

COVID-19: CONSIDERATIONS FOR DIVERSE GROUPS & EXPERIENCES

Resource created and provided by Psychology Training Diversity Enhancement Council

This is a list of considerations that can help us provide a person-centered, health equity-minded response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please see the appendix for links to additional resources.

Consider how stigma may shape others' experiences

- Epidemics/pandemics can promote xenophobia and discrimination; groups experiencing such stigma and discrimination can be particularly vulnerable (e.g., hiding symptoms to avoid discrimination, social isolation)
- Stigmatizing language and rising hate crimes may add to the stress load of Asian Americans
- Members of various racial minority groups have voiced concern about experiencing stigma, discrimination, and safety risks when wearing face masks in public

Be aware of health inequities that may disproportionately impact certain groups

- Early data demonstrate racial disparities regarding COVID-19 contraction and related deaths, particularly among Black Americans
- Existing health disparities, such as higher rates of asthma among Black, LGBTQ, and low-income Americans, may put these communities at higher risk for serious complications
- Individuals with fewer financial resources are disproportionately affected by mental health concerns during major economic recessions

Recognize factors that impact exposure risk and physical distancing practices

- Essential and low-income workers who are disproportionately represented by people of color experience greater exposure to the virus
- People with disabilities, such as those with limited mobility, who require assistance technologies, and/or rely on provider support, may have fewer options for physical distancing
- People with unstable living situations may not be able to practice safe physical distancing
- Individuals with cognitive impairment may not fully appreciate the risks of exposure

Assess for other factors that might add disproportionate stress during COVID-19

- Older adults are at increased risk for viral susceptibility/complications, decreased mobility/independence, and ageism
- Stress, financial concerns, and job instability are all associated with interpersonal violence
- Caregivers may not have in-home assistance from services when caring for loved ones
- Individuals from some religious communities may receive inconsistent messages from spiritual leaders and public health authorities or may feel distant from spiritual sources of support
- Individuals grieving the loss of a loved one may not be able to attend funeral services, resulting in possible limited social support or prolonged grieving
- People in recovery from substance abuse may struggle with changes in reinforcement (e.g., unexpected suspension of urine testing and parole officer visits, limited access to sponsors/support groups)

Consider how systemic barriers to care may create delays in needed services

- Members of minority or stigmatized groups (e.g., people of color, people who identify as LGBTQ, immigrants, people with mental health conditions) are more likely to be un-/under-insured and have difficulty accessing culturally-congruent care
- Some groups are more likely to experience dismissal of their symptoms by their health care providers and/or delay care-seeking due to historical mistreatment by health care systems
- Rural individuals are more likely to stay uninsured for longer, may not have accessible care, and are less likely to have been tested for chronic conditions that could contribute to complications

Things we can do to provide multiculturally sensitive care

- Approach our recommendations with cultural humility and appreciate the limits of our own knowledge; be mindful of our biases, ask questions, and approach ourselves and others with compassion
- Ask patients about the fit of our recommendations/treatment plans and engage in collaborative problem-solving for anticipated barriers
- Contribute to the spread of accurate information
- Practice compassionate and deliberate self-care; be aware of signs of burnout – we cannot engage in effective care of others if we do not care for ourselves

APPENDIX

Considerations for racial and ethnic minorities

“Combating Bias and Stigma related to COVID-19,” a handout from the American Psychological Association
(<https://www.apa.org/news/press/statements/combating-covid-19-bias.pdf>)

“Social Stigma Associated with COVID-19,” a handout by IRFC/UNICEF/WHO
(<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/covid19-stigma-guide.pdf>)

“If COVID-19 doesn’t discriminate, then why are Black people dying at higher rates?,” by the ACLU
(<https://www.aclu.org/news/racial-justice/if-covid-19-doesnt-discriminate-then-why-are-black-people-dying-at-higher-rates/>)

“Physically distant but socially close: Indigenous Resilience and COVID-19,” by the Urban Indian Health Institute
(<https://www.uihi.org/resources/physically-distant-but-socially-close-indigenous-resilience-and-covid-19/>)

LGBTQ Considerations

“Coronavirus, COVID-19, and Considerations for People Living with HIV and LGBTQI+ People,” a report by the Fenway Institute
(https://fenwayhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/C19MC-9_COVID-19and-LGBTQIA-and-People-Living-with-HIV-Brief_final2_links.pdf)

Caregivers

“Coronavirus: Tips for Dementia Caregivers,” a handout from the Alzheimer’s Association
(<https://www.alz.org/media/Documents/alzheimers-coronavirus-covid19-tips-for-dementia-caregivers-ts.pdf>)

“Disability & Health Information for Family Caregivers” by the CDC
(<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/family.html>)

Parents

“Helping children cope with changes resulting from COVID-19,” by the National Association of School Psychologists
(<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>)

“Advice for caregivers of children with disabilities in the era of COVID-19,” by the American Psychological Association
(<https://www.apa.org/research/action/children-disabilities-covid-19.html>)

People with disabilities

CDC YouTube Channel with all instructions in ASL
(<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvpr9iOILTQatwnqm61jqFrsfUB4RK6J>)

“Coronavirus: Wisdom from a social justice lens,” a podcast from Irresistible that centers the experiences of people who live with chronic illnesses and disability
(<https://irresistible.org/podcast/corona>)

Grief

“Grief and COVID-19: Saying goodbye in the age of physical distancing” by the American Psychological Association
(<https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/grief-distance>)