



Disaster Psychology:

From Toilet Paper to Hand Sanitizer

COVID-19:

- ▶ Preparing Yourself and Your Family

Samantha Lushtak, MS, CSP, CIT
Absolute EHS
www.AbsoluteEHS.com

What is Disaster Psychology?

- It is the study of how humans react to a disaster
 - Children: fear, anxiety, regression, fear of recurrence
 - Adults: Disturbed sleep, anxiety over resources
- This can also affect a person who is helping someone else deal with a disaster

<https://www.resilience.org/stories/2011-03-17/psychology-disaster/>

<https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma11-disaster-03.pdf>

https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1446229198552-36ec1e690d9e70130fc4837f56afaf8c/section_07_unit_7_ppt_102715_508.pdf

Optimism Bias

- “It won’t happen to me”
- 80-90% of the population thinks this way, it’s a coping strategy
- Mostly seen with the unknown
 - Smoking can lead to cancer
 - Driving can lead to a fatal collision
 - Coronavirus can be deadly

<https://psychonline.eku.edu/insidelook/%E2%80%99Cit-won%E2%80%99t-happen-me%E2%80%9D-optimism-bias>

When Optimism Bias Changes

- We know someone who was directly affected
- One of two things happens
 1. I know someone it happened to so the likelihood of it happening to me is less – this is far less frequent
 2. I know someone it happened to so now it is real, and I should panic - far more frequent

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-optimism-bias-2795031>

Revert to What We Know

- Humans deal with 'acts of god' fairly routinely
- These events tend to lead to no electricity, infrastructure, gasoline – this is why the toilet paper is being purchased in bulk
- We do things that are familiar in a disaster like buy toilet paper, batteries, flashlights, water
- The last, most severe pandemic, in history was the HIV/AIDS Pandemic (2005-2012). Before that was the H3N2 Flu in 1968.

<https://www.mphonline.org/worst-pandemics-in-history/>

▶ The Desire to do Something Concrete

- People tend to want a concrete solution in a disaster
- This solution needs to be novel to feel right
- The CDC indicated that hand sanitizer is effective against Coronavirus – many people ignored the fact that soap and water is better
 - See the other module on why soap and water is better than hand sanitizer on my website. www.AbsoluteEHS.com/covid-19/

N95+ Masks and Surgical Masks



- Can easily be found in most grocery and hardware stores
- Do not go out if sick, masks generally not needed because of this

N95 + Masks	Surgical Masks
Must be fit tested	No requirement
Must be medically cleared to wear	Should be removed if causing respiratory distress
If worn correctly, no gaps/tight fitting	High likelihood of gaps
Must remain on at all times (not while sleeping)	Must remain on at all times (not while sleeping)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirator-use-faq.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>

Picture from style-seal.com



Take Away Thoughts

- Shopping local regularly is important
- If you are low risk, not sick, and have the flexibility, consider volunteering your time at your local community center, school, nursing home, or library to assist in the disinfecting efforts.
- If you know of an underprivileged person or family, a food-poor family, or an elder who lives alone, consider helping them stock up on food and hydration for 2-6 weeks.
- Do not assign blame, be as proactive as possible and assume you will be affected. If you are affected, you expected it, if you're not affected, that's great!
- If possible, refrain from person to person online shopping

Thank you!



- Please feel free to email Samantha.Lushtak@AbsoluteEHS.com with questions
- Please check my webpage for website links, downloadable documents, and worksheets.
www.AbsoluteEHS.com/covid-19/
- Please consider supporting my small business by donating to support public services such as this one.
 - PayPal on the website
 - Venmo @Samantha-Lushtak

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