**SPEC. SHEET The Affects of COVID-19 On Mental Health**

**Speaker**

* Joshua A. Gordon, MD., PD. D. Director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

**When**

* Wednesday, February 5, 2020

**Event Start Time**

* Speaker and event introduction begins 7:00 and speaker will walk towards stage left at 7:10. Welcomed onto stage at 7:15.

**Location/Address**

* 10 Center Dr, Bethesda, MD 20814

**Technology**

* Speech will be read using teleprompter.

**Full Schedule**

* Event Intro 7-7:15
* Josh Gordon speech 7:15-7:30
* Closing remarks 7:30-7:45

**Speech Duration**

* 15 Minutes

**Where**

* Virtual symposium held at NIMH.
  + Due to coronavirus concerns, it would be difficult to hold an event in person. A virtual event allows us to reach a large audience, while also deploying multiple speakers with no geographical limitations.

**Event Duration**

* Under an hour/45 min

**Audience**

* 20,000 participants are expected to attend the virtual symposium. The audience will include health care professionals, and individuals concerned about the mental health of themselves and others.

**Topic**

* Convincing people of the importance of taking care of mental health during a pandemic.

**Sub-Topics**

* How to participate in social events/interactions during COVID-19
* Activities with positive affects on mental health
* How to create a daily routine in a pandemic

**Personal Connections**

* Battled with mental health problems in the past so knows what people are experiencing.

**People to Acknowledge**

* People suffering from mental illnesses.
* Dr. Anthony Fauci for his work with COVID-19.

**Speech: COVID-19 Is Negatively Affecting People’s Mental Health**

It’s a pleasure to speak on behalf of the National Institute of Mental Health. I’d like to thank the health council and advisory board for selecting me to speak on such a delicate topic.

I hope I’m not too rusty. This is actually the first speech I’ve done in a while. More importantly, I don’t think I’ve ever done a virtual speech.

Are people getting used to that yet? Something about wearing a suit and tie while sitting in basketball shorts just doesn’t sit right with me. But nonetheless, here we are.

COVID-19 is negatively affecting people’s mental health. COVID-19 has taken millions of Americans’ lives. I cannot express how sorry I am for members of the crowd who have lost family to this virus. While COVID-19 seems like mostly a physical disease, it is also damaging mentally too.

Firstly, Prolonged periods of self-isolation caused by COVID-19 have negatively affected people’s mental health.

Secondly, People are experiencing increased rates of loneliness, emotional instability, and depression due to COVID-19.

Thirdly, People do not have access to resources that will help them take care of their mental health during this pandemic.

**Prolonged periods of self-isolation caused by COVID-19 have negatively affected people’s mental health.**

The Kaiser Family Foundation recorded that 47% of people who were sheltering in place reported negative health effects resulting from worry or stress related to coronavirus. 50% of adults in the United States participated in this study.

Almost every other person in the United States that is sheltering in place is experiencing trauma related to the virus.

The recent self-isolation that people are encouraged to participate in is reducing the amount of socialization opportunities, which means more time alone.

The CDC has reported over 12m confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States. With the rampant number of virus cases self-isolation will continue and it will be difficult for people to get back into daily routines.

Having a daily routine is how people keep their sanity. Hackensack Meridian Health reported that a lack of structure that can contribute to stress, anxiety and even clinical depression.

One component of your daily routine is your job and work life.

More people are now at home during this pandemic because they have not been able to keep their job.

U.S. [unemployment rate](https://www.bls.gov/cps/cps_htgm.htm)s shot up from 3.8% in February [Among the lowest on record](https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/UNRATE) in the post-World War II era – to 13.0% in May, from pew research.

With the large amount of unemployed Americans in the world, we are seeing drastic changes in how people go about their daily routines and more people isolating at home.

Prolonged periods of self-isolation caused by COVID-19 have negatively affected people’s mental health.

**People do not have access to resources that will help them take care of their mental health during this pandemic.**

The World Health Organization released a statement that documented how the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted or halted critical mental health services in 93% of countries worldwide while the demand for mental health is increasing.

Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. However, these actions are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19, according to the CDC.

Unfortunately, people have had to choose between their mental health, and taking precautions to stop the spread of COVID-19.

People need to be connected with necessary resources to help them reduce their stress and anxiety during self-isolation and social distancing.

Some of these resoucres are,

* The Disaster Distress Hotline
* The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
* The National Domestic Violence Hotline
* The Veteran’s Crisis Hotline

The WHO also noted in surveys published ahead of their Global Online Advocacy Event, that Americans are not aware of the mental health services offered for free, including different hotlines and websites designed to help people.

People need to be made aware of these resources.

People with pre-existing mental health conditions or substance use disorders may be particularly vulnerable in an emergency state.

People need resources that will help them take care of their mental health and well-being during this pandemic.

Participants of self-isolating are not able to access their main support networks.

The lack of social interaction that keeps people sane and in their mental routines is now lost.

Depression, anxiety, and stress-related disorders are further amplified by isolation induced by the pandemic.

In a sample of a thousand Americans the CDC noted that 40% of Americans reported in a study said that they were struggling with mental health issues. Which was up from 25% in April.

Research from the Kaiser Family Foundation shows that job loss is associated with increased depression, anxiety, distress, and low self-esteem.

As mentioned earlier, unemployment is at an all time high.

Americans do not have jobs.

Americans are stuck isolating at home.

Americans are dying at an unprecedented rate.

Along with needing resources like support groups and hotlines to support mental health, helping people who have lost their jobs is another way to support mental health.

We have failed to accomplish this, which has been made evident by the unfathomable unemployment numbers.

It’s impossible to take care of your mental health when you are trying to figure out how to put food on the table for your family.

People do not have access to resources that will help them take care of their mental health during this pandemic.

**People are experiencing increased rates of loneliness, emotional instability, and depression due to COVID-19.**

According to a review done by Public Health, loneliness has increased from 20-30% during COVID-19. Emotional distress has more than tripled.

It is vital that people remain engaged with other people and maintain socialization during this pandemic.

The World Health Organization notes that it is very safe for people to communicate with each other as long as they are physically distanced.

This safe distance will allow people to engage in conversations with each other without spreading COVID-19.

The National Institute of Health observed that positive, high quality social interactions, social support and social connectedness that occur online are all negatively correlated with symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Using digital platforms is a good way for people to stay in contact with each other and keep open their lines of communications. Positively affecting their mental health.

**In conclusion, COVID-19 is negatively affecting people’s mental health**.

Prolonged periods of self-isolation caused by COVID-19 have negatively affected people’s mental health.

People do not have access to resources that will help them take care of their mental health during this pandemic.

People are experiencing increased rates of loneliness, emotional instability, and depression due to COVID-19.

I encourage everybody to monitor his or her own mental health, and to call 741-741 for crisis counseling.