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3 Powerful Tools to Help Overcome the Emotional Toll of the Pandemic



The pandemic has had a significant effect on our lives. Possibly without realizing it, many are suffering from a form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Every news cycle paralyzes us with fear of a new variant. Some feel grief over who or what they have lost or continue to have feelings of social disconnectedness. Despite what we have all been through, we need to start moving forward with our lives and truly live again. We must recognize that we have more control over our physical and mental health than advertised. The truth is that there are many helpful things that we can do.

PTSD is a stress-related disorder that may develop after exposure to a traumatic event or ordeal in which death or severe physical harm was a threat or occurred. Those with PTSD may experience agitation, irritability, hostility, hypervigilance, self-destructive behavior, social isolation, flashbacks, fear, anxiety, depression, attention difficulty, loneliness, insomnia, or nightmares.

Trauma can lead to feelings of powerlessness, but powerlessness can also keep us trapped in a PTSD cycle. The psychological imprint of trauma rewires the brain. There's an old saying in neuroscience: "neurons that fire together wire together." Our brain neurons begin firing in the amygdala, the emotional part of our brains, during a traumatic event. People can get stuck in an emotional loop, and the rational voice in their heads does not weigh in. This looping can cause a person to respond disproportionately to

stress – freezing, panicking, or acting out in anger. Some dissociate or enter a trance-like state. Maladaptive coping skills can sometimes develop. Cutting, burning, overeating, drinking, drugs, overspending, etc., is all an attempt to dampen our painful emotional feelings. So, to avoid getting stuck in a PTSD cycle, we must act and take our power back.

Time to seek out the most effective help so that we can feel calm and in control again. What can we do?

1. Boost Your Immune System

If you fear getting sick, it's time to **live a healthier lifestyle and boost your immune system**. Sadly, we are taught (with the help of pharmaceutical dollars) that health comes from a needle or a pill. Our "experts" recommend masks, hand-washing, social distancing, and mRNA vaccines. Still, they seldom suggest a healthy diet, supplements, and other natural remedies to help improve our health and support the body to fight off illness and disease. **Click here for my article that includes 16 Tips on Boosting Immunity.**

2. Embrace Spirituality

Over the last 20 years, I have been honored to have worked with many great therapists, healers, spiritual leaders, and trauma survivors to witness the power of Spirituality in healing. Spirituality is an inner belief system providing an individual with meaning and purpose in life. Whether it involves a higher power, nature, religious rituals, meditation, mindfulness, or prayer, the premise is to stay connected to the core of who we are. That place of stillness within us holding the memory of wholeness, peace, inner strength, and balance - despite what has happened. A spiritual philosophy or practice can provide us with a bigger context for our experiences and clarify our purpose. Spiritual methods also connect us with a sense of community and support. Finding our tribe is essential in the face of trauma and loss. The spiritual journey often allows us to go inside ourselves and listen to our inner guidance and "knowingness." The inner voice may know, for instance, that the virus will not hurt us, or what we are being told by the media is untrue. Spirituality also helps us shift our perspective from "why me" to "what can I do about it. It brings us a sense of power and control.

3. Guided Imagery & Bilateral Stimulation

Both tools are essential for the trauma therapy toolbox. They are noninvasive and helpful for overcoming the effects of trauma. Guided imagery can help us alter the negative or stressful pictures and thoughts in our minds and help us create new, more peaceful ones—a form of instilling positive affirmations. Before you read on, I thought you might like to download my **10-minute exercise**. This science-based, comprehensive video will help you to cultivate a sense of inner peace and give you a way to help overcome the effects of this pandemic - [GET IT HERE](#)

Is There Science Behind This?

Science, yes. Magic, no. This method requires regular practice if you want to make lasting, long-term changes to the ways that you think and feel. The good news is that both guided imagery and bilateral stimulation are widely practiced and well-established practices. However, I recommend that if you are still struggling after repeated listening, you find a qualified trauma therapist to continue the work you have already started.

A Look At The Research

Guided imagery is a behavioral technique using a series of verbal suggestions to guide oneself or others in visualizing an image in the mind to bring a desired response in the way of a reduction in stress, anxiety, or pain. A growing list of empirical literature supports the use of these techniques in various physical and emotional conditions. Guided imagery resulted in a clinically significant reduction in PTSD and related symptoms in a returning, combat-exposed active-duty military population. Positive affirmations can positively affect the brain's circuitry. There is MRI evidence suggesting that specific neural pathways are increased when people practice self-affirmation tasks.

Numerous research articles have established that bilateral stimulation is one of the most effective treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Some therapists practice Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), a combination of psychotherapy and bilateral stimulation. EMDR is very effective for treating a wide range of mental health issues due to emotional and physical trauma. During bilateral stimulation, patients tend to "process" the memory in a way that leads to a peaceful resolution. And, often results in increased insight regarding both previously disturbing events and long-held negative thoughts about the self.

"Bilateral Stimulation induces a fundamental change in brain circuitry, similar to what happens in REM sleep. It allows the person undergoing treatment to process and incorporate traumatic memories into general association networks in the brain. This therapy helps the individual integrate and understand the memories within the larger context of their life experience." - Robert Stickgold, Ph.D., Harvard Medical School

Takeaway

If you feel stressed or feel that you have PTSD resulting from this pandemic, try the above suggestions and download my helpful video before resorting to medication or maladaptive coping strategies. Also, you can discover the many mind-body practices you can do at home to help manage stress more successfully and so much more. SIGN UP HERE to receive your free download today. To purchase my book *Healing Without Hurting*, click here.