

HUMAN SERVICES HEALERS IN COVID-19:

Policy, Practice and Advocacy Implications



**Emotional
Support of
Healers
in the Wake of
COVID 19**

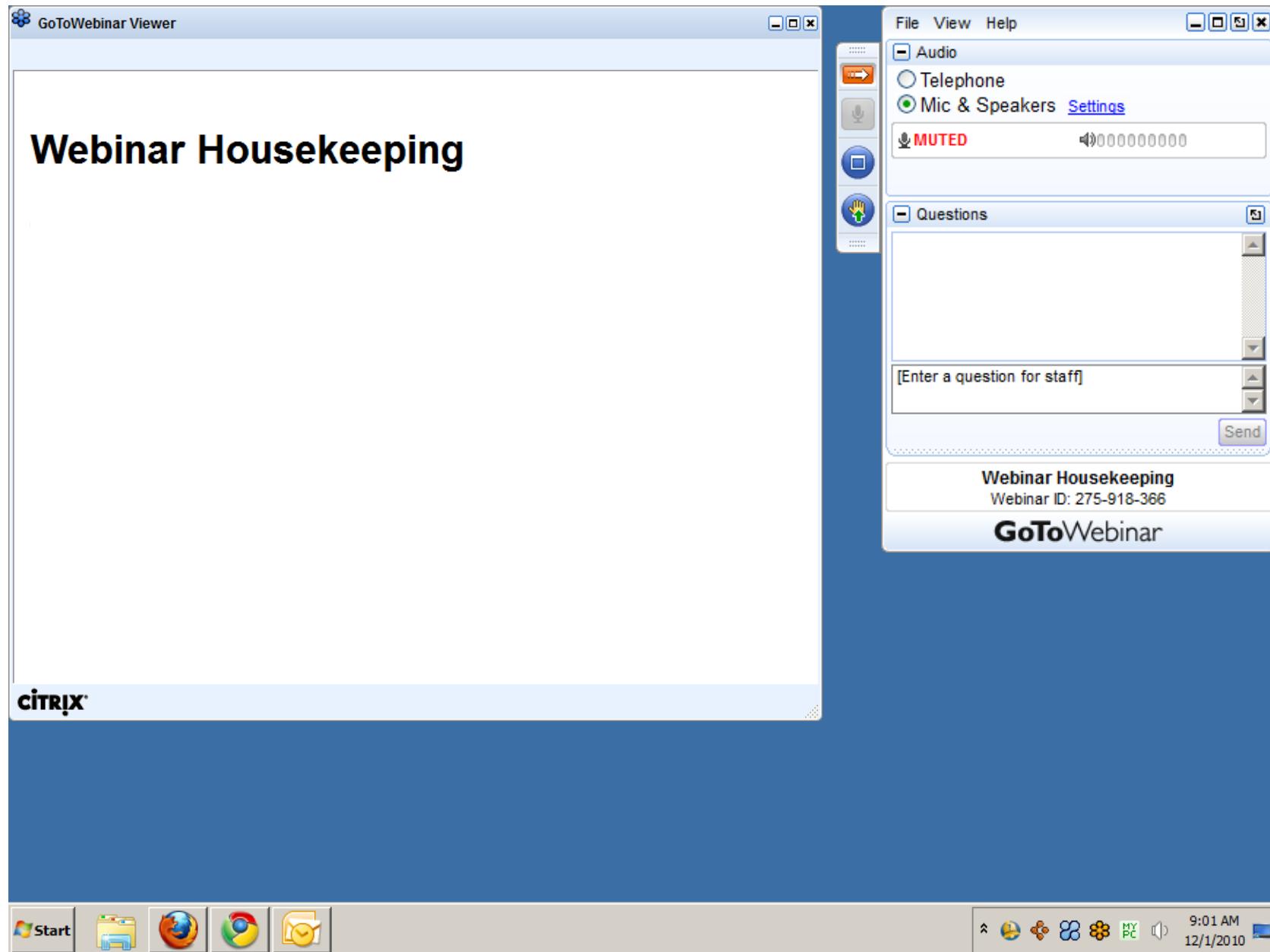
Hosted and Moderated by:

