

# Mental Health in the Workplace During COVID-19

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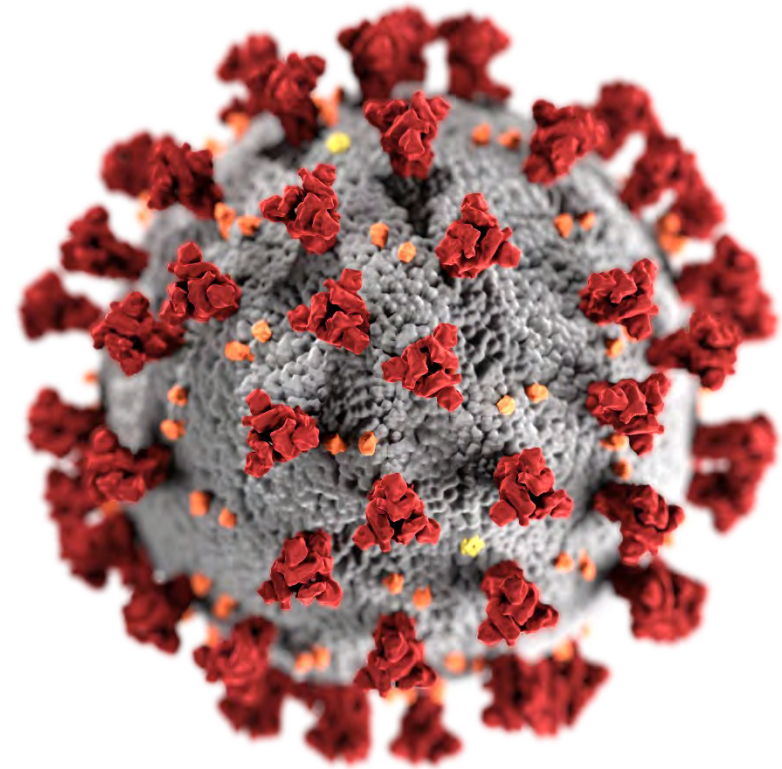
PRESENTER: DAVID CLARKE, DURHAM MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



# The Impact of COVID-19

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- Health impacts
- Economic impacts
- Social impacts
- Psychological impacts





“The ... outbreaks and fatalities of the COVID-19 disease may impact mental health by elevating anxiety worldwide.”

Psychology Today

# Signs that an employee may be struggling

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1. Changes in work habits
2. Changes in physical appearance
3. Changes in demeanour
4. Increased absenteeism or tardiness
5. Outbursts and mood swings
6. Seeming withdrawn or avoiding interaction



# Local Mental Health Crisis Support



Durham Mental Health Services Crisis Services

**905-666-0483 or 1-800-742-1890**

[www.dmhs.ca](http://www.dmhs.ca)

- Links callers as needed to internal DMHS programs and external community healthcare or human services; experts on local community resources
- 24/7 telephone support
- You needn't be "in crisis" to call!

# Martin Seligman's PERMA Model of Human Flourishing



P

Positive Emotions

Positive Outlook

# Benefits of Positive Emotions

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- ❑ Psychological benefits
- ❑ Cognitive benefits
- ❑ Social benefits
- ❑ Health benefits

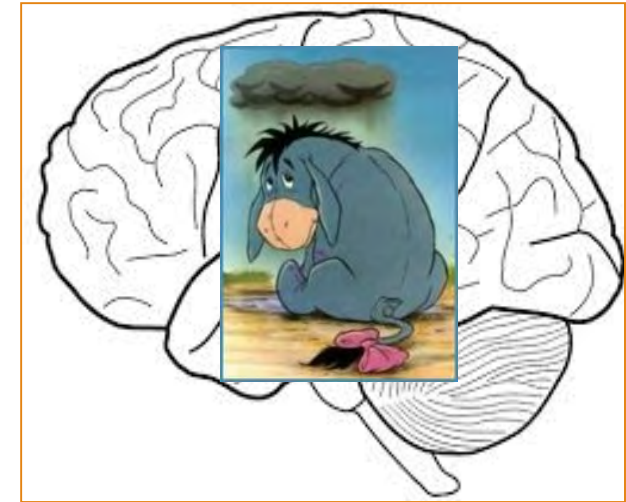




# The Brain's Negativity Bias

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- The mind is Velcro for painful experiences and Teflon for positive ones
- Negative events have more impact than positive ones (5:1 relationships, lottery/accident, bad vs. good information)



