

Wendy Ashley, Psy.D, LCSW
She/her/hers

Professor – Social Work Department California State University Northridge

Agenda

Vulnerability of opportunity/TAY youth

- Intersectionality = disproportionality and disparities
- Contextual dynamics and lived experiences
- Impact on their ability to receive services
- Providers capacity for sustained service delivery

COVID 19 and civil unrest

- Impact on opportunity/TAY youth
- Impact on providers

Recovery and wellness planning

- Clients
- Providers

Definitions & statistics

What is mental health?



Mental health defined

- The level of psychological well-being or an absence of mental illness
- It is the state of someone who is "functioning at a satisfactory level of emotional and behavioral adjustment"
- Cultural differences, subjective assessments, and competing professional theories all affect how one defines "mental health"
- Psychological imbalance, lack of well being, mental health symptoms, poor functioning, lack of balance, poor coping skills, lack of productivity and inability to manage stressors = mental illness
 - Wellness
 - Recovery

Statistics

- In the United States, 4.6 million (1 in 7) young people between the ages of 16 and 24 are neither in school nor working
 - About half are living in poverty
- The unemployment rate for individuals 16-24 is at 11 percent
 - Higher among African-American (22%) and Latinx (12%) youth
- In 2019, 3,926 unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness, which was a 24% increase from the previous year



The Challenges of Homelessness

- Invisibility
 - Unaddressed trauma
 - Untreated mental health conditions
 - Lack of healing community and social connections
- Severely compromise their health and well-being and jeopardize their efforts to reconnect with society and succeed in education and employment

Age 16-24 — the **TRANSITION** years



Transitions impact:

- Identity and sense of self
- Relationships with family, community and society
- Systems (education, health coverage, employment, housing, child welfare, justice system)

Enter this stage fully dependent on individuals and systems for food, shelter, guidance, and emotional support

Exit with the expectation that they are economically self-sufficient

Hope and opportunity versus anxiety about disappearing support systems and lack of opportunity



Neurological considerations

- The brain doesn't fully develop until age 24
 - Need for ongoing care, emotional regulation, connection, guidance
- Early childhood abuse, neglect and trauma impact the brain
 - Arousal of the sympathetic nervous system, low activation of the parasympathetic nervous system
 - Higher correlations between
 - Trauma and juvenile justice system
 - Sexual abuse and juvenile justice system
 - ACE's (complex trauma) and unemployment

