

**Culturally-Sensitive Trauma  
Informed Care: Healing Your Mind  
During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Zion Church  
The 173rd Session of the Allegheny Annual Conference  
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**Today's Objectives**

- Participants will acquire knowledge regarding the biblical perspective of healing.
- Participants will increase their knowledge regarding the common reactions to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) that includes stress, trauma, anxiety, and depression.
- Participants will increase their knowledge of culturally-sensitive, trauma-informed skills and techniques designed ... to heal physiological, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral signs of stress, trauma, anxiety, and depression; ... to heal their mind from COVID-19.

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**Biblical Perspective of Healing**

- "In the NT, God's intent to "save" or "rescue" is identified with the person and ministry of Jesus. Specific traditions about Jesus record acts of delivering people from disease and demonic possession, bringing them to a condition of restored wholeness" (Powell, 2011).  
Examples include:
  - Jesus **Heals** Ten Men With Leprosy - Luke 17:19
  - The **Healing** at the Pool - John 5:6
- The Greek word for save, rescue, restore, do well, be (make whole) or heal is Sozo

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## Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

(CDC, 2020)

- Is a respiratory illness that can spread person to person.
- Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness.
- Symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus.
- Symptoms can include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, muscle pain, chills, sore throat, and new loss of taste and smell among others symptoms that health professionals are identifying daily.
- Thought to spread mainly from person-to-person via respiratory droplets among close contacts.
- The CDC's most recent report states there are over 138 million total cases in the U.S., over 80,000 total deaths (985 new deaths), and over 220 thousand recovered cases (May 11, 2020).
- 26 states report more than 10,000 cases of COVID-19.

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## Common Reactions to COVID-19

- Inner conflicts and anxieties that accompany important human issues of meaning and purpose:
  - Uncertainty about the future
  - Worry
  - Fear
- Concern about protecting oneself from the virus.
- Feeling socially isolated, especially if one lives alone or in community settings that do not allow for visitors.
- Guilt if love ones help them with activities of daily living.
- Increased levels of distress, anxiety, depression, trauma related symptoms (especially true if one has pre-existing mental health concerns before the outbreak).

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## Trauma

- "Individual trauma results from an event or series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful for life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being" (SAMHSA, 2014, p. 7).

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## Stress

- Is an emotional/bodily reaction to physical, psychological and/or emotional demands.\*\*
- An applied force or system of forces that tend to strain or deform the body.
- Is a survival mechanism used to respond to perceived dangers.
- Is a powerful internal communication to raise awareness.

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## Stress

- Causes:
  - Expectations of self
  - Expectations of others
  - Physical environment/Context
  - Internal environment

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## Anxiety

- "Anxiety is a normal reaction to stress. It helps one deal with a tense situation in the office, study harder for an exam, keep focused on an important speech. In general, it helps one cope. But when anxiety becomes an excessive, irrational dread of everyday situations, it has become a disabling disorder" (NIMH, 2011).

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## Depression

- Comes from the Latin *depressio*, meaning to press down and make lower.
- Depression comes with a melancholic mood that is ordinarily weighted with negative thinking. It ordinarily follows an extraordinary stress.
- Yet, for some, depression (and avoiding depression) is a way of life.

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## Depression

- Depression is a normal phase of living for millions.
- Sadness, feeling down, bereavement, and feeling depressed are all part of the human condition
- Most people, over their lifetime, experience some degree of depression, some much more than others.

Knaus, 2006

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## Signs & Symptoms of Stress

- **Physiological Responses to Stress:**
  - Increased heart rate & blood pressure
  - Sweating
  - Dry mouth
  - Headaches
- **Cognitive and Emotional Responses to Stress:**
  - Negative self-talk
  - Restlessness, inability to concentrate, lack of interest, avoidance behaviors

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## Signs & Symptoms

- Feeling irritation, anger, or denial
- Feeling uncertain, nervous, or anxious
- Feeling helpless or powerless
- Lacking motivation
- Feeling tired, overwhelmed, or burned out
- Feeling sad or depressed
- Having trouble sleeping
- Having trouble concentrating

Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019

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## Signs and Symptoms of Trauma and Stress

- Headaches, backaches, stomachaches, etc.
- Sudden sweating and/or heart palpitations
- Changes in sleep patterns or changes in appetite
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Easily startled by noises or unexpected touch
- More susceptible to colds and illnesses; worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs and/or overeating
- Fear and worry about your own health and health of your loved ones
- Worsening of mental health conditions (e.g., depression, anxiety)

Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020

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## Signs and Symptoms of Depression



- Persistent, sad, or “empty” mood.
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism.
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness.
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies or activities.
- Decreased energy, fatigue, or being “slowed down”.

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## THE GOOD NEWS

Practical and Evidence-Based Techniques and Skills  
to Heal Your Mind and Be Made Whole

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## Managing Stress

“Living a stress-free life is not a reasonable goal. The goal is to deal with it actively and effectively.”

David Spiegel, Ph.D.

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## Trauma-Informed & Resilient Approach (SAMHSA, 2018)

- **Realizes** the impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;
- **Recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in individuals, families and groups,
- **Responds** by integrating the knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices.
- **Resists** practices that could cause more harm.

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## Six-Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach

- Safety
- Trustworthiness and Transparency
- Peer Support
- Collaboration and Mutuality
- Empowerment, Voice and Choice
- Cultural, Historical, & Gender Issues

(Haughee, 2016; SAMHSA, 2018)

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## Coping

- The process which the individual manages the demands of the person-environment relationship and the resulting emotions that are generated from the situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).
- A set of strategies that are available to be implemented to match specific situations:
  - Emotion-focused strategies (Internal)
  - Problem-focused strategies (Action)

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## Coping Strategies

- Lead a balanced life: Total Health and Wellness (i.e., self, family, social activities, work/career, community, etc.)
  - Other health and wellness strategies: spiritual/religion, exercise regularly, activities, eat a well-balanced diet, improve sleeping/get more rest)
- Understand and accept personal strengths and challenges
- Expand your support network

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### Coping Strategies

- Promote Positive Self-Talk
  - Notice your patterns of negative, irrational thinking vs. positive, rational thinking. Become aware of how much you engage in negative, irrational thoughts in your head and how much it affects you.
  - Journal Writing – insight and inner process
  - Thought-Stopping; Don't always believe what you think

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### Coping Strategies

- Set short-term & long-term goals (SMART)
- Manage time and include quiet time
- Delay major/important decisions
- Develop support systems and spend time with them.
- Drink responsible and in moderation
- Give yourself rewards!!!

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### Treatment Strategies

- Seek treatment from a mental health professional (Telehealth):
 


<https://www.psychologytoday.com>




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## Thank You!

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