A SECOND CHANCE INC.
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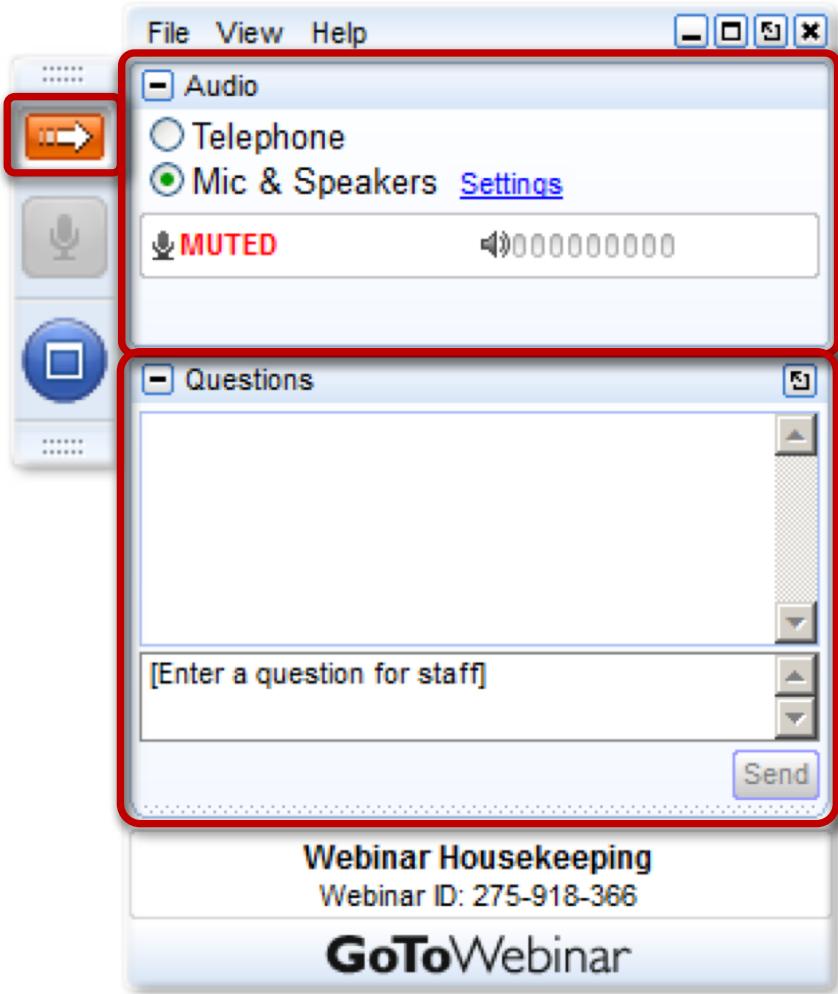


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Note: Today's presentation is being recorded and will be provided within 48 hours.

Purpose



To gain insight on how human services professionals can do to better meet the emotional needs of their frontline staff who must remain healers amid COVID-19.

To hear strategies in planning, addressing and managing how we support our healers so they themselves remain diligent in supporting child and families.

The Emotional Side of COVID-19

A Second Chance, Inc.

Walter Howard smith, Jr., Ph.D.

The Basics

STRESS occurs whenever we adapt; COVID-19 forces large-scale individual, family and social adaptation for survival

- ❑ Stress is our response to any change
- ❑ Trauma is the overwhelming stress that occurs when we perceive danger
- ❑ Chronic Stress is more difficult for humans to adapt to because we normalize it, and it overwhelms our adaptive abilities
- ❑ How we adapt to stress is rooted in our skills, emotional wellness, situation and family and social supports
- ❑ Trauma and stress take time to manifest into symptoms and problems, and they vary greatly by person, family and community

