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health options

Covid-19 A Catalyst for Change (Virtual Peer Support Group)

September 22, 2020

Agenda

1 Impact of Covid-19

2 Peer Specialist Strong

3 Peer Support Groups, How it Works

4 Outcomes

5 Discussion

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Goals for Today

- Understand of Covid-19 on Peer Delivery
- A review of the Strength of Peer Specialist
- How to build a Virtual Peer Support Group
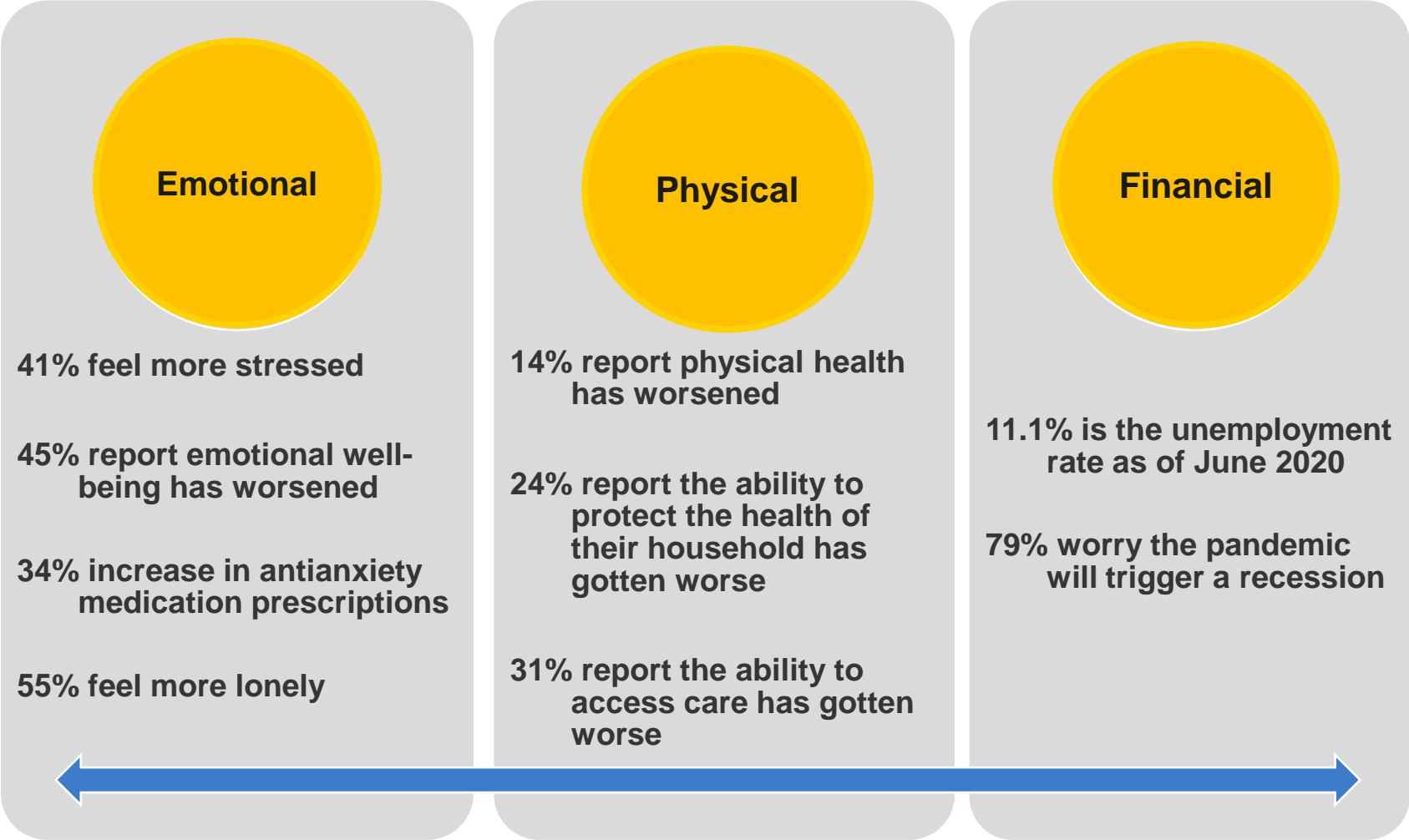- Understand outcomes associated with Virtual Peer Support Groups

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Chapter

01

Impact of Covid-19

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Individuals report that they are experiencing emotional, physical, and financial impact as a result of COVID-19

Emotional

41% feel more stressed

45% report emotional well-being has worsened

34% increase in antianxiety medication prescriptions

55% feel more lonely

Physical

14% report physical health has worsened

24% report the ability to protect the health of their household has gotten worse

31% report the ability to access care has gotten worse

Financial

11.1% is the unemployment rate as of June 2020

79% worry the pandemic will trigger a recession

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KFF.org – Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Axios-Ipsos Coronavirus Index

Emotional toll

- The single most prevalent reason for depression is isolation.

