



The Age of Anxiety Amplified: COVID-19

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COVID-19 Anxiety



State of the World's Mental Health since COVID-19

Artiga, Garfield, & Orgera (2020); Eby, Drill, Harney, Lanca, O'Brien, & Zona, (2020); Jia et al (2021); Krantz (2022); Santomauro (2021); Shine and Martin (2021)

- an **additional 76.2 million cases of anxiety disorder globally**
- **Increase in anxiety and depression**
- **Rise in visits to the emergency room with suspected suicide attempts**
- **More eating disorders**
- **Healthcare disparities in BIPOC and LGBTQIA+**
- **18-29 year olds especially affected**



Baseline anxiety

COVID-19

Racial injustice

Political/election anxiety

Climate change

World war III?



Across the Lifespan

Gruber et al. (2021)

Childhood

- Disruption to roles and routines
- socialization



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Adolescence

- **Developmental vulnerabilities**
- **Losses: rites of passage and milestones, autonomy, peer experience/socializing**



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Young Adulthood

- Losses: rites of passage, socializing, independence
- Curtailment of future plans



Adolescence and young adulthood in particular

- Developmentally off-track
- Missing milestones
- Pivotal year(s)



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Middle Adulthood:

- Economic stressors
- Juggling demands: homeschooling, work, older parents

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Middle Adulthood:

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- Juggling demands: homeschooling, work, older parents

Older Adulthood:

- Increased risk of contracting COVID
- Loss of supports/visits → loneliness, social isolation

Other vulnerable populations

- Members of marginalized racial and ethnic groups
- People with less economic resources
- Healthcare workers
- People living with substance abusing partners or domestic violence
- Prisoners
- Houseless people
- People with chronic mental illness

Anxiety, the role of uncertainty, and coping strategies



Coping strategies

Berinato, S. (2020)

Park, C. L., Finkelstein-Fox, L., Russell, B. S., Fendrich, M., Hutchison, M., & Becker, J. (2021)

Rettie, H., and Daniels, J. (2021)

- Adaptive
 - Acceptance
 - Support-seeking
 - Active coping
 - Mindfulness
 - Meaning-focused coping
- Maladaptive
 - Self-distraction
 - Avoidance

Neurological effects of living with the chronic stress of an ongoing pandemic

- Impaired prefrontal cortical functions → consequences for coping, including parent-child functioning (Arnstein, Condon, Dettmer, Gee, Lee, Mayes, Stover, & Teng, 2021)
- Inflammation of the brain → psychological distress, fatigue, concentration difficulties/brain fog, depression (Hampton, 2022)





Helpful tips

(in addition to your usual therapy skills, of course!)



Don't assume, ASK...

WHETHER IN PERSON



OR REMOTELY



Normalizing feelings → decrease “kicking one’s self”



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Active coping strategies

- Connect with people



- Exercise



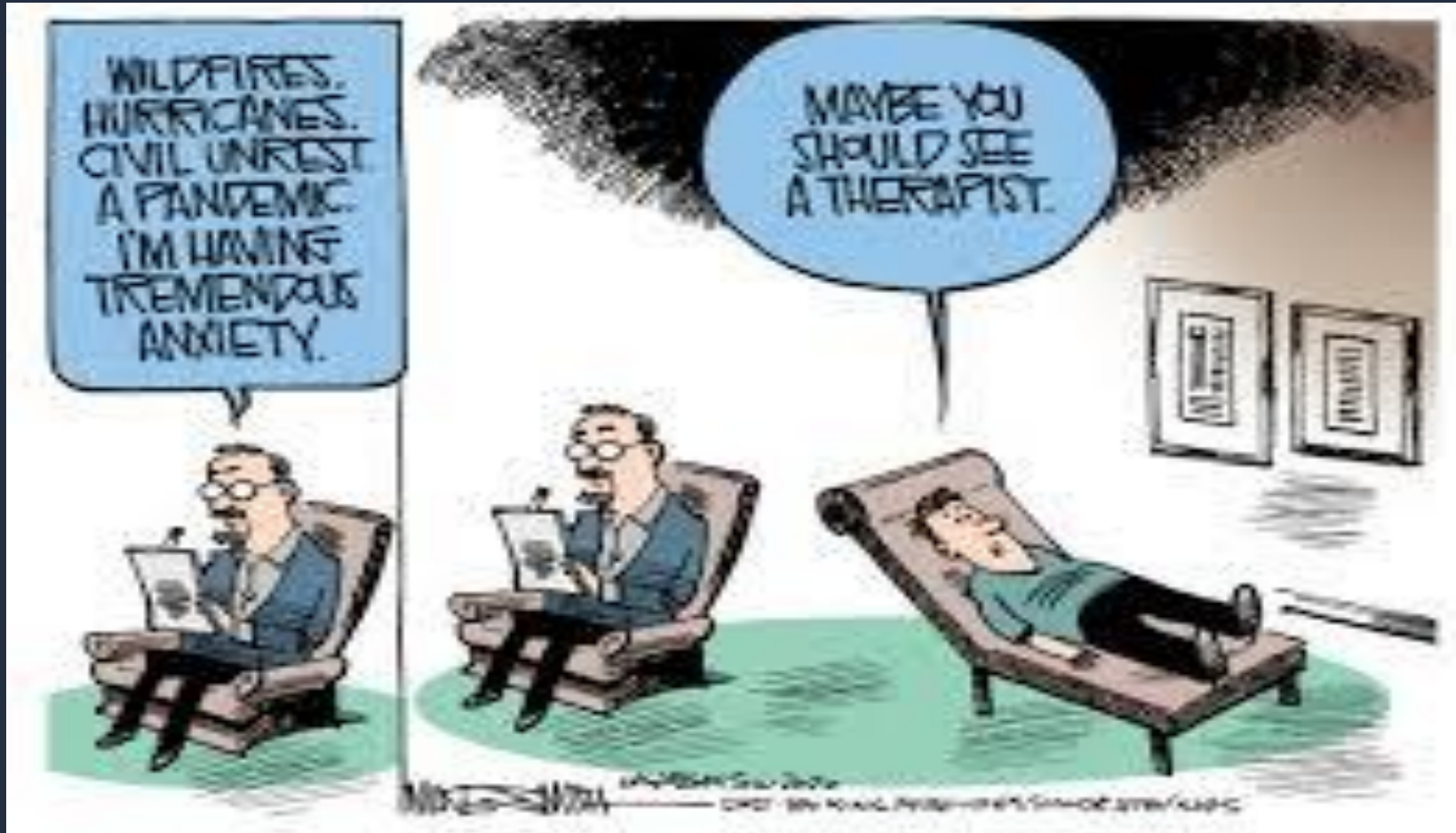
- Learn something new
- Do things you enjoy



Even if remote: join clubs, meet people at work



And a word about being a therapist during the pandemic...



Area of future focus...



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