COVID-19 and Stresses

- Invisibility of spread
- Social isolation
- Lack of control
- Threat of dying
- Death of family and friends
- Lack of testing and poor social response
- Unending threat/helplessness
- Disproportionate impact on people of color, people in poverty, cultural communities
- Possible financial threats

- Provide facts, information and data about the disease and its impacts
- Make sure the information is culturally competent in its source, form and distribution
- De-Stigmatize the disease and its impacts
- Increase social supports to assist with managing grief and loss
- Know the impact on poor and vulnerable children, teens and adults will be significant and disproportionate
- Allow everyone space to be scared, stressed and afraid
- Grant people control of decisions impacting their lives – in all ways possible
- People without resources will have fewer in the future
- Collect data to know how to improve our services and to have greater impact
- Rates of family violence increase with social isolation and distancing

COVID-19 in Vulnerable Populations

- This disease will not impact people uniformly
- Increase child abuse and family violence
- People of color and cultural communities will suffer more and are more vulnerable
- Poverty and age related to poor outcomes- children will suffer
- Vulnerable populations have fewer adaptive resources

- Children and teens will suffer direct and indirect impacts that will endure for a long time
- Social distancing disrupts major adaptive strategies for many cultures: Using relationships and cultural traditions and connections to manage stress, threat and danger
 - ❖ Church, religious practices
 - ❖ Extended family connections
 - ❖ Traditional ceremonies (funerals, weddings, reunions, social events)
 - ❖ Disrupting family and cultural traditions
- Our economy has collapsed with huge economic consequences – both short and long term
- People of color already have health risks because of poverty and traditions: obesity, diabetes, less income, under employment
- Oppressed persons already experience society as controlling and threatening
- Oppressed persons have histories greater traumatic experiences because of policing, child welfare, justice systems, poverty, biases and racism

Three Factors to Managing Stress

- Control
- Time-limited
- Meaningful and goal-directed

- ❑ Increased stress does **not** equal poor outcomes
 - ❖ Some are stronger after stresses
 - ❖ Some do better under stress than without it
 - ❖ Some do worse with little stress
 - ❖ Some stresses trigger life-changing symptoms
- ❑ In general, how people functioned before stressful events predicts how they will function afterward
- ❑ General threat problems:
 - ❖ Over-responding to threat
 - ❖ Denial and not recognizing threat
 - ❖ Perceiving threat and not changing to respond
 - ❖ Perceiving threat and blaming others/external circumstances
 - ❖ Perceiving threat and blaming self instead of responding to others/external circumstances

Control

(Decrease helplessness)

The more control we have over our responses and our circumstances, the better we function with stress

- Focus on controlling (managing) one's own threat responses
- Emphasize self-care strategies; individualize them
- Emotional self-regulation increases here-and-now focus
 - ❖ Diaphragmatic breathing
 - ❖ Relaxation and meditation
 - ❖ Meditative prayer
- Increase structure and organization of workday and clinical work
- Clarify expectations about work and clarify worker independent decision making
- Less authoritative supervision/ More collaborative supervision
- Increase decision making by direct service staff regarding clinical work and schedules
- Decrease ambiguity and increase empathy

Time-Limited (Decrease hopelessness)

Knowing how long we will endure stress limits its negative impacts

- Create realistic timeframes for duration of stress
- Establish artificial time limits and goals for staff and teams, and keep track of progress; celebrate wins
- Establish clear goals for the work under stressful circumstances
 - ❖ Team meeting to set goals for work – daily, weekly and personal goals
 - ❖ Assist consumers to set short-range goals
 - ❖ Keep staff and consumers focused on daily and weekly goals; celebrate wins
- Empower staff to set limits and boundaries with consumers
- Create clear work hours; work week – find ways to contain exposure to work stresses within time limits

Meaning and Purpose

(Decrease meaningless and despair)

Enduring stress to achieve a meaningful and purposeful activity strengthens us

- Hope matters
- Make work deeply meaningful by focusing on the larger purpose and importance of achieving goals; emphasize mission and purpose of agency and work
- Reframe stressful challenge into an opportunity to grow, expand skills, build and strengthen relationships
- Create learning environment and perspectives
 - ❖ Reflect on learning from past stresses
 - ❖ Opportunity to practice adaptive skills
 - ❖ Opportunity to break patterns of behavior that are problematic
- Renew faith, beliefs; empathy reduces stress
- Avoid thinking you are trapped and helpless because of COVID-19; find meaning and purpose
- Create opportunity for workers to talk about how they are growing and learning from this challenge

Thanks You!