- We are seeing an increased number of people who are struggling with remaining calm and managing their frustrations and emotions.

- There has been an uptick in domestic violence, anger, substance use, and suicide.

- The most vulnerable people are those:

  o With chronic medical and/or behavioral health illness, including substance use disorders

  o Those with economic hardship

  o Those without social support

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Ground Zero

One of the hardest hit areas in the United States for the Coronavirus was New York. As per Hopkins and the interactive COVID materials there were (as per Wednesday April 8, 2020):

- 149,401 total cases in New York State
- 6,268 deaths from the coronavirus in the state
- 81,803 cases in New York City, including 4,571 deaths
- 20,474 people with COVID-19 are hospitalized, including 4,376 in intensive care — 12,187 coronavirus patients have been discharged

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Chapter

02

Peer Support Specialist Strong

Mutual support / 12 Step Program experience

"The therapeutic value of one ___ helping another is without parallel." This helper therapy principle (HTP) observes the helper's health benefits is derived from helping another with a shared malady.   This HTP can be found in wide ranging mutual support groups from: gambling, to shopping; from cancer survival to over eaters; mental illness to marital divorce. This shared foundational principle is supported by readily recognizable; tenants, principles, steps that provide the framework for a variety of mutual support groups.

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Strength vs. Deficit Based Approach (National Practice Guidelines)

The most significant of these guidelines focuses on; what's strong not what's wrong:

- Peer supporters focus on the strengths of those they support.

- Peer supporters use their own experiences to demonstrate the use of one's strengths.

- Peer supporters encourage others to explore dreams and goals.

- Peer supporters operate from a strength-based perspective and acknowledge the strengths, informed choices and decisions of peers as a foundation of recovery.

- Peer support is mutual and reciprocal

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03

Peer Support Groups, How it Works

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Traditional Support Groups

- Most support programs are modeled on the format of Alcoholics Anonymous
- Groups are conducted face to face
- You need to travel to a meeting site
- Most support Groups rely upon just one facilitator
- Typically only a single support therapeutic is offered
- Most mutual support groups are deficit based (stop: drinking, drugging, gambling and or aberrant sexual behavior,
- Passing the collection plate

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Co-Facilitation In Virtual Space

It is like dancing in pairs, their names are Task and Maintenance. It requires practice, intuition and excellent communication. You look beautiful and funny and engaging with free-flowing moves. The impact on the Group is stimulating, purposeful, engaged and fulfilled, when you got!
Co-facilitation maximizes adult learning principles.

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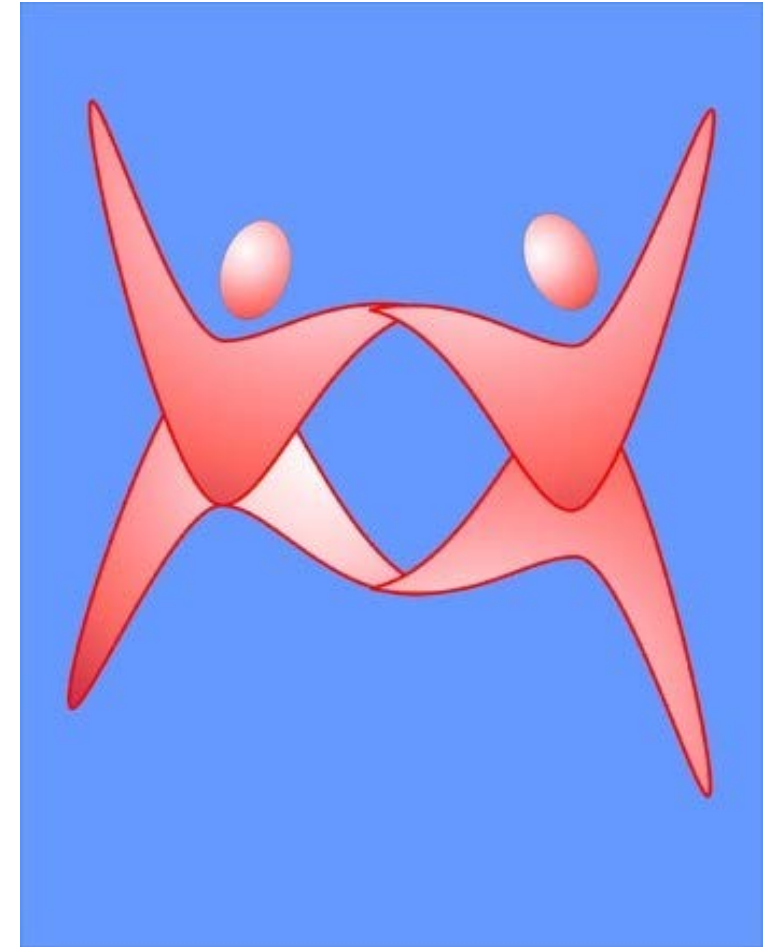
Benefits

