How do we honor our feelings and transform our anger, grief, and fear into meaningful action... when we are exhausted from the pandemic?

University of Minnesota Medical School
Special Topic Grand Rounds
June 2, 2020

Panelists: Christopher Warlick, MD/PhD, Sophia Vinogradov, MD
Jeff Wozniak, PhD, LP, C. Sophia Albott, MD, Katie Lingras, PhD, LP
Why the vehement reaction?

- The reaction to the murder of George Floyd must be observed through the lens of the history of chronic and repeated acute traumas suffered by African-Americans.

- Since slavery there has been continued institutionalized racism and violence against African-Americans in the US including Minnesota.
  - Duluth 1920: Lynching of Elias Clayton, Elmer Jackson, Isaac McGhie

- Institutionalized racism has contributed to our state bearing some of the nation’s largest racial disparities in income, education, and health outcomes.

- COVID19 disproportionately affects POC/high unemployment/social distancing.

- George Floyd murder is the latest in a long line of murders of Black and other Indigenous and POC individuals.
  - Particularly egregious murder, deliberate cruelty, not a split second decision.
Why are we doing this?

- Important to understand the pain/suffering (and resilience) of others
  - Engenders empathy
  - Builds trust
  - Fosters unity instead of divisiveness

- Important to understand the effects on our own mental health and the mental health of others

- Provides foundation to support the difficult work of change
Here are all of the things that Sophia can do without thinking twice:

Go birding (#ChristianCooper)
Go jogging (#AmaudArbery)
Relax in the comfort of my own home (#BothamJean and #AtatianaJefferson)
Ask for help after being in a car crash (#JonathanFerrell and #RenishaMcBride)
Have a cellphone (#StephonClark)
Leave a party to get to safety (#JordanEdwards)
Play loud music (#JordanDavis)
Sell CDs (#AltonSterling)
Sleep (#AiyanaJones)
Walk from the corner store (#MikeBrown)
Play cops and robbers (#TamirRice)
Go to church (#Charleston9)
Walk home with Skittles (#TrayvonMartin)
Hold a hair brush while leaving my own bachelor party (#SeanBell)
Party on New Years (#OscarGrant)
Get a normal traffic ticket (#SandraBland)
Lawfully carry a weapon (#PhilandoCastile)
Break down on a public road with car problems (#CoreyJones)
Shop at Walmart (#JohnCrawford)
Have a disabled vehicle (#TerrenceCrutcher)
Read a book in my own car (#KeithScott)
Be a 10yr old walking with our grandfather (#CliffordGlover)
Decorate for a party (#ClaudeReese)
Ask a cop a question (#RandyEvans)
Cash a check in peace (#YvonneSmallwood)
Take out my wallet (#AmadouDiallo)
Run (#WalterScott)
Breathe (#EricGarner)
Live (#FreddieGray)

I CAN BE ARRESTED WITHOUT THE FEAR OF BEING MURDERED (#GeorgeFloyd)
1. Please identify your top three stressors from three months ago. (Multiple Choice)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stressor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk of infection or harm to self/</td>
<td>(501/628) 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty about future</td>
<td>(486/628) 77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional betrayal</td>
<td>(52/628) 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social isolation/ loss of teamwork</td>
<td>(307/628) 49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations in resources (inadequate PPE, ICU beds, testing)</td>
<td>(145/628) 23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acute risk of violence</td>
<td>(32/628) 5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Please identify your top three emotions from three months ago. (Multiple Choice)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear/ anxiety/ insomnia</td>
<td>(486/628) 77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger/ rage/ short fuse</td>
<td>(85/628) 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grief/ depression/ sorrow/ despair</td>
<td>(270/628) 43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt/ shame</td>
<td>(68/628) 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism</td>
<td>(73/628) 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helplessness/ hopelessness/ inadequacy</td>
<td>(359/628) 57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewed sense of purpose/</td>
<td>(150/628) 24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Please identify your top three CURRENT stressors. (Multiple Choice)

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<tr>
<th>Stressor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk of infection or harm to self/</td>
<td>(285/620) 43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty about future</td>
<td>(444/620) 72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional betrayal</td>
<td>(113/620) 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social isolation/ loss of teamwork</td>
<td>(143/620) 23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations in resources (inadequate PPE, ICU beds, testing)</td>
<td>(29/620) 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acute risk of violence</td>
<td>(234/620) 38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial impact/ possible job loss</td>
<td>(107/620) 17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>(371/620) 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare/ managing distance learning</td>
<td>(45/620) 7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Fear/ anxiety/ insomnia</td>
<td>(304/620) 62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger/ rage/ short fuse</td>
<td>(241/620) 39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grief/ depression/ sorrow/ despair</td>
<td>(369/620) 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt/ shame</td>
<td>(186/620) 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism</td>
<td>(70/620) 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helplessness/ hopelessness/ inadequacy</td>
<td>(333/620) 54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewed sense of purpose/</td>
<td>(147/620) 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy coping</td>
<td>(75/620) 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhealthy coping</td>
<td>(34/620) 5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Past 3 months: Experiences and stressors of Covid-19