Define your life
and responses

My coping strategies:

- ❖ Practicing classical guitar
- ❖ Building a fence and gardening
- ❖ Cooking and dining each day
- ❖ Watching past episodes of Star Trek (245 so far)
- ❖ Rediscover humor, irony and sarcasm
- ❖ Having phone meetings with colleagues and friends
- ❖ Watching news only twice a day
- ❖ Listening to great music on my hi-fi system
- ❖ Staying connected with family and friends
- ❖ Listening to books on tape
- ❖ Focusing on being grateful
- ❖ Focusing on the challenges of vulnerable persons to renew my passion
- ❖ Appreciating and thanking frontline folks everywhere I go
- ❖ Creating daily routines of exercise and breathing

Supporting Child Welfare

We Can Heal Together Through the COVID 19 Pandemic

Betsy Farmer, Ph.D, Dean of Social Work

Eliza A. White, MSW, Program Development Specialist



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What does physical distancing mean for children and families?



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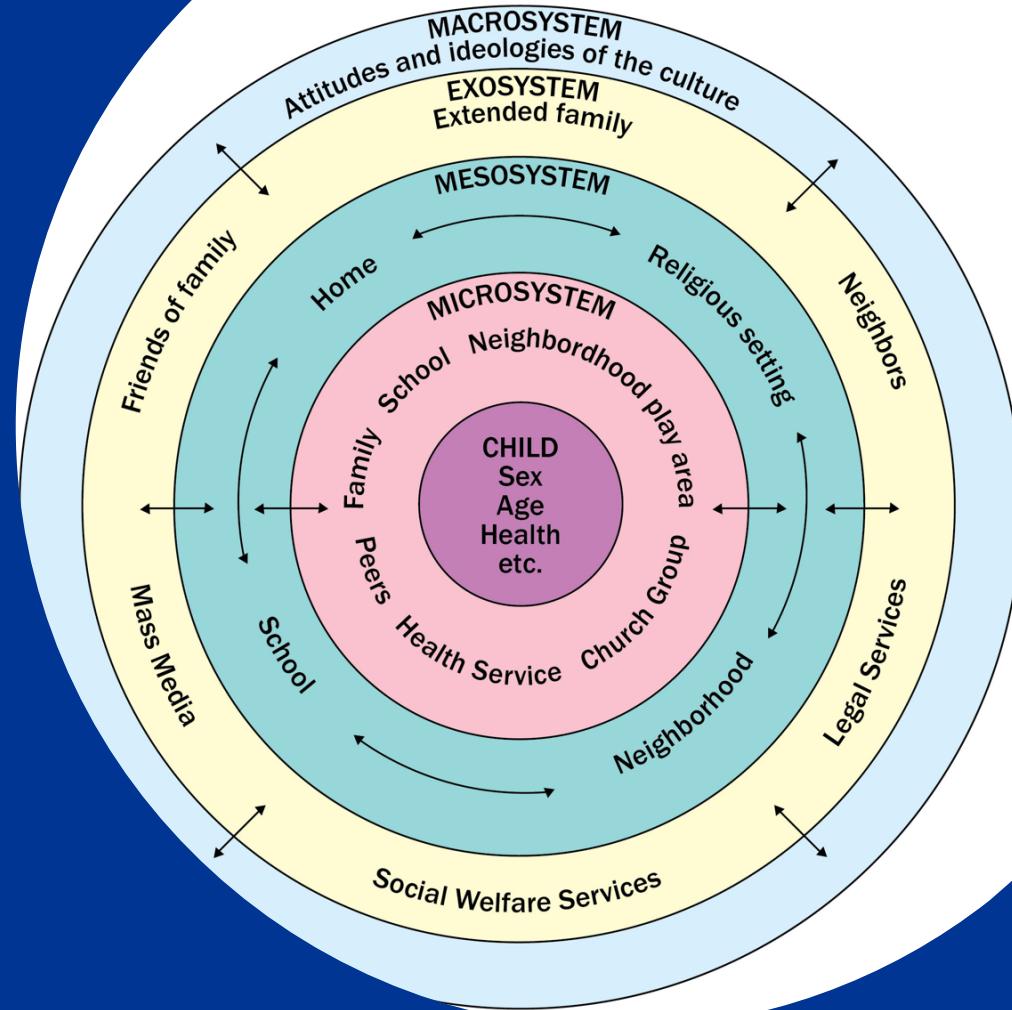
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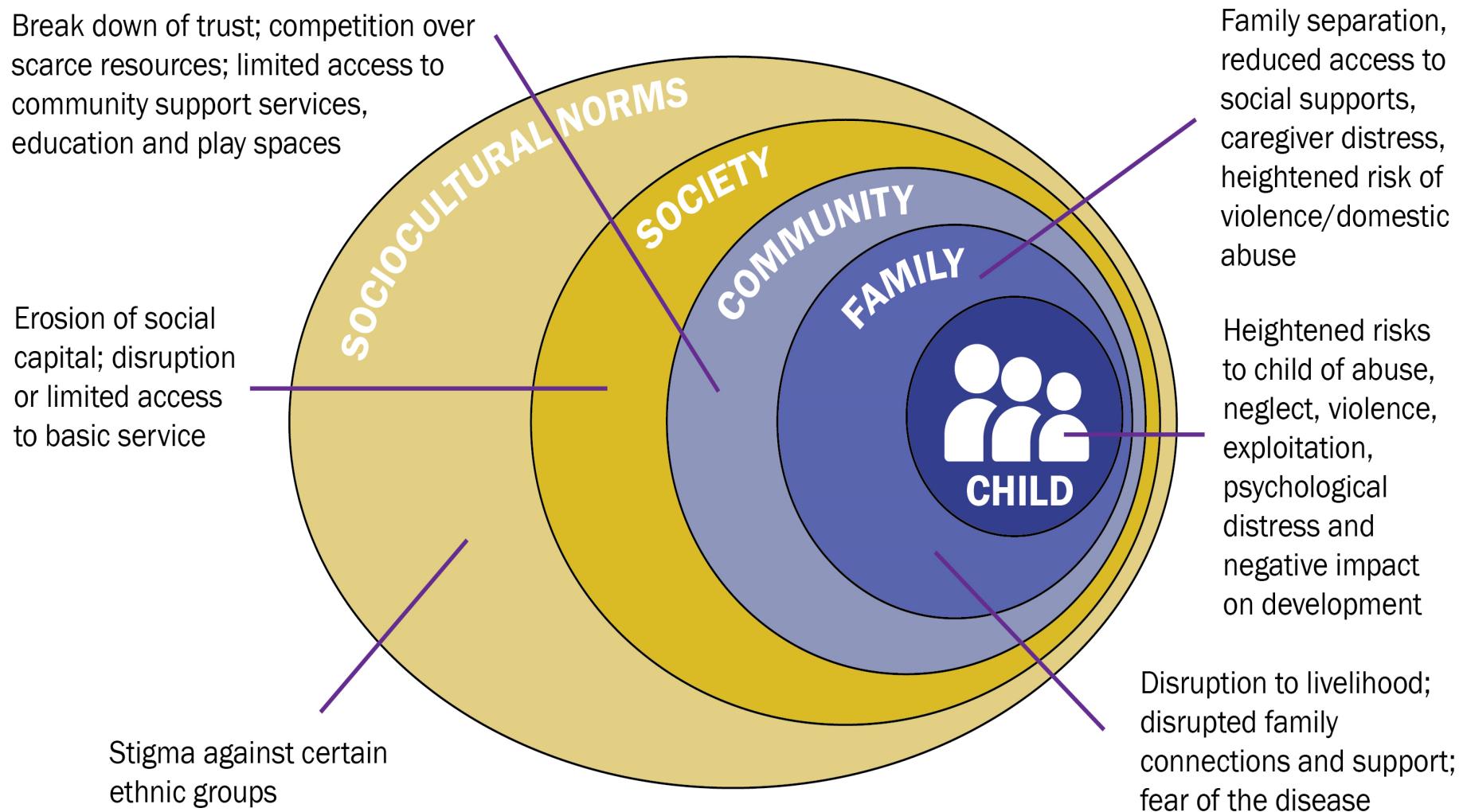
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It Takes A Village to Raise Children