- Fluid information exchange ~ the digital format of online groups better supports the exchange of important information

- Continuous availability ~ for those experiencing a traumatic life event or chronic illness.

- Greater access ~ Like telemedicine has helped patients in rural or remote areas access care, support groups can provide help for those unable to travel to in-person meetings

- More anonymous ~ some people seeking help may not want to make themselves known to others, for any number of reasons

- Provide the same support ~ another upside to support groups is that they provide the same kind of emotional care as in-person meetings.

- Additional support ~ virtual support groups can also be harnessed as a supportive tool, in addition to in-person meetings or other therapeutic interventions,

Elements Beacon Virtual Peer Support Group Pilot

- Virtual Peer Support Pilot Pre/Post Assessment

- Virtual Peer Support Group Criteria

- Virtual Peer Support Training Outline for Facilitators

- Virtual Peer Support Informed Consent Form

- Virtual Peer Support Brochure

- Virtual Peer Support Suggested Topics List

- Virtual Peer Feedback Survey


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Chapter

04

Outcomes

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Intervention

- To support those members who were currently engaged with ICM services, Beacon began a virtual peer support group

- The group was co-facilitated with two peers

- The group was designed to reduce loneliness scores and to support members on the issues that they are addressing

- 50 individuals were offered the group
  - 22% of those individuals engaged in at least one group

Challenges- Changes to Protocol

- Limited attendance during the first several weeks
  - Began texting a reminder 2 hours prior to the group
- Due to the low attendance during the first few weeks expanded to 8 sessions versus 6
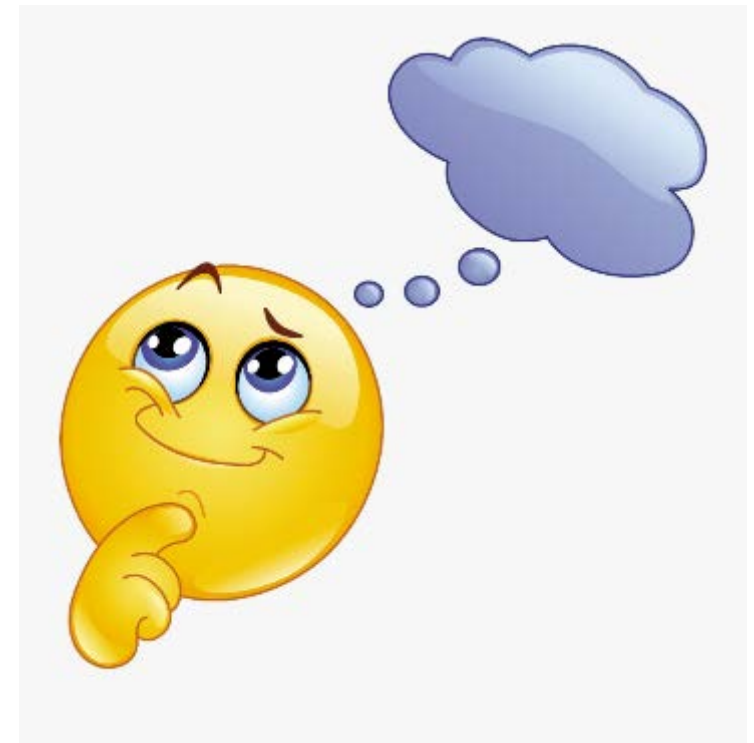
By the Numbers

- 100% of the individuals that attended at least 4 sessions reported that they felt the groups were helpful

- 100% of the individuals that attended at least 4 sessions felt that the group assisted with loneliness

- Net Promoter Score was 0

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Conclusion

- The group was helpful to those that participated

- Facilitators appreciated the experience

- The results need to be interpreted with caution as this was a small n

- Co-Facilitator Competence Enhancements

Chapter

05

Discussion