

Emotional Fatigue During the COVID-19 Pandemic



By
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The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives. The changes have happened in big and small ways, and some of those changes have been painful. In our area, it has very directly impacted our daily lives since mid-March, and these 5 months have been difficult to navigate. We

have had to deal with fear of the unknown, fear of getting sick, fear of loved ones getting sick, financial changes, and, in some cases, financial devastation. We have also had to change the way we go about our daily lives, how we work, how we parent our children or care for our loved ones near and far, how we maintain some semblance of social support, and how we interact with others in the world. The changes have been influenced by personal needs, personal beliefs, politics, and differing points of view.

Most of the patients I talk to are weary. We are all tired of the complications this pandemic has caused in our lives and the lives of our friends and neighbors. Every decision about how to go about our lives seems to be influenced by

considerations we have to make related to the pandemic. The anxiety, sadness, anger and grief we feel seems to have caused a collective emotional fatigue. In addition, the strategies we often use to manage emotional upheaval have also needed to be altered. Vacations, exercise routines, socializing with friends, playing with grandchildren, even sitting at our community pools and parks have all changed because of the pandemic. So people are left with a sense of hopelessness, exhaustion, and frustration that is very concerning to me as a psychologist.

I am encouraging those I talk with to look for the glimmers of hope. As we begin to interact with the world a little more, look for the kindnesses, the generosity, and the strength

of your community. Look at the courage and fortitude of our healthcare workers, essential workers, and public servants. We can always find inspiration and meaning when we are looking for it. Do your best. It's not great right now, but it will get better. And be generous with acts of love, encouragement, patience, and kindness. I wish you peace and good health.

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