- True for ALL children
- Two meanings of Child Welfare:
 - Wellbeing; Safety; Development
 - System designed to support these processes and outcomes
- Families and Youth served by this system are particularly vulnerable in disaster/crisis





Supporting Child Welfare Through COVID 19

Parallel Process

Helping Others & Ourselves

Transparency

It's OK to Not Feel OK

Cross-Systems Collaboration

Together We Are Strong



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Philanthropy & Nonprofits

Healing in a Time of Hurt

Dr. Cheryl Hall-Russell



The Shift

In less than three weeks the paradigm shift has been gigantic—it has also been traumatic

Philanthropy and nonprofits are circling one another, trying to figure out the best way to redistribute resources

Nonprofits are trying to protect their agencies, staff, and still serve communities

Ultimately, we will not look the same on the other side

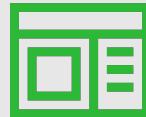
Opportunities

- Yes, even during this crisis you have an opportunity to change your relationship with your funders. Consider asking them to allow you to move program dollars into operating for a short time. Pivot to offer emergency service to support families trying to maintain and rebuild, be a part of a solution to a problem of which they have no answers!
- Push for systems changes. Catalogue what is working and what isn't and find your voice. The time to ride things out has ended. Work with coalitions of like-minded leaders to engage with philanthropy and government to strategize on both short- and long-term system changes
- What has made you most vulnerable? Time to look at your structure and how you can pivot quickly. Times like this, when most nonprofits have two months or less in reserves are scary. What are different ways you can deliver your service using technology or other modes that can both serve your mission and provide the services you deem essential?
- Learn about the stimulus packages being offered and apply for everything you qualify for!

Weathering the Storm



Breathe! That is tough under this pressure. Nonprofit execs are on high alert. They are losing sleep, sending emails at all hours, comforting families, and figuring out new strategies. Sick leaders can't lead.



Rewrite your story – has your mission been creeping? Has making a case for your work been harder and harder in a competitive environment? It may be time to rewrite your case eschewing programs that are underperforming and getting to what gives your organization heart.



Talk – don't avoid those who depend on you both as an employer and those who are recipients of your services. An authentic leader will draw strength from those around them both emotionally and strategically. Team up with those who care and get help working toward solutions.



Collaborate—not like the old days when forced collaborations were pushed by funders. Reach out to agencies around you with similar values and see what you can do together. You will see a lot of mergers and the combining of resources over the next few years. Get ahead of it if it's a good option for you.

Healing the Healer



What is the role of self-reflection, prayer and meditation?

Dr. David Brock

Who does the healer turn to when they need to be healed?

Keeping conscious contact with a higher power can make a world of difference in our physical health as well as our mental sanity. For starters, **prayer** and **meditation** will help reduce depression, anxiety, and stress in large numbers

“To take care of yourselves, you must take care of the helpless Beggar inside you.

You have to embrace him/her. You have to talk to him/her. You have to do something that shows that you acknowledge his/her presence.

You must promise to give your all to heal and look after him/her.”

- Siraj Sirajuddin

A time comes, when our consciousness or as I like to call it our spirit understands that it is unstable or wounded because of the enormous pain and loss attached to the work that we do. That is when our “Self” needs healing to create balance.