Increased Vulnerability = Decreased Options

Disproportionality and disparities

Intersectionality = marginalization

System or multi-system involvement

Contextual factors

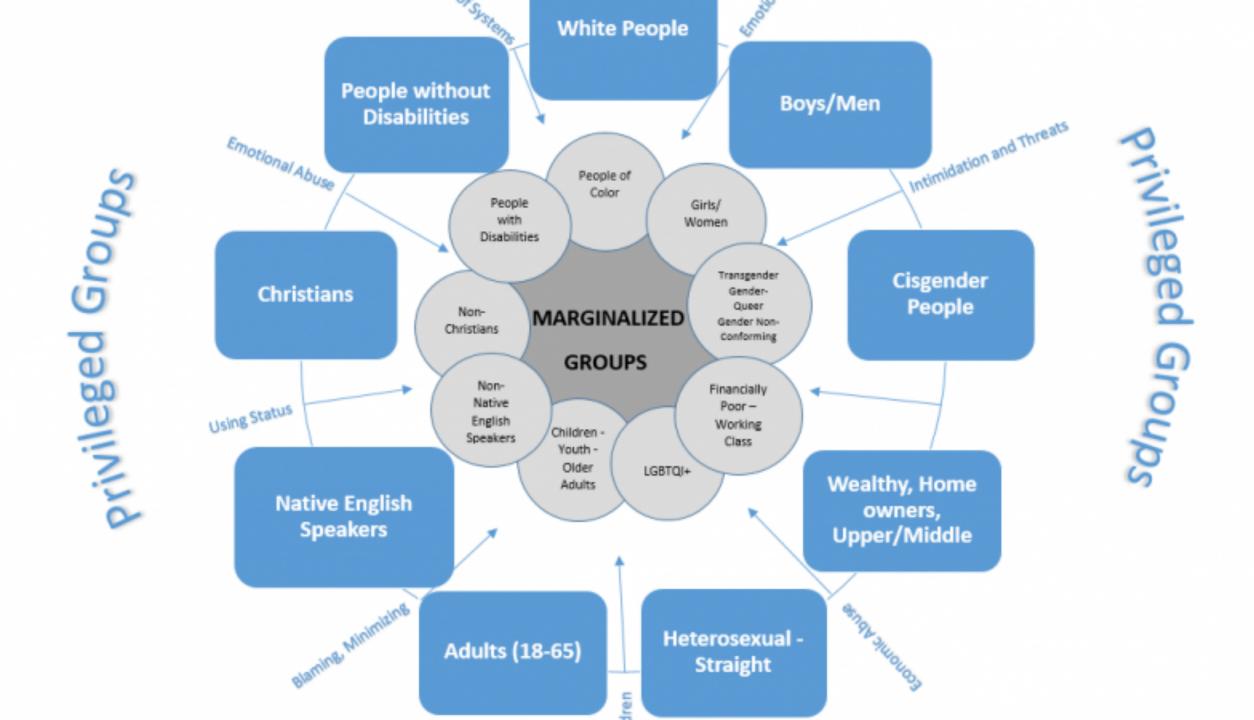
- Homelessness
- Education
- •Employment
- Substance use

intersectionality:

 $[\text{in} \bullet \text{ter} \bullet \text{sek} \bullet \text{shun} \bullet \text{al} \bullet \text{it} \bullet \text{ee}]$

noun

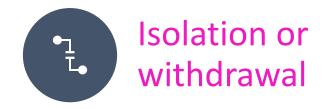
The study of the intersections between different systems of oppression and domination, including the privileges that accompany gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, religion, ability, sexual orientation, etc.



Impact of subordination and marginalization













WARNING!!!

Expressive communication/ interaction

Receptive communication/ interaction

The COVID 19 Crisis & civil unrest

Opportunity/TAY Youth

Professionals

Impact of COVID on opportunity youth

Information overload from media and social media

The challenge to 'stay at home' or 'social distance' when homeless or in a shelter or facility

- Familial
- Social
- Relational disruption

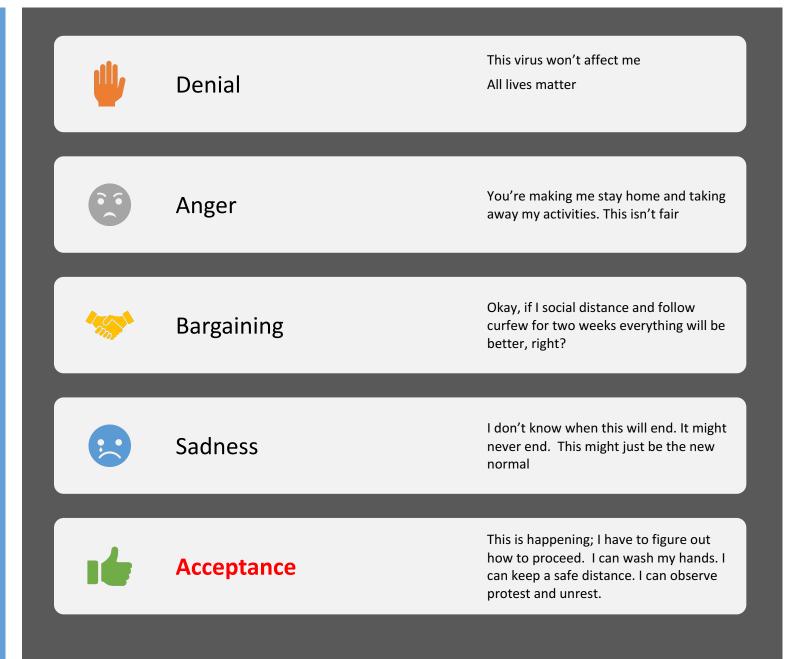
College disruption, struggle to maintain food, shelter, technology

