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Opinion

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Anticipation is Everything: How Do You Know it is Coming?

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Abstract

There has been a lot to deal with in the past year with COVID-19 and the pandemic residual. One psychological technique to decrease counterproductive impacts on both our physical and mental health is anticipating what might increase the odds of losing our focus to be productive citizens. Being attune to these and other potential barriers to our success will not only help us thrive, but help us continue taking care of our family and vocational responsibilities. We can start with anticipation.

Keywords: Counseling; Rehabilitation counseling; Healing you pain; Worldview

Introduction

As most can attest to during this unusual year (2020-2021), COVID-19 has changed the way we think and act in private and public spaces. Wearing masks, washing your hands and other items on your person, and being careful not to get too close to people not living with you are all common behaviors that preoccupied many living in the United States and across the globe. Indeed, many are struggling with providing the most needed necessities (e.g., food, clothing) to stay alive and, in many instances, trying not to get evicted from their residences. Moreover, the threatening financial situations that many of us have encountered is not because of anything we did or did not do. Many of the struggles we face this past year is because of the residuals of COVID-19. As this past year has been unforgettable for many because of COVID-19, the physical, mental, and emotional (e.g., behavioral health) tolls across the globe are yet too early to prognosticate. In the face of these undisputed facts, there are some things we can control-how we internalize events that cause us both mental and physical harm. Some of the strategies in this opinion piece might help deal with the physical and psychological stresses of COVID-19 and other unrelated unplanned events in our lives. Most of us will go through times where we will have vocational

and or life concerns that have impacted (e.g., sleepless nights, easily frustrated, being unusually tired) us in various ways. While some events might not be as controllable as others, this article is the connection between what we can control and those things that we cannot control that tend to positively or negatively impact our behavioral health. It is important to note that our worldview (i.e., how we see and internalize events and people's reactions to others and ourselves), for example, can dictate how positively or negatively our behavioral health might be trending. Unlike COVID-19 hitting us like a sledgehammer, a technique can facilitate better behavioral health when we anticipate when something terrible is coming. Let us briefly discuss the residuals of not anticipating adverse events.

Anticipating the Hit

I am sure we have all been hit in the stomach or back unexpectedly. As in getting hit in the stomach, one would first feel the pain, then, the attempt to catch our breath becomes labored as the air departed the diaphragm unexpectedly and caused a contraction in the said diaphragm. It doesn't take long before one realizes that the unexpected hit's impact would not have hurt as



much if the hit was anticipated in enough time. Why? Because when you anticipate the hit in the stomach, you have time enough to prepare yourself (e.g., tense your stomach muscles, move away as far as you can to decrease the impact of the hit to the stomach). By anticipating the hit, we can do the following:

- Decrease the impact (velocity) of the hit on the stomach.
- Because you know the hit is coming, you can prepare emotionally for the event.

These simple things will not only help you recover faster, but you might even have enough strength to fight back, theoretically speaking. Additionally, one of the most salient residuals of being prepared, you will not suffer as much damage because you know that the hit is coming. This illustration is instructive because we all will get hit with the good and not-so-good news as in life. And suppose you are part of an underrepresented group. In that case, you will not get surprised by ignorant comments and behaviors aimed to hurt and discredit you because of your gender, race or sexual orientation [1]. Thus, the benefits of anticipating potentially adverse events can not only save your life but enable you to have better mental and physical health throughout your life span.

Conclusion

As with COVID-19, there are some events that we cannot control that cause us physical and emotional stress. In many cases, severe illness and death can and have resulted in COVID-19. However, we can control how we perceive certain events in our lives. Anticipating the hit can positively affect those who can anticipate adverse events that might be on the horizon. Changing how we view adverse events can keep us upright and increase the chances that we will have the energy to carry-on and reduce our emotional and physical recovery time. Yielding a more fulfilled life with our family and friends. Lastly, and more important, while we may not have control of everything that happens to us (e.g., COVID-19), understanding the principles of anticipating the hit will give us the positive energy to not only endure, but thrive during the COVID-19 pandemic!

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Conflict of interest

No conflict of interest.

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1. Wilson KB (2019) Black male leadership: Brothers in higher education in charge and public health. In: Saddler JS, Bezold PM (Eds.). Black male