Harmony is created when you get connected with your own “Self” (e.g., the Beggar inside you). Understand that because of pain, you can feel the beauty of healing. People are not meant to stay wounded forever. As the tides have to take a turn, your life needs to move forward. Those who can change; they heal themselves; overcome the burdens and become the healers for others.



Mark Twain once said, “*The physician who knows only medicine, knows not even medicine.*” In order to be skillful in the art of healing others we need to start with ourselves.

There are many influences on healing ourselves, but for simplicity we will list five, but focus on two:

- **Lifestyle**
- **Nutrition**
- **Family History**
- **Mind-Body:** Stress Management, Emotional Health, Social Connection
- **Spirituality:** Finding a connection that results in meaning & purpose in your work

MIND-BODY

We understand the mind is the battlefield of the spirit. Whatever happens in your body can be traced back to starting in your mind. There are a few things that can be done to help you heal and maintain your work of a healer.

- List those people whom you love and care for deeply in your life?
- What can you do to help these relationships grow?
- Think of a relationship that has been strained or one where you have been hurt. What could you do to resolve these feelings within you?
- What are the three top sources of stress in your life?
- What do you do to relax or wind down?



SPIRITUALITY

Defining what is spirituality is not easy, because there are many different types of spirituality. There is spirituality inside religions (Islam, Christianity, Buddhism), and there is also spirituality without religion. The drive for spirituality is inherent in our nature, but the way the spiritual path unfolds is unique to each individual. There are many spiritualities, and what is spirituality to you may be different from what it is for me.

Still, let me present you a broad definition of spirituality, so we can be on the same page.

- ❖ In simple terms, **spirituality** is a worldview and a way of life based on the belief that there is more to life than what meets the senses, more to the universe than just purposeless mechanics, more to consciousness than electrical impulses in the brain, and more to our existence than the body and its needs.
- ❖ Spirituality usually involves the belief in a higher form of intelligence or Consciousness running the universe, as well as life after death. It exists to satisfy the deeper human thirst for meaning, peace, mystery, and truth
- ❖ We understand that we may not all believe the same way or practice our beliefs the same.
- ❖ What are your sources of meaning, hope, strength, peace, love and connectedness? (When life is getting you down, where do you find strength?)
- ❖ Do you consider yourself part of an organized religion or spiritual practice?
- ❖ What aspects of your spiritual practice do you find most helpful?
- ❖ How do these beliefs affect the way you would practice healing of others?

By starting your day with a short period of prayer and meditation you do several things:

- ❖ Calm the mind
- ❖ Align your thoughts and actions for the day
- ❖ Focus attention on critical personal and professional issues



How to Heal Yourself...

One way to heal yourself is to pray

- James 4:8 - Come near to God and he will come near to you.
- Read your Bible, Coran, Chant or what ever way you connect in your belief system.

Another way to heal yourself is to do **grounding meditation**.

Establish a **regular journaling practice**.

Self-Healing

This means accepting who you are from a physical, physiological, and spiritual perspective. It also means treating **yourself** in a kind, gentle, and supportive way, just as you would support a loved one in need. In many ways, our bodies help us self-heal.

Live!

When healing, people tend to slow down and stop living fully. To stop living is never a proper approach to healing.

Rather healing is about refocusing how you live. Yes, you should slow down when healing yourself but not to stop living life either. When healing yourself, there is an opportunity to live and explore life in an even deeper more perceptive manner than you might realize. While in a state of healing: the body and mind often then go into a deeper state of awareness

Finally...

Recognize that some challenges in life will not be resolved. Paul pled that “a thorn in the flesh” be removed. The Lord simply answered, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” He gave Paul strength to compensate so he could live a most meaningful life. When we find a balance between our inner challenges, it then becomes possible to find grace.





**Persistence can change failure
into extraordinary achievement—
Therefore, Its not whether you get
knocked down— but if you get up
and respond!**

Let's respond together!