Employment furloughs and lay offs

Fear and trauma activation by instability and uncertainty

Grief

Making sense of grief and loss in a COVID context





The many faces of anxiety

Anxiety presents itself in many different ways...

The desire to control people and events



Difficulty getting to sleep



Feeling agitated or angry





Defiance and other challenging behaviors



Having high expectations for self, including school work & sports



Avoiding activities or events (including school)

Pain like stomachaches and headaches



struggling to pay attention and focus



Intolerance of uncertainty





Grying and difficulty managing emotions



Overplanning for situations and events



Feeling worried about situations or events

Third quarter challenges

Increased loneliness

Resentment, anger or blame

• Interpersonal conflict

Hollow eyed stares, disconnection

Low mood, lack of morale, hopelessness

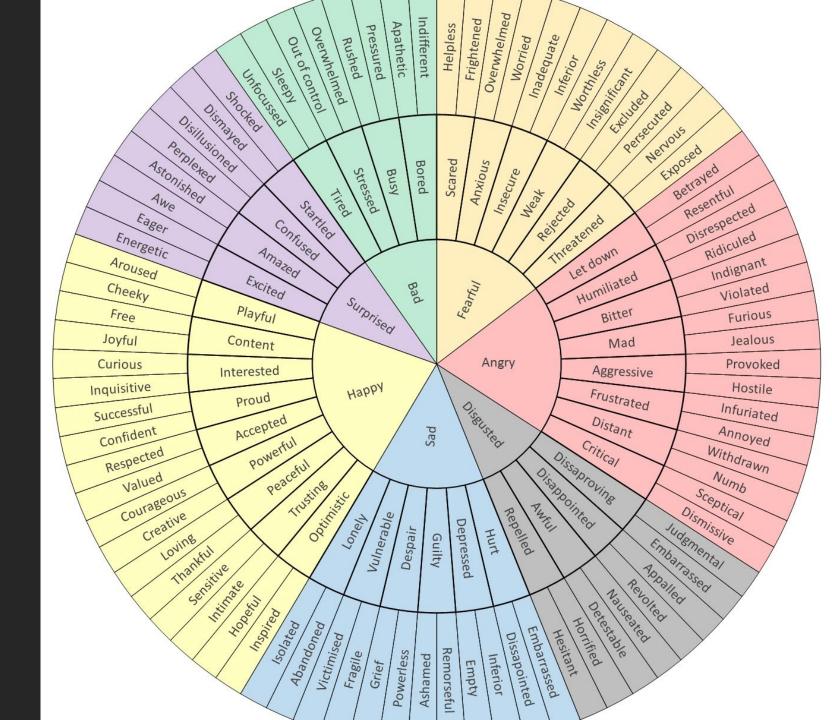
Difficulty with tracking days and time

Powerlessness

- Stage 1- Heightened Anxiety
- Stage 2- Settling down to routine and depression
- Stage 3- Anticipation, with emotional outbursts and aggressiveness



Check in with clients about their feelings



What is/are the feelings? How intense are they (scale and space)?

MANAGING CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) ANXIETY



For Quarantine/Isolation

-Keep in contact with your loved ones via social media, texts, and phone calls

-Create a daily self-care routine

-Keep yourself busy: games, books, movies

-Focus on new relaxation techniques

Anxiety often originates from a very primitive place, so interventions may need to be for an earlier age (hint-be creative!)