# A Leader's Positive Outlook

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- ❑ As a leader, you have a huge influence on what people at work pay attention to
- ❑ Emotions are highly contagious, spreading rapidly from one person to another
- ❑ The emotions of a leader are especially contagious



# Three Key Emotions

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- ☐ Gratitude
- ☐ Optimism
- ☐ Hope



# Gratitude

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- ❑ One of the most effective ways to create a positive workplace is to develop a culture of gratitude
  - ❑ Start by making a conscious effort to notice pleasant experiences and count your blessings
  - ❑ Create a culture of appreciation by noticing and commenting on the good things in your workplace and among your employees, and encourage your employees to express appreciation to one another

# Optimism

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- ❑ Optimism and pessimism are **LEARNED** explanatory styles
- ❑ Over time we can learn new explanatory styles, by adopting new and healthier mental habits

<b>OPTIMISTS</b> view the causes of bad events as ...	<b>PESSIMISTS</b> view the causes of bad events as ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❑ Temporary</li><li>❑ Specific</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❑ Permanent</li><li>❑ Pervasive</li></ul> <p><i>With good events, it's just the reverse.</i></p>

# Hope

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## GOALS

Something you  
want to achieve

## AGENCY

Your belief in  
your power to  
act to achieve  
your goal

## PATHWAYS

Routes to goal  
achievement

**E**

Engagement (Flow)

# Facilitating Engagement

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- ❑ Adopt a strengths-based approach to management, and help team members utilize their strengths in their roles
- ❑ Work from home can facilitate engagement by creating a workspace free of distraction and interruption
- ❑ Help team members see the “big picture” so they can understand how their work contributes vitally to the organization’s goals



R

Relationships

# Nurturing Relationships

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- ❑ Establish an ethos of holding “active meetings” that provide intentional opportunities for staff to connect and interact with each other
- ❑ Take time in gatherings to acknowledge and appreciate where and how positive partnerships and collaborations have occurred
- ❑ Promote a culture of interdependence, mutual trust and respect

**M**

Meaning (Purpose)

# Sources of Meaning

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- Relationships
- Values
- Service to others

# Values

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- ❑ Values are deeply held beliefs about what is right and good
- ❑ They help identify our purpose in life and give our lives a sense of coherence
- ❑ Knowing what we value helps define who we are



# Values (cont.'d)

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- ❑ To live a more purposeful and rewarding life, we need to make a more conscious choice to align our daily behaviour with goals that are based on our values
- ❑ Talk to employees to find out what matters to them at work



# Values (cont.'d)

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- ❑ Encourage them to be intentional about spending more time on what is important
- ❑ Help people see how their work contributes to valued outcomes
- ❑ Point out shared values so that they understand how their personal values align with corporate values



# Service to Others

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- ❑ During this health emergency, we can take heart by “looking for the helpers (you will always find people who are helping)”
- ❑ All of us achieve meaning most fully in our lives when we actively engage in pursuits that transcend our own immediate interests
- ❑ Serving others contributes to meaning by giving us a sense of purpose and significance



# Service to Others

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- ❑ Work provides an ideal setting to find meaning in service to others, a chance to improve others lives by providing them with a valuable product or service, and contribute to a collective effort
- ❑ Have frequent conversations about how the work you do makes a positive impact
- ❑ Leaders can ensure that employees are aware of the impact of their work –reminding people of the company mission and how the work they do contributes to it

A

Achievement

# Promoting Achievement

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- ❑ Take a coaching approach to leadership: define clear and measurable goals for each employee, give them the resources they need, and help them develop solutions on their own
- ❑ Give voice to accomplishments by sending emails to acknowledge and explicitly name where and how success has occurred
- ❑ Celebrate organizational achievements as a team

We need to be intentional and relentlessly creative in:

1. Continually connecting with each other using all modes available to us now;
2. Finding ways to be productive again in new roles that tap existing strengths; and,
3. Doing business that will hold our economy stable through this crisis.

**Psychology Today**



Please don't hesitate to send comments, questions or suggestions to David Clarke at [dclarke@dmhs.ca](mailto:dclarke@dmhs.ca).

Thanks for listening!