

Welcome to COVID-19: Preparing Yourself and Your Family. This module is meant to educate the public on the various types of professionals. Who should we listen to about vaccines, policies, and masks? My name is Sam Lushtak, owner of Absolute EHS.

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Each type of professional works together and completes an important role but you need a clear understanding of where each expertise lies. That said, I am speaking in generalities of each profession for the purpose of this module.

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I have broken the professionals we are seeing into three broad categories. Medical professionals. For the purpose of this exercise, will include doctors and nurses in addition to morticians, medical researchers, and vaccine developers. I wanted to make sure morticians were included here as they are often the people who notice a pandemic or new disease that causes deaths and then works with doctors and nurses to see if there were similar symptoms.

Public health officials study how disease spread. These public health officials are often working very closely with medical researchers, or virologists in this case. Public health officials also work very closely with politicians and advise them on what to do to change our society to decrease the spread of diseases.

Safety professionals are trained in analyzing potential risks, potential solutions to those risks, and implementing changes. Safety professionals tend to be the first ones involved in an emergency and have an elaborate toolbox of knowledge to help with on the fly and continuous support until a disaster is mitigated. Safety professionals tend to have more personal interactions with the community.

Safety professionals are called in to consult on public health disaster plans as well as medical procedures prior to execution. For this reason, a safety professional tends to be involved in any emergency or risk from conception to completion - minimally as a mediator or another set of eyes to a medical professional or public health official.

This means that safety professionals should be involved in case there is an emergency and they are an excellent source of first responders to the community while other professionals are working on more long-term and wholistic solutions. All this to say, doctors should not spend time posting videos on how to store a mask – especially since you should not reuse a mask. Their specialty is saving lives that are already in danger and working on creating a vaccine. A safety professional can be more effectively utilized for a question surrounding masks while a doctor would be a better source to tell you if ibuprofen or acetaminophen exacerbates symptoms. The doctor's work is on a longer timeline, the public health official's work is on a shorter timeline, and a safety professional's work is immediate. We all work together until the crisis is over.

As illustrated by the venn diagram, each specialty needs to be familiar with the other. As a safety professional, I can tell you what I think governments should do to slow the spread of this virus but I would not know who to speak with first or how to push that regulation through. Similarly, I can tell you how viruses work and that you will likely be treated with fluids in the hospital but you would not want me to intubate you or start an IV.

When it comes to immediate crisis management, masks, and soap, a safety professional will have more expertise with these things, as they possess intimate knowledge of personal protective equipment. While the other two categories of profession use personal protective equipment every day, a safety professional knows how to fit test a mask, which mask should be used for which application, and the various types that extend to all industries and applications.

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Safety professionals want you to know that there are many risks to the untrained person when it comes to wearing masks of any sort. If you do wear a mask, know that it has points of failure. I encourage you to watch the module on masks on my website to learn more about this. Masks, should you choose to wear them, cannot be reused or shared – despite what you may see doctors doing (remember, they at least have some basic training and know the risks they are presenting to themselves).

When it comes to gloves, gloves protect your skin. They do not protect each surface you touch. They do not protect your nose, mouth or eyes. Wearing gloves will do absolutely nothing against this virus if they are not changed between surface contacts, are not used to touch your own common items – such as a cell phone or the inside of your own pocket– or your face. Hands must be washed with soap and water after gloves are removed every time. Glove material matters as well.

Soap and water will defeat a virus! Hand sanitizer won't quite cut it. Please see the module on soap and water v. hand sanitizer on my website about this. You also don't need fancy chemicals to clean your door handles, dish soap and water will do it. Remember, vinegar is no replacement for soap.

Since every interaction with anyone is a potential point of failure, you need to learn to think like a safety professional if you plan on going out or have something delivered. I would encourage you to watch the module on degrees of separation and flattening the curve which is posted on my website. Minimally, do the 'degrees of separation' worksheet posted under the 'support documents' tab.

Ultimately, staying home is ideal.

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Public health officials need you to understand that this virus can infect people before you ever show symptoms. On top of that, you may never show symptoms which means many people can be infected by each other and never know. Every infected person is equated to 2.5 people becoming infected. For this reason, public health officials need us all to be honest about any symptoms we may feel and understand that this is not simply a child-like game of 'not touching you'. The minimum of 6 feet apart guideline is if you need to be physically near someone. It is not an invitation to have a picnic on an abnormally large blanket. Every interaction has a potential point of failure.

Staying home is ideal.

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Medical professionals want us all to understand that they are in the middle of this every day. They are getting exposed to many cases of COVID-19 every day and they are bringing this virus home to their families every day. The more people who get sick, the more people they are exposed to. These medical professionals are the only ones who can provide life-saving treatments which makes this virus

particularly scary. Add to that that these medical professionals are still dealing with a normal load of cardiac arrests, births, broken bones, and cancer treatments and they are most definitely going to have problems.

If you stay home, you are less likely to get into a car crash or contract this virus.

Staying home is ideal.

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Thank you so much for listening to this module on the various professionals we have been listening to lately. Feel free to email me if you have any questions, personal or about this presentation, at Samantha.lushtak@absoluteehs.com. Feel free to also check out my website for a full length, 45 minute, webinar that was previously recorded with a lot more information in it or check out one of my other short modules on the topic.

Finally, please consider supporting my small business at this time, particularly if you found this information or the worksheets and documents on the website helpful. Donations can be made via PayPal or through Venmo to Samantha-Lushtak.

Stay safe and stay home!