Impact of COVID on professionals

Stress vs anxiety

- Increased acuity
- More family contact if working from home
- Less space and room for recharging
- Lack of usual coping strategies

Work/life balance

Compassion fatigue

Vicarious traumatization

Burnout



Warning signs



Emotional symptoms

Ongoing grief, anxiety, sadness, irritable or angry, easily distracted, changes in mood or sense of humor, or person may begin to feel generally unsafe



Behavioral symptoms

Isolation, increase in alcohol or substance consumption, altered eating habits, and difficulty sleeping. Increased engagement in risky behavior, avoidance of people or tasks, or they might find it difficult to separate work and personal life and may increase their workload



Physiological symptoms

Headaches, rashes, ulcers, racing heart, or heartburn



Cognitive symptoms

Cynicism and negativity, difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions in daily life. A helping professional may also find it difficult to stop thinking about the trauma experienced by a person in their care, even when not at work



Spiritual symptoms

Loss of hope, a decreased sense of purpose, and feelings of disconnect from others and the world in general. People may lose sight of their life purpose or come to feel as if they are unworthy of love or do not deserve love



Check Your Battery How are you currently feeling?

Feeling great! Keep meeting your needs and practicing self-care.

Feeling okay. How can you make your day a tiny bit better?

Struggling. Practice triage. What area of your life is suffering the most right now? Focus on that one area today.

BlessingManifesting

Feeling good!

How can you maintain the levels you're currently at?

Meh.

How can you love on your self today? Be extra kind to yourself.

I'm empty.

Pinpoint what's draining you and try to create a boundary & then do one thing that fills you up.

How are YOU?

- +Check in with yourself +Develop a plan
 - +Create a team

Recovery and Wellness Planning Opportunity/TAY Youth

Professionals

Pandemics are unsettling and activating

Anticipate lability

Mood

Anxiety

Physical/health

Anxiety

Physical/health

Trauma
response (more
ACEs = more
mental and
physical health
symptoms)

Resurgence of old behaviors
behaviors
symptoms)



Racist acts and civil unrest are tiring, unsettling and activating

If you are an ally

Check in

Acknowledge differences

Don't ask if they are OK

Acknowledge systemic oppression

Use your voice



If you are a POC, validate lived experiences and historical experiences

Access your compassion

Everyone will have different levels of fear and grief and it manifests in different ways

Are your colleagues or clients different from who they usually are?

- Notice the emotional undertones. You are likely to be seeing their fear and anxiety
- Be patient
- Talk about the elephant in the room. Name it



Goal assessment and re-evaluation

Are the current goals appropriate for the COVID context?

It may be necessary to develop temporary goals for this crisis

Where do we have control and where don't we have control?

- Normalize uncertainty and destabilization
- Encourage minimal major decision making

Stay in the present (out of the past or future)

- Anticipatory grief is the mind going to the future and imagining the worst
- Notice what is around you
 - You can name five things in the room. There's a computer, a chair, a picture of the dog, an old rug, and a coffee mug. It's that simple.
 - Breathe.
 - Realize that in the present moment, nothing you've anticipated has happened.
- Notice yourself right now
 - In this moment, you're okay. You have food. You are not sick. Use your senses and think about what they feel. The desk is hard. The blanket is soft. I can feel the breath coming into my nose. This really will work to dampen some of that fear and pain.
- Let go of what you can't control.
 - What your neighbor is doing is out of your control. What is in your control is staying six feet away from them and washing your hands. Focus on that.

Self soothing and coping

Differentiate old trauma from current instability

- Fear brings up old wounds and trauma
- Resources, access to self, voice, power
- Self soothing skills and tools

Assess adaptive and maladaptive coping skills

- How are they working? This CANNOT be formulated by you
- Are there ways they aren't working?
- When do we become concerned?
- Make this an *ongoing dialogue* vs a parental lecture

Self care planning

What is self care anyway?

