

Educational materials

Education and Medical Simulation Centre

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EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

**PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS of
the EPIDEMIC**

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SECURITY FIRST

The present situation has the features of a difficult, crisis situation [1, 2].

The uncommonness of events, various types of restrictions, fear for the health and life of our relatives and our own make us a bit out of the current pattern of functioning. Many areas of our lives have changed: we go to work in a different way, we are exposed to the possibility of staying longer in it due to quarantine, we risk infection. Sometimes our contact with loved ones is only by phone, through glass, at a distance.

How to deal with the magnitude of changes?

First, as in the BLS scheme – security

We mean both psychological and medical safety. Both are very much related to each other in the current situation.

Psychological security is associated, among others, with the reconstruction of the structure, that is, creating a plan of action in a new situation [1, 2]. It will not always be a return to the known rhythm of the day, work. More often it will be to sort things out again. The issue of on-call duties, contacts with children and time to rest will be different. It is definitely worth organizing – adjusting to the realities in which you are – all the areas important for functioning: relationships with relatives, including contact with children, work, contact with yourself, time for rest, hobbies. This allows you to rebuild a sense of security in this changed reality.

Is it possible? After all, it seems to us that the current situation is sometimes overwhelming, "abnormal"?

Each of us has a kind of mental flexibility. Researchers of the phenomenon of positive adaptation to difficult situations call this phenomenon **resilience** [3].

In English, resilience means flexibility and the ability to regenerate strength.

The concept of resilience assumes that each of us has certain resources, a set of immune behaviors, thanks to which we are able – like a spring – to bend under the pressure of something difficult for us, and then return to the original shape when the weight loses a little.

Researchers of this phenomenon also say that it is the ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions [4].

Each of us has certain resources, and if we also know our weaknesses, the better we will be able to find ourselves in a new situation and deal with what life brings us.

Resilience can be constantly exercised and developed. Therefore, let us also look for the positive in this difficult situation. Let us be grateful for what we have!

So let's act! By accepting what is happening here and now, let's check what we have influence on and reorganize our plan for our daily lives.

Psychological, or emotional, security is closely related to physical security. Real, exactly as understood in the BLS scheme.

What does it mean?

Let us consider what we lack in the current situation to feel safe. Knowledge and equipment – you will probably say.

Let's deal with the first issue, because we have a real influence on it.

It is knowledge that binds the issues of psychological and physical safety together.

Acquiring knowledge about the current situation is a kind of information support from the psychological side, but also allows you to act in a way that protects life and health, and thus also ensures physical safety.

Psychologically speaking, knowing the current situation allows you to reduce the level of anxiety related to the existing threat. The result will be more reliable conduct and action during the performance of medical procedures, ensuring physical safety for yourself and the patient.

It is worth remembering to share this reliable knowledge also with patients.

They are on the same side of the barricade, also under stress, also in a crisis related to the threat to values such as health and life [5]. Here, too, factual, reliable knowledge conveyed in an accessible and readable language is an important stage in building psychological security in those we deal with.

A patient who has received informative support knows what is happening to and around him. He will feel safe both physically and psychologically. There is a chance that he will react with a slightly lower anxiety, and thus his immune system will have a chance to mobilize to fight the virus [6].

Why seek knowledge? After all, nobody has one hundred percent of it. A large part of the medical staff did not work in infectious diseases wards and although the procedures are known theoretically, it is worth refreshing them and recalling them. The unknown is disturbing – it is natural. Coping with this situation is, among other things, seeking adequate knowledge and practicing new procedures.

It is important that we refer to information from a reliable source on how to deal with COVID-19, familiarize ourselves with the procedures, know where to look for help, who to consult.

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