- Physical health disparities (beginning prenatally)
- Educational disparities (exacerbated by remote learning)
- Mental health access disparities (beginning in early childhood)
- Uncertainty
- Financial impact/job loss
- Personally meaningful activities indefinitely sidelined
- Risk of infection to self/family/colleagues
- Social isolation, loss of teamwork & camaraderie
- Limitations in resources (testing, PPE, ICU beds)
- Housing inequality
- Systemic and institutionalized racism
- Stereotype threat, racial profiling, microaggressions, discrimination
- Income inequality

Stressors

Black, Native American, People of Color

Past 3 months: Experiences and stressors of Covid-19

Stressors

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Past week: Experiences and reactions to murder of George Floyd

- Historical trauma
- Posttraumatic stress disorder, Retraumatization
- Anger/rage
- Grief/despair
- Helplessness/inadequacy
- Shame
- Fear
- Betrayal, cynicism

Stressors

Anger/rage, fear of retaliation for protests
Access to resources cut off in already low resourced communities

Black, Native American, People of Color
Racism is a pathogen with acute and chronic stressor effects

- POC between ages of 30 and 64 account for **32% of COVID-19 deaths** in MN, yet represent only 16% of the MN population.

- Police violence is a leading cause of death for young men in the United States. Over the life course, about 1 in every 1,000 black men can expect to be killed by police.

- A Lancet study from 2018 demonstrated that **police killing one unarmed Black person harmed the mental health of every Black person living in that state**.
Stress has direct effects on brain function and brain information processing.

- Chronic stress:
  - inadequate sleep
  - poor nutrition
  - emotional distress
  - decreased regulation of cortisol
  - attention
  - perception
  - short-term memory
  - learning
  - word finding

- Acute stress:
  - fear & fight/flight/freeze reactions
  - concentration and decision-making
  - increases glucocorticoids
  - cellular changes in the hippocampus

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How do we manage our stress reactions and work together to move successfully into a new future?

**Individually**

- Acknowledge negative emotions: anger, fear, anxiety, sorrow, despair
- Foster your positive emotions: gratitude; compassion for yourself and others; solace from music and other creative outlets
- Spend time with your religious, faith-based, or spiritual practices; spend time in nature
- Honor your unique story and the unique story of each person around you

**Collectively**

- Embody optimism
- Find connection
- Foster self-efficacy
- Engage in collective efficacy
Turning our emotions into meaningful action: **First steps**

- Self-care in ways that work best for you*
- Connect with colleagues*, check on your colleagues of color
- Check in with your teams, supervisees, see if time off is needed*
- Call on colleagues to help cover professional responsibilities if needed
- Try to practice active self-compassion. Be kind to yourself. Take breaks.
- Extend compassion to each other

*Know that steps will differ for different communities and individuals, especially at this time.
Turning our emotions into meaningful action: Possible next steps

- **Speak up** when you see/hear biased comments, actions, policies, and in daily life., even if (especially if!) there are no POC around. Silence is betrayal.

- **Listen** to each other and our own UMN faculty, staff, and learners who have long been advocating for change in education, research, and clinical care; learn from their writings and teachings (eg J. Kerandi, 2020; R. Hardeman, 2016, B. Cunningham 2014, 2015, etc); **Examine existing resistance to change**

- **Get comfortable with the uncomfortable** task of self-inquiry (learning occurs at the edge of our comfort zones), talk to children about current events (especially white children)

- **Avoid** asking BIPOC to do more emotional work; consider who you ask to hold your experience.
Continued Learning & Resource List

How to Be an Ally to People of Color:
https://medium.com/equality-includes-you/what-white-people-can-do-for-racial-justice-f2d18b0e0234?fbclid=IwAR11rvFH8pv7ddD12oE5a9oWBBvfmGJa48jBpj3dGpKqLYKRINCxjEXMzeM

Anti-racism Resources:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BRiF2_zhNe86SGqHa6-VIBO-QgirTwCTuqSfKie5Fs/preview?pru=AAABcnX07hc*Pm8gUUGqTq4TxCwAWKNadg&fbclid=IwAR3Sx1odL3b0m7ABxXHINkfVxw1oWB9Dx bdsB5yJ92L_I_V8QnFylWaSXAw

Self-Education Resource List from Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1p5_t8jKwLJAKuMCed6EYZnjX0hbPDddQlKkODy VNvyQ/edit?usp=sharing

June 3 MPR Community Conversation: Spotlight on Black Trauma and Policing
https://apmq.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_uHllyv-qJQWamDZm6JF4tnQ
“The most clear-sighted view of the darkest possible situation is itself an act of optimism.”
--Jean-Paul Sartre

“Optimism is always the primary justification for its own existence. It can seem naive until it is gone. The assumption that things can get better, with the expectation that they should, creates the kind of social ferment that yields progress.”
-- Marilynne Robinson
Our incoming Vice Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Ana E. Núñez, MD

Dr. Núñez will join the Medical School community on August 31.