
Mental Health Impacts during COVID-19

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Psychological impact of COVID-19 what are the signs of anxiety, panic attacks, depression, and suicide. The coronavirus pandemic is a psychological and population health crisis. The social isolation, dramatic changes, financial distress, economic hardship, and grief issues has impacted many globally.

Even during this time of physical distancing, it is important to differentiate signs of anxiety, panic attack, depression on adults and geriatrics, insomnia, and suicidal ideations.

Signs of depression are as follows: A lack of interest and pleasure in daily activities, insomnia or hypersomnia, low energy, or an inability to concentrate. Depression in older adults may mask differently that was mentioned by National Library of Science includes: History of depression, chronic or severe pain, vascular illness, being a widow/having someone you love die, lack of a supportive social network, living alone, reduced independence, damage to body image, fear of death, and side effects of meds.

Signs of anxiety are as follows: restlessness and irritability, persistent worry or feeling overwhelmed by emotions, excessive worries that something bad is going to happen, difficulty concentrating, sleep problems, and generally feeling on edge.

Signs of a panic attack are as follows: seating, trembling, shortness of breath, or a feeling choking; a pounding heart or rapid heart rate, and feelings of dread. Such attacks often happen suddenly, without warning. Individuals who suffer from panic attacks often become fearful about when their next panic attacks and can cause them to restrict their normal activities.

Suicidal risk factors are as follows: thoughts of harming oneself, history of suicide attempts, recent loss through death, divorce, separation, even loss of friends, changes in behavior, sleep patterns and eating habits; changes in personality like sadness, withdrawal, irritability, or anxiety.

The impact of COVID19 impacted most adults (61%) reported weight fluctuations since the onset of the pandemic. On an average of 15 pounds. Two in 3 Americans said they are experiencing hyper insomnia or insomnia since the pandemic started. Almost half of Americans have canceled or delayed their health care services since the onset of the pandemic. More than half reported they were uneasy about in person interaction once the pandemic ends. Generation Z adults were the most likely to report their mental health worsened compared to pre pandemic, followed by Xers, Millenials, Boomers and older adults. This was cited in Psychology Today [1].

As behavioral health clinician during the pandemic, I would strongly urge consult with a mental health professional or 1800 273 TALK for active depressed moods and suicidal thoughts. Some coping strategies would be keeping a positive diary, challenge your negative thought by asking “what’s the worst scenarios?”, “what’s the best scenarios?” and neutral response or realistic response, SUDS (Subjective Units Distressed Scale 0-10). Mindfulness breathing exercises to improve one’s mood and stress management, nature walk, positive strengths, daily positive affirmations for at least 5 minutes, practice forgiveness and gratitude jar - 3 things one is grateful for and improved posture can build positive confidence and inner self.

REFERENCES

1. Psychology Today. April, 2021. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/basics/coronavirus-disease-2019>