVID

## Negative Outcomes

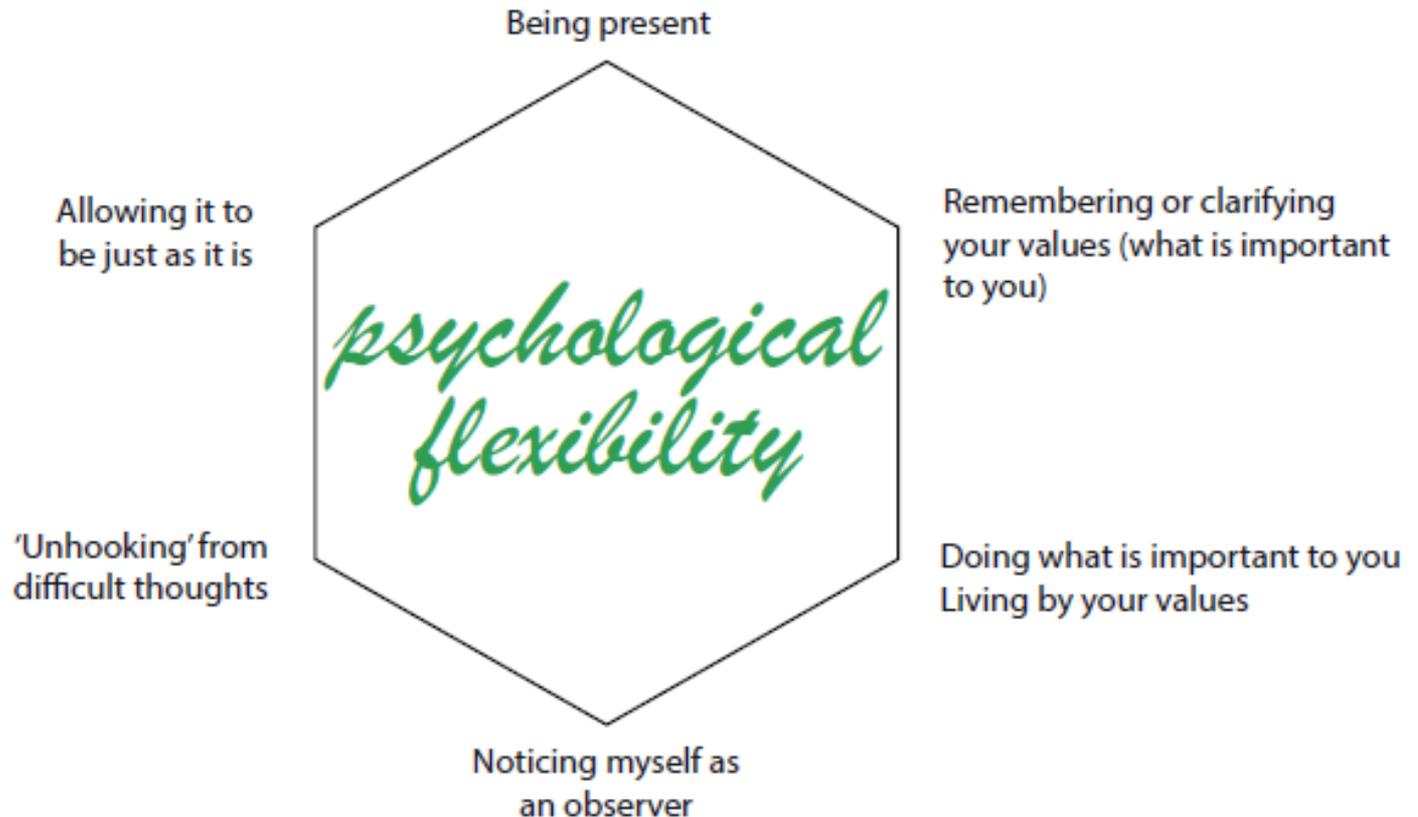
- Higher rates of anxiety, depression, PTSD
- Increased substance use
- Sleep problems
- Decreased physical activity
- Increase caloric consumption
- Social isolation and less social support

## Positive Outcomes?

- Decreased stigma around mental health
- Good time to cut back or change substance use behaviors
- Less distractions
- More time to be mindful around health behaviors
- Finding meaning and prioritizing what's important

# Window of Opportunity

- Link mental wellness and health behaviors to values



# A Reminder about Resilience



- Those who have experienced serious illness are accustomed to managing uncontrollable, overwhelming stressors
  - Social isolation
  - Uncontrollable stressors
  - High degree of uncertainty
- They have expertise in:
  - Monitoring and interpreting medical symptoms, understanding their condition, treatments etc.
  - Communicating with the medical team, family and friends

# Resources

- Community mental health centers/crisis lines
  - Healthier Colorado: [healthiercolorado.org/about/covid-19-resources](https://healthiercolorado.org/about/covid-19-resources)
  - Colorado Crisis Services: Call 1-844- 493-8255, text “TALK” to 38255 or go to [coloradocrisiservices.org](https://coloradocrisiservices.org)
  - American Foundation for Suicide Prevention’s Mental Health and COVID-19 page: [afsp.org/campaigns/covid-19](https://afsp.org/campaigns/covid-19)
  - COVID-19 Mental Health Resource Hub: [psychhub.com/covid-19](https://psychhub.com/covid-19)
  - Mental Health Center of Denver: [mhcd.org/covid19](https://mhcd.org/covid19)
  - Mental Health of Colorado: [www.mentalhealthcolorado.org/resources](https://www.mentalhealthcolorado.org/resources)
- Virtual groups – Cancer Centers (UCCC), various societies (Example Leukemia and Lymphoma Society)
- Virtual Wellness Programs
- Private practice- telehealth

A vibrant rainbow arches across a cloudy sky, spanning from the upper left towards the right side of the frame. The landscape below is a mix of green grassy hills and several large, dark green pine trees. In the foreground, a wooden fence with vertical posts and a wire runs across the bottom. The sky is filled with soft, grey clouds, and the overall scene is bright and clear.

Thank you!