



DART CENTER FOR JOURNALISM & TRAUMA

THE JOURNALISM SCHOOL AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

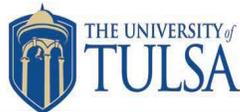
**Prioritizing Mental Health Care and
Coverage During the Coronavirus
Pandemic**

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Why are we here?

- Covid-19 An unprecedented crisis
- Journalism plays a critical role
 - Many of you were not expecting to cover trauma, crisis and mental health – new area
- Challenges both craft and personal capacities
- Stay resilient, effective and relevant

Goals

- Give you a few ideas about college mental health & trauma
- Focus on your well being

Ideas for coverage

- Resilience – creative ways students are engaging, connecting, making a difference- stories of juggling, managing
- College mental health services
 - Capacity, usage
 - Crossing state lines on online platforms
- Grief/Loss of developmental milestone – graduation
- Returning to chaotic/under-resourced areas
- Students with special needs
- International Students
- Athletes specific mental health issues
- Impact on professors & administrators
- Graduate students needs – anxiety, worry
- **Economic impact on Universities**
 - Credit rating outlooks of US higher education have been downgraded to negative - 2021
 - Shared governance issues in emergencies
- **Impact on research and experiential learning**
 - IRBs
- **Online issues**
- **Accreditation Issues**

Starting Point 1: The Education Beat has changed

- **Become “trauma/crisis” reporters**
 - This is not breaking news but long haul
 - **Vicarious** – empathic engagement with traumatized sources & communities
 - **Moral distress**– breach of our moral compass
 - **Stories that interact** with our personal history and identity
- **Direct risks of in person coverage**
 - Safety/ risk assessments
 - For some of you, remote reporting is a challenge
- **Stories of Uncertainty, lack of control**
 - Telling stories about what we don't know is not in typical toolbox
- **Doing this with balancing new routines, etc.**

Starting point 2: Resilience is the norm

- Research shows that mission, craft, ethics and colleagues are all protective factors
- Majority of journalists return to their equilibrium and are fine

What is different about this pandemic?

- **Anxiety is real, valid and normal** (Meyer, FB post March 30, 2020)
 - General anxiety
 - Journalism specific experiences
- **Loss and Grief are real for everyone**
 - Anticipatory Anxiety
 - Loss of a semester
 - Loss of expected outcomes
- **Change in expectations is hard for everyone**
- **Humans crave predictability/certainty and control – we don't have it!**
 - Hard wired to react

Know your signs: People cope differently

- **Old bad habits can come back- make a plan**
 - What do experience when you are stressed?
- **Use good habits, signature strengths to your advantage**
- **Pre-existing vulnerabilities need attention**

Are you a worrier?

- Worry is real in today's world
- Focus on TODAY not tomorrow
- Make a list of what you can and can't control – focus on what you can control
- Set a worry time

(Meyer, FB post March 30, 2020)

Shorten stress response: Technology and boundaries

- Changing nature of work and technology are intertwined, boundaries are more permeable
- Consequences of technological tethers
 - The Bad: WF conflict, technopressure
 - The Good: Flexibility, job performance
 - Benefits are strongest for people who see technology as a resource
- Set boundaries around and with technology

What Works: Self-care

- Pace yourself: regulate trauma/anxiety load
- Social connection
- Know your signs!
- Stay grounded & lower arousal: exercise, meditation etc
- Sleep!
- Have a self-care plan/practice
- Training (like today)
- Attainable victories!

When to Self Care



- Self care has no limits or time frame, you can participate in it any time, any where

Between Projects/Assignments	End of the Day
Write some notes	Take a shower
Get a drink	Call or talk to a friend/ colleague
Go to the bathroom	Exercise
Wash hands	Read
Stretch	Watch some television
Eat a snack	Change clothes
Take a short walk if safe	

Adapted from J Ragsdale, 2019

What Works When Working Remotely

- Get dressed
- Have a schedule
 - Schedule breaks
- Change “problems” to “challenges”
- Boundaries
- Keep track of accomplishments
- Work journal

What Works: Social and Collegial Support

- Physical distance isn't social distance: use technology to **ASSERTIVELY** reach out to others
- **PLAN** coffee hours, cocktail hours, dinners
- Learn from one another! – craft, self-care, skills
- Peer support – being a good colleague: All research shows that one of the best indicators that someone will be resilient is the support they give **AND** receive from others.

Meaning-making

- What meaning are you personally making about COVID-19?
 - Sense of the world
 - Yourself
 - Your relationships
- Do you find any positive or fulfilling meaning from this?
- What meaning are you providing others?

Back To Wendy! Here are some resources

- www.Dartcenter.org
- <https://dartcenter.org/content/covering-trauma-impact-on-journalists>
- <https://dartcenter.org/events/2020/03/reporting-and-covid-19-webinar-series-journalists>
- <https://dartcenter.org/resources/covering-coronavirus-advice-video-journalists>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbCFmXG3Qns>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxwWW0x7vIY&t=441s>
- Telepsychology hub by state -APA
https://www.apaservices.org/practice/legal/technology/state-telehealth-guidance?_ga=2.82597270.1274535961.1586879338-273754276.1567383231
- Association for university and college counseling center directors- <https://www.aucccd.org/>