PROACTIVE

- How can I adaptively self soothe?
- How will I know the rabbit hole is coming?
- What are my typical symptoms and which ones indicate it is VERY CLOSE?
- Who can I trust to tell me the truth?
 - Accountability/consult teams
- Where do I struggle?

REACTIVE

- How will I know I am in the rabbit hole?
- How can I prepare for this not as an admission of failure, but to reframe as disaster planning?
 - Realizing my advanced cognitive skills and healthy coping skills may be accessible
- Acknowledgement that there is no recovery related to civil unrest. Transformation is necessary and we have no idea what that looks like

PROACTIVE planning

Mindfulness

Cultural implications Routine and self regulation

Ongoing medication management

Therapy or other treatment

Resource assessment and consciousness

Relapse prevention



Self care strategies

Mindfulness

Social media and media breaks

Regular meals, with efforts to eat somewhat balanced meals

Hydrate!

Routine = stability

Sleep consistently

Be conscious about the amount and frequency of substances consumed

Move (exercise in the COVID era)

Connections and social exchanges-laughter

Creativity

Adaptations for EVERYTHING

Mindfulness recommendations and resources 🛝



Breathing

- Belly breathing (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMjTJf4-xz0)
- Box breathing (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RY73nw-jsA)

Progressive muscle relaxation

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Xp2UzG7UYY

Prayer

Meditation

- Mindfulness meditation (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZToicYcHIOU)
- Do nothing for two minutes (http://www.donothingfor2minutes.com/)

Yoga

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1OtxPbFAec

Grounding methods



body

lay on the ground, press your toes into the floor, squeeze playdough



5 senses

wear your favorite sweatshirt, use essential oils, make a cup of tea



selfsoothe

take a shower or bath, find a grounding object, light a candle



observe

describe an object in detail: color, texture, shadow, light, shapes



breathe

practice 4-7-8 breathing: inhale to 4, hold for 7, exhale to 8



distract

find all the square or green objects in the room, count by 7s, say the date



REACTIVE planning (Plan B)

- Recognizing when you're in crisis
- Acknowledgement and awareness of the challenges in asking for help
 - Periodic check ins
 - Continue to acknowledge feelings
- Crisis resources, services and facilities
- Adaptation
 - Preparing for discomfort
 - Resilience will be helpful. Bouncing back is painful but doesn't last forever
 - Reminders that discomfort doesn't = chaos

Crisis resources

Crisis text line

- Text 741741
- Website: https://www.crisistextline.org/purpose
- About: this service is available 24/7, 7 days a week
- Once you text HOME to 741741, you can speak with a trained crisis counselor.

Trans Lifeline (for trans and non-binary folks)

- Hotline: US: 877-565-8860
- Hotline is open 24/7, though operators guaranteed to be online at following times: 7:00am-1:00am
- Website : https://www.translifeline.org/

Trevor Project (LGBTQ youth)

- US: 1-866-488-7386
- Text START to 678678
- Open a chat online: https://www.thetrevorproject.org/gethelp-now/

Additional crisis resources

RAINN: Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network

- US Phone: Call 800.656.HOPE (4673)
- Website: https://www.rainn.org/about-nationalsexual-assault-telephone-hotline

https://13reasonswhy.info

- Crisis for youth
- Suicide prevention
- Intersectionality specific resources

National Domestic Violence Hotline

- Hotline in US: 800.799.SAFE
- Website: https://www.thehotline.org/

Anti-racist resources

BLM for therapists and social workers

 https://www.socialwork.career/2020/06/antiracism-resources-for-social-workers-andtherapists.html?utm_source=facebook&utm_me dium=Social&utm_campaign=SocialWarfare

Scaffolded resources

 https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/ 1PrAq4iBNb4nVlcTsLcNlW8zjaQXBLkWayL8 EaPlh0bc/mobilebasic

National Resources

https://linktr.ee/NationalResourcesList

Questions







Dr. Wendy Ashley Wendy.Ashley@csun.edu